


**BINDURA UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE EDUCATION**

# A WORKING MODEL TOWARDS RESOLVING LEADERSHIP WRANGLES IN THE CHURCH: A CASE OF THE EVANGELICAL CHURCH OF ZIMBABWE

**BY**

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**BINDURA, ZIMBABWE**

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## DECLARATION

I, **Brain Kahondo Chitumba**, do hereby declare that this dissertation is a result of my own investigation and research, except to the extent indicated in the acknowledgments, bibliography, references, and comments included in the body of the report, and that it has not been submitted in part or in full for any other degree to any other university.

..... .....

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## DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to the Almighty God, to my wife Sekai Priscilla, and my beloved children, Karen, Tawananyasha and Makatendeka.

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**ABSTRACT**

The study interrogated and analyzed key factors that contributed to a split in the Evangelical Church of Zimbabwe, examined their effects to the church, and also developed a working model which would help resolve the leadership wrangles in the church today. The study adopted the interpretivist philosophy which allowed for the adoption of a qualitative research approach. This was a case study which used an exploratory research design. Non-probability sampling procedure including purposive and snowballing sampling techniques, were used for sampling purposes while the open-ended questionnaire, interview guide and document analysis were used for data collection purposes. The data was then analyzed using thematic analysis, a qualitative method with a bit of statistics. This data was coded into themes which were then integrated with content analysis so the data could be properly analyzed. Findings suggest that the conflict in the ECZ was caused by differences in theological and doctrinal teachings, power struggles and greed among the leaders, lack of effective communication and accountability, as well as succession issues. The study also found that the ECZ-TEAM conflict was partly fueled by the unwillingness of the missionaries to surrender control of the church or hand over power to indigenous African leaders, an eyesore which degenerated into a total fiasco. However, the study further shows that the 2015 split of the ECZ was principally caused by succession issues and leadership disagreements, which were provoked by leaders taking different doctrinal viewpoints, such as the prosperity gospel and the usage of anointing oil much against the evangelical church statement of faith. This ideological division, along with power battles and a breach of the constitution of the church, shattered the church`s cohesiveness and resulted in the development of a breakaway group led by former Bishop. The research noted that disagreements within the ECZ have fragmented the congregation, lowered engagement in worship and ministry activities, and even caused the departure of certain members. In addition, the split also undermined the church`s sense of community and belonging which a healthy body of Christ should have. Findings also suggest that spiritual stagnation, broken connections, and disillusionment among members have limited the church's capacity to effectively fulfill its mandate. Therefore, the study recommends that the church should consider implementing servant leadership to guide its governance and decision-making processes and empower leaders to serve the church and community rather than their own self-interests. The study further recommends the church to embrace a more holistic approach to spiritual leadership and train leaders to acquire skills to navigate interpersonal tensions, mediate disputes, and foster reconciliation thereby transforming internal conflicts into prospects for growth, restoration, and spiritual renewal.

Keywords: Evangelical Church of Zimbabwe, Theological and doctrinal teachings, Split, Leadership wrangles

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| ACDH | - | Anglican Church Diocese of Harare |
| ACPCA | - | Anglican Church of the Province of Central Africa |
| AEC | - | African Evangelical Churches |
| AFMZ | - | The Apostolic Faith Mission in Zimbabwe |
| AOGA | - | Assemblies of God Africa |
| BUSE | - | Bindura University of Science Education |
| CC | - | Church Council |
| CAN | - | Christian Association of Nigeria |
| ECZ | - | Evangelical Church of Zimbabwe |
| GSB | - | Graduate School of Business |
| PC | - | Pastors' Council |
| MC | - | Mission Centres |
| SAM | - | Scandinavian Alliance Mission |
| TEAM | - | The Evangelical Alliance Mission |
| ZAOGA FiF | - | Zimbabwe Assemblies of God Africa - Forward-In-Faith |

# CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 INTRODUCTION

The study sought to develop a comprehensive working model for resolving leadership conflicts within contemporary church organizations and denominations with a special focus on the Evangelical Church of Zimbabwe (ECZ). This chapter presents the background information, the problem statement and the rationale for carrying out the dissertation. Furthermore, the chapter also presents objectives of the study and research questions which would guide the investigation process. Additionally, the chapter also justifies the reasons for carrying out the study and further presents a proposition for study, its research assumptions, delimitation and limitations, as well as definitions of outstanding operational terms including a dissertation outline before wrapping up with a summary.

## 1.2 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Leaders are critical for any organizational achievements or failures, whether in the private or public sectors. Therefore, leadership becomes essential, but if not handled properly it can spoil or corrupt people. Afolabi (2021) noted that leadership should serve as a rallying point and significant aspect in organizational hierarchy. Nevertheless, conflicts or wrangles among leaders abound in most organizations, in the same way it does in any settings, as people seek to position themselves strategically. Even in the church, conflict among leaders can be destructive as leaders are revered though often defied. A study by Maxwell (1993) pointed to leadership as the source of conflict in the church as everything ascends from and falls on leaders. While leadership conflicts or wrangles are destructive Lathrop (2015) understands that these conflicts are too often a part of the Christian ministry and therefore, are inevitable.

Today the church has become a battle ground or theatre of leadership conflicts due to varied factors. Fighting for the little available resources together with threats to depose others from top and strategic posts have grown prevalent and phenomenon in the contemporary church. For years now leadership wrangles in church organizations have been a persistent issue, often leading to divisions, stagnation, and a loss of credibility within both local and global religious communities (Smith, 2020). Leadership wrangles typically arise from power struggles, doctrinal disagreements, and ineffective governance systems that fail to foster transparency

and accountability (Jones and Bailey, 2019). Studies by Williams (2018) show that unresolved leadership disputes can severely hinder the church`s mission, impede its ability to serve congregations and communities effectively.

Onyima (2013) concluded that conflict has been and has become a common phenomenon in the church today with Pentecostal churches suffering the most. A study by Hollenweger (1997) showed that conflict among the Pentecostals could be traced back to 1906 when and where pastors in the Californian Church got themselves into a conflict. According to Wilfred (2011) since then the Pentecostal church has been engulfed in leadership disputes and power struggles which have stalled its numerical and spiritual.

However, unresolved church and leadership conflicts have often led to churches splitting amongst them. While there are many and different causes of splits in the church the fact that some people have moved away from Jesus Christ and captured the church for personal benefit or ends has become the major contributing factor and cause for conflict and split. Church splits in spite of cause are often catastrophic, can be distressing in addition to dismaying to Christians, as well as bring havoc to the leaders in the church especially to pastors, and ultimately bring ridicule upon the testimony of the church. Afolayan (2018) noted that the church is no longer a sacred institution as it used to be yesteryears as evidenced by the changing dynamics of the church and its public image. Thus, it is no longer discrete, where no one would wash their dirty linen in the public as it has been rare for church issues to end up in litigation and unheard of for members to revolt against their leadership. Additionally, Burgess (2016) once discussed the tension between the church`s internal struggles and its public standing, stating that the church`s dirty laundry is often aired in public.

Awojobi (2001) noted that most church conflicts are among the leadership at whatever level since these leaders are seen as God`s entrusted men and women which in other words would mean they are ordained to direct followers to observe the mission and vision of the church. As put by Afolabi (2021) the moment church leaders become subjective in handling church affairs and abuse their power and authority, conflict certainly occurs. While there are many factors contributing to conflicts in the church, leadership succession disputes together with the system of appreciating such leaders seem to engender strife in the church today (Chikwanha, 2022). To confirm that leadership wrangles are universal or everywhere a study

by Afolabi (2021) shows that the Nigerian Church of Christ has been engulfed into leadership wrangles over succession issues. The studies show that there have been many such succession conflicts as evidenced by numerous court cases due to fights over the control of assemblies between pastors and evangelists.

Historically, churches have employed various strategies to address leadership wrangles, through mediation and arbitration to doctrinal oversight by denominational authorities (Brown and Harris, 2021). However, as put by Johnson (2022), most of the approaches have failed due to their reactive nature which saw them addressing symptoms rather than the underlying causes. As a result, there remains a growing need for a more proactive and systematic model that can prevent conflicts before they escalate. Another study by Nyandiri (2020) in Kenya concluded that while the native Kenyan Christians have always looked upon their leaders for guidance in both spiritual and societal matters it seems their leaders have been affected by conflicts among themselves and lost responsibility. Nyandiri (2020) further notes that incidences of leadership conflicts and politicisation of church affairs have awakened many Kenyan Christians as to what has befallen their leaders.

In Zimbabwe several cases of leadership conflicts in the church have been recorded in recent times. Numerous church denominations, both apostolic sects, Evangelical and Pentecostals have been affected. Pastor Lee Fore reporting in the Herald of May (2020) noted that conflicts among leaders in the church have been experienced in the Johanne Marange Apostolic sect, Anglican Church of the Province of Central Africa (ACPCA) versus the Anglican Church Diocese of Harare, The Apostolic Faith Mission in Zimbabwe (AFM) and the Evangelical Church of Zimbabwe (ECZ) among others.

According to Musevenzi (2017) the conflict in the Anglican Church resulted from disputes over leadership differences on issues to do with homosexuality and same sex marriages apart from its handling of cases of sexual abuse and misconduct by church leaders, while the conflict in the AFM in Zimbabwe church centred on disputed elections and appreciation of leaders among other things. Musevenzi (2017) noted that the conflict in the Johane Marange sect was caused by differences of the church`s doctrine and belief system. For example, the church`s emphasis on faith healing has led to numerous preventable deaths and deaths of pregnant mothers due to lack of knowledge of child diseases and vaccination. In addition, the church`s teachings on polygamy and the subordinate role of women have been criticized for

perpetuating gender inequality and increased the risk of HIV/AIDS among women in the sect. Numerous churches both main line, either Protestant Evangelicals or Pentecostal church have been engulfed in conflicts of some sort in one way or the other. Thus, church conflicts in Zimbabwe are complex and multifaceted which means they affect various denominations and involve doctrinal, governance, leadership and social justice issues.

Among the numerous causes of wrangles or disputes in the church, Afolabi (2021) concludes that leadership wrangles can be a result of clash of interests among individual church members. According to Adetunji (2010) sometimes conflicts often occur as an expression of dissatisfaction by congregants with the conduct or proposed church programmes. Besides the different factors leading to leadership conflicts in the church Miller (1978) noted that some conflicts are influenced by the governance system of a particular church organization. The system would also provide how the wrangles could be resolved. Bickwell (2015), Gibbs (2017) and Hart (2018) concurred that the three distinct systems of governance in the church include Episcopalism, in which the church government primarily resides in the office of the bishop, and Congregational system, seen as being more democratic in which the congregation determines church policy and practices, as well as the Presbyterianism which, according to Miller (1978) is some sort of republican or representative democracy where local churches are represented at the Presbytery meetings.

However, the Evangelical Church of Zimbabwe which forms part of this study adopted a Hybrid system which includes the three systems (ECZ Constitution, 2015). To be precise, the ECZ is evangelical. While the church adopted a Hybrid system of governance it seems the majority of its membership including some of those in leadership think they are congregational. When the Church, then under the stewardship of Reverend Ernest Nyamhondoro (now Retired) sought to amend the Church Constitution it appears the Constitutional Amendment team did not amend the sacred document but rather formed a new church (ECZ Constitution, 2015). If ever the constitution was amended then just a few clauses were looked into. However, there is a major distinction between the Old and the New Constitution of the ECZ in terms of thrust and focus.

The ECZ was founded by the then Scandinavian Alliance Mission (SAM) which later transformed to The Evangelical Alliance Mission (TEAM) after their arrival in then Southern Rhodesia, now Zimbabwe in the early 1940s (Powell Hawkins, 2005). According to Powell

Hawkins (2005) when TEAM arrived in Zimbabwe they were from Manzini now Eswatini on their way to Portuguese East Africa, now Mozambique, but they were denied visas by the government of the day. However, TEAM was allowed to work in Zimbabwe by then Rhodesian government. Powell Hawkins noted that the Portuguese Roman Catholic Church dominated the Christian space and so did not want any Protestant Churches or Missionary groups in the Portuguese colony.

TEAM then opened Mission Centres (MCs) in the Zambezi valley, largely in Mashonaland Central and Mashonaland West Provinces. They established Msengezi Mission in 1942 and Hunyani Mission at Chikafa in Mbire district in 1948 before opening Kapfunde in Hurungwe and Hatfield (Harare) in 1950. In Mt Darwin, TEAM opened Chironga Mission in 1954 and later the popular Karanda Mission Hospital in 1961 (Powell Hawkins, 2005). They also acquired Mavuradonha Mission from the Zambezi Alliance Mission when the missionaries were now moving to Malawi. TEAM also opened Rusambo Mission (Mahutwe Home Craft Centre) in Rushinga. At each of the MCs TEAM would open a clinic, a school and build a church later. During all these years there was no established church until the 1960s and 70s when the idea to form a denomination was mooted. TEAM did not want denominationalism. One of the major reasons why TEAM was reluctant to form a denomination is that the group was made up of missionaries from different church denominations as they came from different home countries. Some of the missionaries were Baptists, Presbyterians, Methodists and United Methodists with some from the Evangelical Lutheran Church and the Dutch Reformed Church (Powell Hawkins, 2005). This made their group complex to the extent that it was difficult to make such important and critical decisions. In other words the majority of them were Ecclesiological missionaries. TEAM successfully opened their first Bible Training school at Kapfunde which would later relocate to Chinhoyi.

The Evangelical Church was then formed following a resolution to unite all the mission centres under one umbrella body (denomination). The first church council of the church, the Evangelical Church of Rhodesia (ECR) now ECZ was established in 1974 at Karanda Mission in Mt Darwin. The Council comprised members from the TEAM and the mission groups scattered in the country, and was headed by the late Rev Kakunguwo. However, the majority of the mission centres were deserted, abandoned and destroyed during the liberation war. During those years the church and TEAM worked together to advance the Kingdom of God. At Independence missions like Karanda hospital and Mavuradonha School were

reopened while the majority of them were reopened by local authorities and have remained under rural district councils (RDCs) to this day. The take over by councils was necessitated by the war of liberation that destroyed some of these properties which resulted in majority of them being abandoned.

1n 1990 a conflict arose between the ECZ and The Evangelical Alliance Mission (TEAM) after a leadership wrangle in which the white dominated TEAM board wanted to continue controlling the church led by the black Africans because they did not want to be led by blacks. According to the former Bishop of the ECZ, Retired Bishop Rev Nyamhondoro, what happened in 1990 was an organisational deadlock between two organisations that wanted to merge. Although the ECZ was started by TEAM the two organisations remained and were separate. At the formation of the ECZ by TEAM the missionaries came from different church denominations so it became difficult for them to remain tied to the ECZ. The conflict between TEAM and the ECZ led to the formation of the defunct Fellowship Church which was formed by members from the ECZ who sympathised with TEAM missionaries. However, in 2006 following an mediation by a group of Old missionaries from the USA, TEAM headquarters, the church and TEAM apologised to each other and came back to good terms but could not merge because of the structure of TEAM. However, room was created for the two organisations to work together in ministry.

In 2015 the church (ECZ) was again confronted by another conflict, this time from within its set up. There arose a succession dispute among leaders which again tore the church apart. Then Bishop of the day did not want to leave office even after his term of office had expired. According to the ECZ Constitution the Bishop`s term of office is limited to five years but can be extended to another five year term if re-elected. However, it does not provide for a third term. That being the case then Bishop had only completed one term but was not eligible for another term because he did not have a degree, one of the qualifications and his age had surpassed the age limit as provided in the Church Constitution. The then Bishop had been smuggled into office knowing well that he did not have the required qualification, an issue which the Church lawyer later advised should not be repeated after then losing candidate had raised alarm. ECZ Constitution (2015), Article V111 Section A (v) provides that the Bishop must be educated with at least a first degree in theology. However, in special cases the AGC may resolve to appoint a Bishop with a qualification deemed equivalent. This did not then

apply. The refusal to leave office degenerated into courts after a church member approached the High Court seeking recourse.

According to Article V111 Section C (f) and (g) of the Constitution of the ECZ (2015) the election of a new bishop is triggered by the sitting bishop six months before the expiring of his term of office which then bishop did. In late 2014 the High Court ruled that then Bishop`s term of office had expired so he was illegitimate therefore, he was ordered to pave way for his vice to occupy the office and lead the election of a new bishop. Following the judgment, then Bishop left office and set up a new Church Council against the provisions of the constitution thereby creating a schism. This resulted in litigation.

In March 2015 a new Bishop of the Evangelical Church of Zimbabwe was elected but then bishop challenged the process which resulted in a series of court cases until 2020 when it was ruled that Makachi (then Bishop) and 7 others had ceased to be members of the ECZ (High Court of Zimbabwe, 2020). However, even after losing at the High Court the breakaway appealed to the Supreme Court (SC), which they still lost in 2022 when the Supreme Court upheld the High Court judgment, the conflict continues to this day. The breakaway group is now fighting to retain some of the assets especially buildings which they were ordered to surrender and vacate.

### 1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Against the background in the preceding section the Courts made their decision but the problem continues as the two groups continue to fight for control of properties even after court judgment. The breakaway group continues to occupy the properties which they were ordered to surrender. Such leadership conflicts within churches can significantly impact on the growth of the church and hinder the ability to fulfill the church`s intended mission. While leadership wrangles have become a common feature in the universal church it seems such wrangles have had dire consequences including church splits among others. Many contemporary churches have experienced and continue to experience significant conflicts among their leaders due to differing visions, power struggles, differences in doctrinal and theological teachings, greedy and governance related issues. In recent times Zimbabwe has also witnessed some church denominations splitting due to conflicts among leaders. Some of these include the Assemblies of God Church (AOG) conflict which led to the formation of

ZAOGA FIF and Glad Tidings, the Anglican Church which saw a split of the Diocese of Harare from the Anglican Church Province of Central Africa while the Apostolic Faith Mission is another casualty of recent past leadership wrangles. The Evangelical Church of Zimbabwe (ECZ) has not been spared as the church suffered these splits on two occasions. Conflicts among church leaders not only disrupt church operations, but also affect congregational unity, impede spiritual growth and compromise the mission and testimony of the church. However, despite available literature on organizational leadership and conflict resolution or management it seems there still remains a lack of practical, context-specific models tailored to the unique dynamics of the contemporary church. This understanding is motivated by the fact that current approaches often overlook cultural, spiritual and relational aspects inherent to church leadership which has led to ineffective resolution and management strategies. Therefore, the absence of a comprehensive framework for managing and resolving these conflicts continue to affect the growth and efficacy of the church. Despite existing efforts which have failed in some way the study sought to build a working model that would consider the theological, cultural, and organisational dimensions of contemporary churches to effectively resolve leadership wrangles. This model would serve as a resource for conflict prevention, management and resolution among church leaders, and most particularly in the Evangelical Church of Zimbabwe.

## 1.4 THE MAIN AIM

The major or main aim o the study is to draw up or propose a framework or working model that will be adopted and implemented in resolving church leadership conflicts or wrangles.

## 1.5 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

- To interrogate key factors that led to a split in the Evangelical Church of Zimbabwe.
- To examine the effects of splits in the church.
- To propose a working model that will help resolve conflicts among church leaders.

## 1.6 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- What factors have led to a split in the Evangelical Church of Zimbabwe?
- What are the effects of the split in the church?
- What model can work towards resolving conflicts among church leaders?

## 1.7 PROPOSITION

Effective resolution of leadership wrangles within the church today is contingent upon the implementation of a biblically grounded sound, transparent, and participatory leadership model which fosters open communication, accountability, respect and collective decision-making among church leadership and congregants.

## 1.8 ASSUMPTIONS OF THE STUDY

The study assumed that;

- Leadership wrangles are a common feature in the contemporary church.
- The majority of evangelical churches have suffered splits in one way or the other.
- Leadership wrangles destroy the church fabric and usually leads to splits.
- The researcher assumed that the research process will be conducted in an ethical and unbiased manner while the data to be collected shall be accurate and reliable.

## 1.9 JUSTIFICATION OF THE STUDY

Empirical literature confirms the availability of limited studies or scholarly work on the specific reasons why leaders fight in the church, and the challenges thereof. Considering the prevalence of wrangles among leaders in religious institutions it is imperative to explore reasons for continued fights in the body of Christ and understand these conflicts as they hinder the mission and unity of the church at all levels. Leadership conflicts have an impact on congregational health which also promotes a health communication in the church. A clear model for conflict resolution will foster unity, a healthier environment, enhance fellowship and spiritual growth in the church. It is imperative to conduct this study as it aligns with biblical teachings whilst also serving a practical application for these principles, and providing an embodiment of these values to the church leadership. The findings will also enhance leadership effectiveness and encourage long-term sustainability of church programmes and this study will definitely contribute to the existing body of knowledge and materials that other churches can learn from and implement. Finally, the development of a working model for conflict resolution can encourage a culture where differing opinions are respected and valued thereby fostering an environment where church leaders and their congregants can engage in healthier dialogues which will improve the overall church dynamics and relationships. However, carrying out this study was not only timely and

necessary, but also integral to the development of a healthy and lively church with a focus on missions.

## 1.10 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The current study mainly sought to develop a conflict resolution model by developing a framework that would be useful to the leaders in the Evangelical Church.

## 1.11 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Available literature confirms the availability of a strong connection among leadership conflicts leading to splits in the contemporary church. This study is three-fold in terms of scientific relevance. Firstly, the study would benefit Evangelical Christians and their leadership in Zimbabwe to understand the impact of conflict in the church on the growth of Evangelical churches in the country and probably devise ways to address the challenges. In addition, this will further allow members to appreciate the impact of conflicts on the growth and development of the church. Essentially, this will show how harmonious it is for Evangelical Christians to be together in peace and love. Key stakeholders to benefit from this study could include the Churches fraternal, ECZ, the researcher, and the University. This research will be able to help resolve disputes among members and develop the functioning of the body of Christ as well as add to the existing body of knowledge on wrangles among leaders and conflict resolution within religious institutions, especially, the church. However, conducting a study on a working model for resolving leadership conflicts in the contemporary church could pose challenges on theory and its relevance. Additionally, this study can also illuminate gaps in current leadership practices. Thus, according to Chandra and Harris (2021) the significance of this study extends across the church fraternal, researchers, and the academia among others.

### 1.11.1 Significance to the church fraternal (Church community)

The results from this study will help enhance conflict resolution strategies among different church leadership. While the primary importance of this research to the church community lies on the availability of effective conflict resolution strategies, the identification and implementation of a working model for conflict resolution will help church leaders resolve conflicts in a constructive manner by presenting communication and dialogue among them.

Such a move will help and lead to healthier congregational dynamics and improve relationships among members.

### 1.11.2 Significance to the researcher

The study will also benefit the researcher through provision of a clear appreciation of the complex relationships between leadership wrangles and church splits, which could inform future research in the subject area. In addition, researcher could also gain recognition in the field of study which could also lead to career advancement opportunities. The study will further provide researcher with the opportunity to develop knowledge in relation to conducting research, data analysis and report writing.

### 1.11.3 Significance to the sponsoring institution and the academia

While the study was focused on closing the literature gap on building a model that will help resolve leadership wrangles in the church the results or findings may be used as a reference material for future academic work and research. Additionally, by contributing to the existing body of knowledge on the impact of conflict to the contemporary church the study will be relevant to the academia. The Graduate School of Business (GSB) at Bindura University of Science Education (BUSE) which sponsored and provided support towards the research is set to benefit in different ways. Research findings have the potential to enhance the reputation of the institution as a leader in the field of organizational psychology and the study could attract more students to the institution, as it demonstrates a commitment to practical research that could lead to real-world applications. In addition, the study could also generate new opportunities for collaborative efforts with other universities or tertiary organizations of higher learning thereby attracting additional funding for future studies in related subjects.

## 1.12 DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This section of the study set and defined the research`s boundaries and involved identification of the exact population, variables, and time period that would be taken in the research process (Creswell, 2015). The research was carried out within the ECZ which now has over 74 assemblies following the split that occurred in 2015. The study interrogated the leadership conflicts in the Evangelical Church of Zimbabwe. Therefore, addressing church leadership conflicts is critical for the growth of the church in achieving its mission.

## 1.13 LIMITATIONS TO THE STUDY

Limitations refer to factors that may affect the ability to draw meaningful conclusions from the findings (Silverman, 2016). The study was limited to a larger extent by the time factor as researcher was left with very little of it after adopting a new topic. In this study limitations included financial constraints, the small sample size and attitude of participants or unwillingness of the members to participate in fear of victimization by the church leadership. To counter time limitations researcher engaged the services of two research assistants in data collection and also motivated members so they could willingly participate. The study was also be limited by the information gathered as the data given by some respondents was often incomplete and inaccurate. However, researcher engaged the church leadership so they could allow their members to openly participate. The unavailability of data on the website and archives was also an impediment. The unwillingness or reluctance by some members to participate in the study was also a limitation but after encouragement they were motivated to contribute. In addition, the study was also constrained by the attitude of society towards research as some participants did not even show any concern or interest in responding.

## 1.14 DEFINITION OF TERMS

### 1.14.1 Leadership

Leadership is the ability to influence followers or others to perform a given task. In other words leadership has to do with power and influence. According to Northouse (2018) leadership is the process of influencing and guiding others to achieve specific goals and objectives. It also involves the ability to inspire and motivate others, facilitate collaboration and foster an environment conducive to growth and productivity. However, leadership is not solely about decision-making or issuance of directives, but encompasses a range of behaviours and skills that allow the leaders to connect with their followers and create a shared vision (Robinson, 2019).

### 1.14.2 Leadership wrangle

According to Smith (2020) leadership wrangles refer to conflicts or power structures that occur among church leaders, often centred on authority, governance, decision-making, or doctrinal differences. Leadership wrangles can lead to divisions within the church and negatively impact its mission and operations.

### 1.14.3 Conflict resolution

According to Johnson (2022) conflict resolution relates to the process of addressing wrangles through communication, negotiation, mediation, or other techniques designed to achieve reconciliation and restore relationships. However, in the church this involves reconciling differences among members while upholding Christian values.

### 1.14.4 Church governance

According to Brown and Harris (2021) church governance refers to the structure and system through which a church is managed and led, including leadership roles, decision-making processes, and policies. Effective governance is crucial for preventing leadership conflicts and ensuring accountability.

### 1.14.5 Doctrinal disagreements

These relate to conflicts that arise within a church due to differing interpretations of religious doctrine, theology, or scriptural teachings (Williams, 2020). Such disagreements often fuel leadership wrangles when leaders or factions within a church hold opposing views on core church issues.

### 1.14.6 Power dynamics

According to Jones and Bailey (2019) power dynamics are simply the way authority could be distributed and implemented within an organization, including authority, influence, and decision-making roles. In church leadership, imbalances in power dynamics can lead to disputes over control and governance.

### 1.14.7 Theological grounded solutions

These are approaches to resolving conflicts that are based on Christian principles and biblical teachings, ensuring that the methods used are in line with the spiritual values and mission of the church (Miller, 2020).

## 1.15 DISSERTATION STRUCTURE

The study is structured into 5 chapters with each chapter presenting a different stage in the built up to the complete dissertation document. Thus, this section of the study presents and lays out the basic structure for a dissertation on a working model toward resolving leadership

wrangles in the contemporary church with a focus on the Evangelical Church of Zimbabwe. The following layout was presented according to chapters.

### 1.15.1 Chapter One

This chapter introduced the research, presented background information, statement of the problem, the research objectives, and questions (sub problems), or proposition and assumptions to the process in motion and continues to present delimitations and limitations as well as definition of terms among other aspects. The chapter further presented the structure of the dissertation before wrapping up with a chapter summary. In other words, this provided an overview of this research.

### 1.15.2 Chapter Two

This section of the dissertation dwelt on and reviewed literature related to the subject on leadership wrangles and conflicts in the church. In other words, chapter two constructed the theoretical and conceptual frameworks that formed the foundational basis for the analysis of data throughout the study.

### 1.15.3 Chapter Three

This chapter presented the methodologies including the philosophy, research design and strategy as well as research sampling methods and techniques, data collection and analysis techniques. In this section of the study the researcher focused on the approach used, either qualitative or quantitative. Before closing the chapter researcher also highlighted how data would be presented, interpreted and analyzed before presenting ethical considerations and a chapter summary.

### 1.15.4 Chapter Four

This section of the study presented findings, analysis and discussion of the study, interpreted and analyzed the results. In doing so, researcher had to compare with results from previous studies as highlighted in the literature view in chapter two. This chapter further discussed the implications of research results, on theory and practice, and would also suggest directions for future studies.

### 1.15.5 Chapter Five

Finally, chapter five summarized the whole study, and findings, made conclusions that researcher drew from the study and recommendations for future purposes. Overall, chapter five constructed the summary and conclusion of the study.

## 1.16 CHAPTER SUMMARY

Chapter one marked the beginning of the study and presented background information, and sought to establish the rationale for carrying out this study. The chapter also provided the problem statement including research objectives and the research question which would guide the research process. In addition, the chapter laid the foundation for an interrogation of some of the challenges and effects of leadership wrangles in the Evangelical Church of Zimbabwe and how they could be resolved or managed.

# CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

## 2.1 INTRODUCTION

This section of the study presented and reviewed literature related to the subject. Furthermore, the chapter presented how the systems theory can influence leadership wrangles and conflict resolution in the church, and elaborated how the conceptual framework would help understand the subject under study. In addition, this chapter reviewed literature on conflicts among leaders in the contemporary church, religious organizational splits and their effects on the growth of the church in Zimbabwe both numerically and spiritually. The contemporary church has become a battle field which has seen mostly the majority of churches experiencing conflicts with some splitting by the end of the day. The research questions and objective would guide the review of related literature.

## 2.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In the context of this research a framework is a set of ideas that can be used to guide research analysis. For example, in the context of a thesis this might be something like Porter`s Framework, which is widely used to analyze the competitive environment of an industry (Porter, 1980). There are numerous theoretical frameworks that could be applied to a study on leadership wrangles and conflict resolution or management. These could include the transformational theory which suggests that followers are inspired and motivated by their leaders towards achievement of set organizational goals through the creation of a shared dream, and the promotion and development of individuals (Northouse, 2016). However, this study was informed by the systems theory.

### 2.2.1 Systems theory

One of the theoretical frameworks that inform leadership conflicts and conflict resolution in the church is the systems theory which is particularly useful for understanding how conflicts arise and how they can be resolved within organizations, including religious institutions. According to Friedman (1985), Steinke (2006) the systems theory presents an all-inclusive model for dealing with and or addressing church conflicts. This theory posits that organisations like churches function as complex systems where each part is interconnected and changes in one part of the system can influence the whole organisation. According to Senge (1990) the systems theory helps to understand the intricacies of leadership conflicts as

well as conflict resolution methods while emphasizing the interdependence of various components within a system, and highlights how these interactions can lead to conflicts and the potential for resolution.

In the church set up it means that wrangles among leaders often arise not just from individual disagreements but from broader systemic issues such as governance structures, communication patterns, theological differences and community dynamics among others. By examining the interconnectedness of individuals, groups and subsystems within the church leaders can identify and address underlying issues driving conflicts. According to Steinke (2006) the church is a multifaceted organism whose operations affect the whole organization. Friedman (1985) reiterated that some of the key ideas fundamental to the framework are that it seeks to balance although it can resist change while at the same time conflicts are able to create self-reinforcing cycles (Heifetz and Linsky, 2002).

## 2.3 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The general conceptual framework to structure a study and identify key variables comes from decades of social science research. A conceptual framework is a broad sketch of the link between the many variables in the investigation. Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) noted that an abstract depicts the variables aimed at emphasizing their connection between them. However, since there is no relationship being sought in this study the most important aspects to be highlighted included resolving leadership wrangles and the issue of evangelical churches. Additionally, leadership dynamics, leadership cohesion, congregational stability and spiritual development are among other components that can guide effective leadership conflict resolution in evangelical churches. These components emanated from theoretical and empirical research on leadership wrangles in the church and conflict resolution methods.

### 2.3.1 Resolving leadership Wrangles

Resolving leadership wrangles in the contemporary church is an essential aspect of maintaining unity and effectiveness within the congregation. According to Kouzes and Posner (2017) leadership wrangles refer to conflicts or power struggles among leaders within organizations, often stemming from differences in vision, values, or leadership styles. As noted by Criswell and Martin (2018) leadership wrangles usually describe the inevitable balancing act where leaders steer their respective organizations through the twists and turns

of competing agendas. These wrangles or conflicts among leaders in the church arise due to varied reasons which might include but not limited to differing visions, leadership styles, and interpersonal tensions among church leaders. However, addressing these conflicts require a multifaceted approach that incorporates conflict resolution strategies, effective communication, and a clear understanding of the church`s mission and values. Contemporary churches can benefit from distributed leadership models that promote shared responsibilities and accountability (Sullins, 2019). Sullins (2019) also argued that leadership are less likely to engage in power struggles and more likely to work together if they can foster a collaborative environment in the organization.

Therefore, the procedures undertaken towards peaceful resolution of disputes is what is called conflict resolution. The process of resolving these conflicts covers a range of strategies whose aim is to address disputes and disagreements, whether they arise in interpersonal relationships, organizations, and or international relations. Conflict resolution often involves mediation, negotiation, or arbitration with the aim of achieving a mutually acceptable outcome (Fry., Ury and Patton, 2011). It is important in that it fosters cooperation, enhances communication and promotes understanding among conflicting parties, ultimately, leading to improved relationships and organizational effectiveness. Additionally, effective conflict resolution is essential for maintaining harmony and productivity in various contexts.

Cameron and Quinn (2011) reiterated that leadership in the church contexts is usually influenced by diverse factors including organisational structure, spiritual beliefs, and interpersonal relationships. Understanding these dynamics helps to identify sources of conflict, such as power struggles, differing visions, and communication breakdowns. As put by Whetten and Cameron (2016) effective communication among leadership is crucial in resolving conflicts in the church. In addition, there is need to consider shared vision and core values which would act as guiding principles for church leaders while establishing common goals to help align interests and foster unity among leaders (Senge, 2006). Leaders can also utilize participatory approaches to create shared vision to promote ownership within the congregation. The conceptual framework also considered emphasising spiritual formation and leadership development which would foster resilience and maturity among church leaders to equip them manage conflicts effectively.

However, unresolved conflicts have often been disastrous and lead to reduced morale, reduced efficiency, thereby increasing return in organizational settings (De Dreu and Weingart, 2003). Over and above all conflict resolution strategies such as mediation, negotiation and consensus-building can help in addressing leadership wrangles in the church (Fisher ad Ury, 2011). These approaches should consider the church community values and beliefs, and promote a collaborative rather than adversarial environment.

### 2.3.2 Evangelical churches

Noll (2011) understands that evangelical churches are Protestant churches whose Christianity is characterized by their emphasis on the authority of the Bible, acceptance of Jesus Christ, including importance placed on sharing the word of God or the Christian faith through evangelism. Evangelical churches prioritize a personal relationship with Jesus Christ and uphold beliefs about salvation through faith alone and they include a diverse range of denominations and movements (Lindblad, 2018). Evangelical churches can play a significant role in resolving leadership conflicts due to their community-orientation nature and potential for influential networks. These churches have the potential to promote collaborative leadership models which would help resolve wrangles or conflicts in the church and they also have the potential to develop clear governance and accountability structures within the church which would prevent misunderstandings and the potential for conflicts. According to Davis (2018) one way evangelical churches can participate in conflict resolution is by creating an environment where open, and honest dialogue which can help address issues before they escalate into serious conflicts.

### 2.3.3 Leadership cohesion

Leadership conflicts in church contexts are influenced by diverse factors which include organizational structure, spiritual beliefs and interpersonal relationships. As noted by Cameron and Quinn (2011) the identification of these dynamics helps to identify sources of conflict which might help bring cohesion among the leaders. According to Cox and Tippett (2020) leadership cohesion refers to the degree of unity, cooperation, and collective commitment among leaders within an organization or a team. Leadership cohesion also involves the alignment of leaders' values, goals, and actions to achieve a shared vision (Kouzes and Posner, 2017).

**The Conceptual framework**

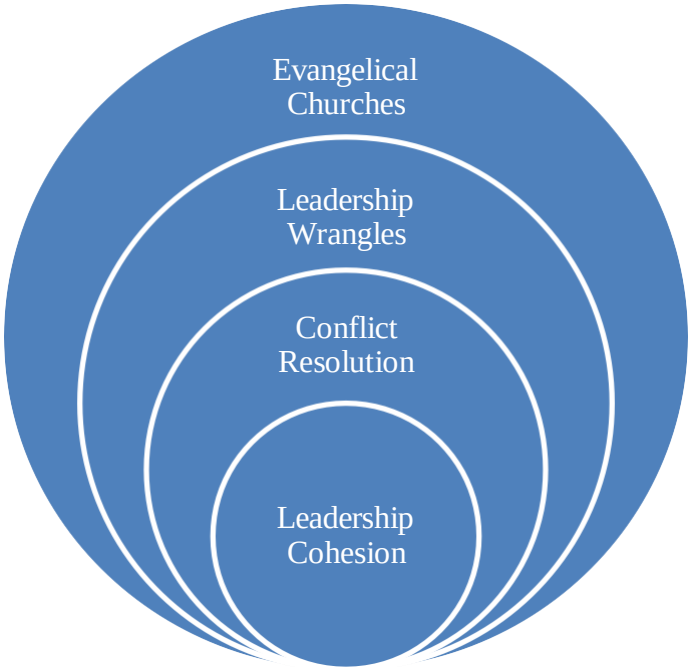



***Figure 2.1 The conceptual framework for the study***

***(Source: Author, 2024)***

The diagram is used to show overlapping relationships and is considered a good choice for emphasizing growth or gradation. The framework presented or illustrated the intention of the church as resolving conflict among leadership which would manifest through leadership cohesion. The outer circle represents evangelical churches followed by their leadership while the third circle revolves around conflict resolution leading to leadership cohesion as the intended objective. Conflicts among leaders can take any form and hence their resolution would require an appropriate procedure bearing in mind that they are inevitable.

## 2.4 FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO CHURCH SPLITS

Ultimately, if church conflicts are not managed or properly resolved the division will widen which would result in a split. Church Splits in the contemporary church have been attributed to numerous factors depending on the level and type of conflict. A study by Heifetz and Linsky (2002) observed that most conflicts which have resulted in splitting churches could be attributed to unaddressed anxiety and stress, resistance to change due to fear, lack of trust among members in the church and leaders, and unclear expectations as a result of ambiguity in roles and responsibilities.

A recent study by Barrier (2024) shows that church split is when two or more groups of people disagree about something in a church and the disagreement becomes so divisive that one of the groups leaves the church. At this stage none of them is either right or wrong. In most cases churches split due to power struggle and greedy within the church that involves elders, deacons and pastors, and church members who sow seeds of discord, financial problems, and doctrinal issues among others. These splits do not demonstrate the love of Christ, but are a horrible and a bad testimony to the mission of the church and do not send a Christian message to an unbelieving community (Barrier, 2024). However, the church is to be unified, and in harmony with one another.

### 2.4.1 History of Church Conflicts and Church Splits

Discussion on causes of divisions of the early church and subsequent schisms should centre on key factors that include theological differences, political influences, cultural diversities and ecclesiastical disputes. Gonzalez (2010) identified 4$^{th}$ Century controversies which questioned the divinity of Christ, whether Jesus was fully divine, human or a combination of both allegedly contributed to significant conflicts leading to the formation of various sects. This also included the Nicene Creed (Council of Nicaea) which further exacerbated the divisions. In addition, language differences between the Latino and the Greek continued these misunderstandings while misinterpretations of theological concepts and doctrines also contributed to these divisions and schisms (Gonzalez (2010).

However, the primary cause of the Nicene Creed was the need to address and unify the various theological disputes among early Christians, particularly, those regarding the nature of Christ and His relationship to God the Father (Gonzalez, 2010). Therefore, conflict in the early church mostly arose over a litany of issues apart from differences in theological and doctrinal understandings, including the Arian controversy of the 14$^{th}$ Century where debates over the nature and divinity of Christ led to the Nicene Creed (325CE). However, Bruce (1990) noted that early church conflicts were caused by different factors such as Gnosticism which challenged the orthodox teachings and Arianism of 325AD including Monarchianism which related to the nature of God, specifically, the relationship between God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

As recounted by Meyendorff (1990), the long standing religious, cultural and political differences all culminated in the formal split between the church from Rome and the Eastern

Orthodox Church. Thus, the history of conflict in the early church including leadership wrangles is marked by developments and events that shaped the Christian faith. One such pivotal moment was the Great Schism of 1054 which led to the major and historic split between the Western Church and the Eastern Church. This incident was characterized by the excommunication of the Patriarch of Constantinople by Pope Leo IX due to various ecclesiastical responses while Cerularius in turn excommunicated papal representatives to solidify the divide (Schroeder, 2004). This formally established the distinction between the Roman Catholic Church in the West and the Eastern Orthodox Church in the East, and has had profound implications in the long-term for Christianity and the European culture.

Mastnak (2002) noted that by the 11th Century various theological, political and cultural disputes had been brewing between these two branches. Key issues of the time included the authority of the Pope, the rephrasing of the Nicene Creed and different practices involving the use of leavened versus unleavened bread in the Eucharist. The Schism was further exacerbated by political tensions and growing power of the Papacy and the influence of the Byzartine Empire (Mastnak, 2002). Therefore, political and ecclesiastical power struggles largely contributed to leadership wrangles and ultimately divided and split the early church (Gonzalez (2010). On the other hand conflict among the leaders arose as the Bishop of Rome (the Pope) began asserting supremacy over all other bishops but, the Orthodox Church based in Constantinople could not yield to the Pope`s authority which led to the conflict over ecclesiastical hierarchy. Debate over the use of religious icons in worship, also created leadership conflicts as those in the West Church venerated these icons while those in East were critical about their use.

According to Kasper (2013) ecumenical movements resulted from numerous factors which included historical context in which these movements were in response to divisions within the church, particularly, following the Reformation and the subsequent fragmentation of the church. Spiritual and theological imperatives which recognized the growing recognition of the need for unity among Christians based on the call of Christ for His followers to be one also contributed to these movements which subsequently tore the church apart. In addition, cultural and social factors relating to increasing globalization of society which fostered dialogue and understanding among different Christian traditions also contributed to ecumenical movements (Kasper, 2013). Furthermore, Kasper noted that ecumenical movements were also caused by responses to modern challenges and dialogue including

relationships which involved initiatives encouraging dialogue among different denominations being instrumental in building relationships and fostering mutual understanding. Thus, these movements both responded to historical and proactive efforts toward realizing the unity that Christians believe is essential in the life of the church.

### 2.4.2 Causes of Leadership Wrangles in the Church

A study by Kuwa (2017) shows that conflict among leadership in the church is global and cannot be phenomenal to one area. The Americas, Africa and the Far East, even Asia have had their fair share of church conflict. According to Fisher (1996) being a Christian pastor in the church is no longer as it used to be yester years due to the gradual and often radical shift in culture. Things have changed in America as evidenced by numerous shifts in their culture which has left the church deeply affected. As Sande (2004) concluded, many good pastors have left ministry due to this situation which has weakened thousands of churches and exposed the church to spiritual assault by the devil. According to Kuwa (2017) the lack of effective or good leadership has affected the church and seen a multiplication in denominational factions, a decline in evangelism, unrestrained divorces, discipleship losing direction and missionaries being forgotten, with some leaving their mission fields due to various reasons. While people expect the church to exhibit and uphold morality Nyandiri (2020) noted that the credibility of the church is collapsing gradually as conflict continues to unfold in recent years. For example, the state of the church in Kenya is deplorable and in crisis (Otieno, 2019).

Thiga., Pam and Nkansah-Obrempong (2021) explored the implications of conflict within the Pentecostal church in Kenya, highlighting how such conflicts have led to divisions among congregants, strained leadership, and negatively affected the church`s mission and outreach efforts. They argue that internal conflicts have often arisen from differences in theological interpretations, governance issues, and socio-political factors, which in turn have hindered the church`s ability to foster community and meet their spiritual needs effectively.

### 2.4.3 Conflicts in the Church today

Church conflicts are inevitable although people still regard the church as a sanctuary of peace where recourse is sought and conflicts can be mediated and resolved or managed. Lathrop (2015) contends that the presence of conflicts in the church is even confirmed by scripture as this could be for the good reasons although in most cases they are for bad reasons. Reading

from the New Testament simply tells that the early church experienced conflicts of different kinds among its own members. In addition Lathrop (2011) underscored that church conflicts are inevitable and exist everywhere. Usually, church conflicts are known to be counterproductive and very painful as they bring disunity and destroy relationships although; at some point the same conflicts could be positive and bring good results for the church.

Among the several factors that cause church conflicts anxiety is also to consider and has resulted in some ministers being forced to resign from service in mostly immigrant churches (Son, 2019). A study by Beta (2015) on why African Independent Churches (AICs) have suffered splits concluded that most of the splits are caused by power hungry, greedy, doctrinal differences and false prophecies at most. However, for Sobrino (1983) conflict should be understood as something that could endanger or destroy the Church which meant conflicts could be negative and harmful. On the other hand Sobrino also argued that the same conflict can also be good if it sought to resolve some problems within the church. In addition, the gospel can also divides the Church to some extent.

According to McGrath (2013) disagreements over theological doctrine have also become one of the major and primary factors leading conflict in the contemporary church. These doctrinal divisions include the divinity of Christ and the authority of scripture that have led to significant schisms between Eastern Orthodox and Roman Catholicism (McGrath, 2013). Dorrien (2006) also contributed to the debate on differences over persistent theological interpretations thought to have contributed to conflicts which have divided churches over issues like biblical inerrancy and the nature of salvation. Such differences have often led to schisms between conservative and liberal branches of denominations.

In addition to theological differences McGrath (2013) also pointed out that ecclesiological disputes have also contributed to church conflicts. Ecclesiological disputes include conflicts over church governance systems, authority and the church structure. Furthermore, McGrath also cited cultural and social influences, reform movement and scriptural interpretation as significant factors that have led to conflicts in the church over the years. A contribution by Carroll and Roof (2002) to the debate on cultural shifts and adaptation shows that churches often face internal conflicts when trying to adapt to broader cultural changes. This is evident when younger congregants push for contemporary styles of worship or want to integrate technology in a setup where more conservative or traditional members would resist such

changes which would create conflict. McGrath (2013) also attributed the increase in church conflicts to reform movements which have throughout history been aimed at perceived corruption or doctrinal error within the church. These movements have divided and split the church as manifest in the Protestant Reformation.

Further studies by Heifetz and Linsky (2002) suggest that conflicts in the church are caused by divergences in values, beliefs including goals among church members, competition for influence, control and decision-making authority, communication breakdowns involving poor communication, misunderstandings and lack of transparency, including differences on theological doctrinal interpretations, ministry as well as the direction of the church. In addition, Heifetz and Linsky (2002) attributed these conflicts to leadership styles relating to leader`s approach to issues. In recent times the church has been engulfed into a complex matter involving debates on LGBTQ+. According to Tooley (2018) disagreements over these social and ethical issues such as same-sex marriages, gender roles in ministry and abortion have become increasingly a source of conflict and division in the contemporary church. Several church denominations have been divided and split due to differing perspectives about LGBTQ+ issues.

Another complex factor contributing to church conflict and split today relates to leadership and governance systems or structures. Barentsen (2016) noted that many conflicts in the church today have resulted from disagreements over leadership styles and governance structures and systems, usually disputes between congregational and hierarchical forms of church governance. Usually, there are three commonly known church governance systems namely, Congregational, Episcopal and Presbyterianism. In view of these systems leaders are embroidered in conflicts which often reflect deeper issues of power and authority within the church, particularly where there are unclear leadership roles and responsibilities, and decisions. In relation to leadership and governance disputes Stark and Finke (2000) highlighted the complexities of economic and financial stress as contributors to conflicts within churches which usually manifest as congregants or leaders disagree on the church`s priorities in terms of mission and outreach thereby exacerbating tensions. Stark and Finke also argued that financial stress often results from reduced membership as many churches struggle to maintain operational costs. However, personal disagreements often rooted in personal clashes, communication breakdowns, or unresolved past grievances among leaders or members have often escalated into organizational conflict.

According to Peter., Kobuthi and Mwamba (2024) some church conflicts in Kenya have been caused by incompetent church leaders. Issues of misuse of finances and unnecessary transfer of church leaders are some of the factors that have caused conflicts in the church. This is evidenced by the fact that most church leaders do not have competences in financial matters. However, according to Peter et al. (2024) the training of leaders can reduce conflicts in the church. Tonder (2008) noted that church conflicts often arise from a complex interplay of theological differences, power dynamics, and cultural tensions within congregations and argues that the conflicts can serve as opportunities for growth and transformation if approached with openness and willingness to dialogue. By fostering an environment where diverse perspectives are valued, churches can navigate conflicts more effectively and emerge stronger than before (Toner, 2008).

In addition to all the cited causes of conflict Crain (2021) noted that self-centeredness, immaturity among members or leaders, change and inflexibility, unmet needs and personality politics have often caused conflict in one way or the other. According to Crain unclear responsibilities or objectives also lead to conflict as this is common among leaders. For example, the Bible tells a story relating to conflict between Kings Saul and David in Israel (1 Samuel 16-31) which caused challenging and complex relational difficulties among the Israelites. As a result Saul died because of pride and presented the opportunity for David to prove himself. Crain (2021) also noted that there is injustice or bias and or favouritism in the church in which some members are made to benefit at the expense of others. This is seen as much against the teachings of Paul who said that the word of God changed the world. Poor assimilation practices in the church have also proved to be costly and a cause of conflict. However, Awojobi (2011) pointed out that leadership wrangles have been at the centre in contributing to conflict in the church today. This is evident in the church as some leaders have tended to apply dirty church politics to take over positions. It is also important to understand that decision-making processes are also a cause of conflict and that since conflict is dynamic it means it can occur any time. For example, those in leadership can make decisions that are critical or controversial and lead to conflict in the church.

## 2.5 EFFECTS OF SPLITS ON THE GROWTH OF CHURCH

Just as society encounters internal crisis the church also suffers crisis. The same way conflict affects the church today is the same way the early church was affected, (I Corinthians 3:4).

Recent studies by Peter et al (2024) concluded that the church is no longer that a peaceful place for fellowships and worship of God as a shift has been confirmed. The study also noted that the world wide church is engulfed in numerous conflicts as a result of different factors. The Bible tells of a story when Paul and Barnabas (Acts 15: 1-8) when they wanted to intervene in a conflict in Jerusalem which arose over issues of circumcision. This was against a background of teachings by men from Judea who taught that believers could not be saved unless they were circumcised. These teachings created misunderstandings in the early church. More critically, the Jews did not want the Gentiles to hear the gospel, in other words they did not want them to be saved. However, conflicts could be resolved by loving one another and hence the importance for believers to embrace love among themselves (Warren, 2002). Because God is love, it is in loving that we are most like him, so where there is love there is no conflict.

### 2.5.1 Effects of conflicts in the church

Although conflicts are inevitable and sometimes essential in church life they have damaged the life of the church because they are not handled constructively (Son, 2019). A study by Thiga et al (2021) concluded that conflicts have negative effects on the growth of the church both numerically, and spiritually, as the churches continue to lose members to other churches around. The studies revealed the presence of conflicts in most churches in Nairobi was meant to control the church. Thiga et al (2021) also confirmed that some of the conflicts are often between pastors and other leaders in the church while in some cases the conflicts could be among other leaders within the church. Overall, conflicts in whatever form negatively affects the church's growth.

There has been a decline in numbers of congregants in Kenyan churches due to conflicts either among leaders or conflicts in different forms. According to Rasool, et al. (2015) in Thiga et al. (2021) many factors have affected the growth of Pentecostal churches particularly in the urban areas where, the Pastor's leadership style also affects either way. According to Masamba (2013) cited in Thiga (2021) the pastor's theological training among other factors has also affected church growth such that conflict has also contributed to major challenges affecting the church and society. However, Gathuki (2015) cited conflict as one of the unique factors affecting Pentecostal churches world wide and that from the beginning these churches have always been involved in conflicts.

A study by Tagwirei (2023) revealed that leadership conflicts in the church have entangled and disrupted countless leaders and followers, and distracted them from the integral *missio ecclesiae* worldwide. Church conflict among leaders has affected the body of Christ in a multiple ways. A study by Chikwanha (2021) about the AFM found that conflicts generated unrest in the church and triggered breakups and legal battles which tarnished the image of the whole church. These divisions and break ups have seen some church members backsliding and others defecting to other churches although some others have not been able to do so' (Chkwanha 2021).

### 2.5.2 Effects of Leadership Conflicts in the Church

For some time now there has been much negative talk about the effects of conflict between Church leaders and congregants in most countries. According to Tagwirei (2024) numerous scholars have written and exposed the multifarious negative effects of ecclesial conflicts, such as dividing the parties involved, splitting churches and creating space for dubious and cultist opportunists to take up leadership positions at the expense of gullible believers. However, the positive effects of conflict represent a critical gap in need of attention in the church. While conflict can occur at all levels, leadership conflicts tend to be more eruptive and disruptive than congregational conflicts, mostly because leaders are more influential than congregants, and, therefore, their conflict often has massive effects. A study by Tagwirei (2023a) shows that leaders have massive influence and that the majority of Pentecostal church founders and heads are neo-patrimonial and authoritarian who exploit their congregations for selfish interests.

In most cases conflict has diverted the attention of involved parties from love to plotting and fighting against each other. According to Chivasa (2018) the AFM leadership and congregational conflicts over elections for leadership positions, succession, performance and transfer of pastors resulted in destructive and disruptive divisions, violent physical fights, costly legal disputes and backsliding of some members. An analysis by Netsianda (2015) of conflict in evangelicals, Pentecostals and AICs revealed that the seemingly endless church conflicts have affected the testimony of the church and put the name of Jesus and the church into disrepute. However, Isenjia (2023) concluded that Church conflicts have diminished the gains of evangelization and gospel witnessing in the country, because these divisions prevented leaders and believers from reflecting the light and grace of Christ that unites humankind with God and one another. For example, in AICs the negative effects of conflict

include divisions, successive breakaways and misinterpretation and abuse of scripture with many leaders ending up forming sects without adequate training or maturity (Beta 2015).

## 2.6 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This section of the study reviewed related literature from different sources. Attention was focused on the systems theory and the conceptual framework that would influence leadership behaviour patterns among churches. More critically, the review of empirical literature was motivated by the research objectives which formed the foundations of the study. Most of the requirements of this part of the study were addressed, and this established arguments which arose in previous scholarly work. The next chapter would focus on data interpretation, discussion and analysis of research findings.

# CHAPTER THREE: SCIENTIFIC AND METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

## 3.1 INTRODUCTION

This study sought to build a model that can resolve or manage conflicts among leaders in the church and ultimately reduce or prevent church splits. The chapter presents the methods used to address the enquiry. This chapter interrogates the philosophy, approach, the research design and strategy adopted in the research. In addition, this chapter also presents the target population, the sampling methods and techniques as well as data collection methods. This would also provide the methods adopted in data analysis and explicates the different ethical considerations applicable before wrapping up with a chapter summary.

## 3.2 RESEARCH PHILOSOPHY

According to Creswell (2013) a philosophy in research relates to beliefs and assumptions that guide one`s approach to conducting a research. Generally, philosophies useful in a dissertation include positivism, interpretivism and pragmatism, but other scholars would include critical realism, and constructivism. According to Mwenje (2020) there is no one correct perspective on research philosophy, but that each perspective has its own strengths and weaknesses. However, Mwenje only identifies three research philosophies namely positivism, interpretivism and critical theory which is often equated to pragmatism. While positivism is objective and quantitative, interpretivism is subjective and qualitative in nature. However, critical theory focuses on power relations and the social context of the research. Mwenje (2020) concludes that it is important to know the suppositions that underlie each philosophical perspective that can apply to the current study. Therefore, this study adopted the interpretivist research philosphy.

### 3.1.1 Interpretivism

The interpretivist philosophy is qualitative and sociological in nature. Sharma (2024) noted that interpretivism is rooted in social constructionism, and takes a subjective ontological stance posting that reality is constructed by humans through social interactions. In other words interpretivism seeks to analyze events from the perspective of those participating. The interpretivist philosophy is used to analyze data related to human actions. According to Myers (2008) interpretive researchers usually assume that access to reality is only through communal structures which can include language, consciousness, shared meanings, and

instruments. For this study interpretivist philosophy was used as it allowed research to appreciate differences among humans in society. However, on the negative the use of the interpretivist philosophy is subjective, which means there is room for bias on behalf of the researcher. In addition, data collected through interprevist studies cannot be generalized as the data is deeply influenced by personal viewpoints.

## 3.2 RESEARCH APPROACH

Research approaches refer to the overall plans for conducting studies. The commonly known research approaches are qualitative and quantitative. For this study researcher opted for the qualitative research approach as it involves studying phenomena through in-depth, open ended exploration and description (Creswell, 2013). Additionally, Creswell (2014) postulated that research approaches guide the overall direction and methodological choices of the research process. Data collection tools for the qualitative approach typically include interviews, focus group discussions, observations, document analysis and of course sometimes the questionnaire to collect data, and the data would be analyzed using thematic analysis, grounded theory or narrative analysis. Researcher used the qualitative research approach because it could facilitate close interactions between researcher and participants. The use of the qualitative approach helped the researcher to collect information on the opinions, attitudes and behaviours of the target population. According to Rupin and Rubin (2011) the qualitative approach is flexible, interactive, and continuous when used for data collection and it helps to understand the "why" behind human behaviour. However, qualitative research is also time-consuming and difficult to replicate.

## 3.3 RESEARCH DESIGN

The research design is the overall plan and strategy used by researchers to achieve their objectives (Lincolin and Guba, 1985). According to Creswell (2018) a research design is a plan or strategy for conducting a research, but Yin (2003) postulates that a research design is an action plan for getting from here to there, "where, here" which maybe defined as the initial set of questions to be answered and "there" being some set of answers (conclusions) about the questions. In addition, Leedy et al. (2013) asserts that a research design involves strategies and plans of carrying out a project. Conclusively, Lewis (2014) asserts that the research design is a strategy for undertaking a study involving a clear outline of data collection methods, analysis and research instruments used. However, it can be an arrangement of conditions for data collection.

Saunders (2009) noted that the several research designs include explanatory, descriptive, diagnostic, experimental and exploratory. In this dissertation, the exploratory research design was used. This design would allow the researcher to collect qualitative data on perceptions and experiences of members in the church today. The exploratory design allows for triangulation of data which will then be used to draw conclusions on the relationship between leadership wrangles and conflict resolution.

### 3.3.1 Exploratory research design

The exploratory research design is used to explore and gain a deeper understanding of a phenomenon or research question (Creswell, 2024). This design is particularly useful when there is limited existing research work on a topic or when the research question is broad and open-ended (Merriam and Tisdell, 2016). According to Patton (2015) the exploratory design involves the collection of data through in-depth interviews, focus groups, and observation methods. However, the goal of this design is to gain a rich and detailed understanding of the phenomenon, rather than to test hypothesis or predict outcomes (Creswell, 2014). This design was ideal for this research because of its flexibility in data collection and analysis, and uses qualitative data collection methods such as interviews and observations. According to Creswell (2014) the exploratory research design emphasizes on gaining a nuanced understanding of the research phenomenon. Although some aspects could not fall under the exploratory research design the researcher found it appropriate as it could address some other issues that needed attention.

### 3.3.2 Research Strategy

Research strategy refers to the overall arrangement of the study that guides researchers when addressing the research process in a systematic manner which would involve collection and interpretation of data or findings (Yin, 2011). A research strategy outlines the specific approaches and methods that would be used in the study to ensure the investigation process remains coherent, structured and focused. Additionally, it serves as a blue print for the entire research process, helping to ensure a methodologically sound study whose findings are credible and reliable. The use of a qualitative research strategy helps researchers in aligning the research question with the methods used to collect and analyze data (Creswell, 2013). While qualitative research is often flexible and adaptive, a research strategy ensures that this flexibility is balanced with a structured approach to avoid losing focus. For example, Maxwell (2013) noted that a research strategy offers a framework that allows for changes and

adjustments where necessary during the investigation process thereby preventing data from becoming too scattered or unfocused.

#### 3.3.2.1 Case study

Generally, a case study is a qualitative research strategy which is used when carrying out a study confined to a particular area, for example, an institution. The strategy is commonly used to explore complex issues where a holistic understanding of the subject is need. According to Stake (1995) a case study is often used in social sciences, business and in educational research to explore issues such organizational behaviour, educational practices, or community dynamics. Usually, a case study deals with a single case or multiple cases, offering comparative insights and also providing a detailed account of the case as well as offering a comprehensive view of the issues at hand. Merriam (2009) noted that case study methods focus on specific instances, enabling researchers to interrogate phenomena in a highly focused manner.

## 3.4 POPULATION AND SAMPLING PROCEDURE

### 3.4.1 Population

A target population refers to the group of subjects or people to be studied and can also be considered a combination of the objects, subjects or members conforming to certain specifications in a particular area. The target population for the study comprised different church membership categories or levels in the Evangelical Church of Zimbabwe including the Church Council (CC), Administration Committee, Elder`s Council, the Pastors` Council, the Elderly and the general membership. According to Rubin and Babbie (2007) a target population refers to elements from which researchers can select their subset or sample. Similarly, Salkind (2012) understands that population is the totality of all the units that are qualified to take part in a study.

### 3.4.2 Sampling

Sampling refers to the procedure or process by which research participants are identified and selected (Grooves, 2004). There are two commonly known methods of sampling namely, probability and non-probability (Babbie, 2010). The most common sampling techniques in qualitative research include convenience, judgmental or purposive and snowballing. The researcher used purposive and snowballing sampling techniques to select the required

research participants. These participants were selected on the basis of their membership to the Evangelical Church of Zimbabwe and knowledge of the church.

### 3.4.3 Sample size

According to Berndt and Petzer (2011) a sample refers to the number of subjects needed to participate in the study for analysis to yield significant results. In the views of Malhotra (2010), the choice of a sample size is determined by the quantity of configuration-related objects, and the kind of investigation undertaken. Sampling is very important because it helps to ensure that the results are accurate and generalizable to the population as a whole. A sample of 65 respondents from the Evangelical Church of Zimbabwe was selected. The sample comprised 34 ordinary members, 6 Church Council members, 6 members from the Pastor`s Council, 8 from the Elders` Council and 11 identified elderly people who have been with the church since its early years.

## 3.5 DATA COLLECTION TOOLS

The most common of these tools or instruments include the questionnaire and the interview guide among others. The chosen research approach and methodology usually determines which research and data collection instrument to use or adopt in a particular research. For this study the researcher used the questionnaire to solicit data from ordinary church members and the interview guide to collect data from technical people among them Pastors, Church Council members and the elderly. However, data collection efforts were complemented by documents analysis.

### 3.5.1 Open ended questionnaire

The open ended questionnaire was used to collect data from the general membership and other selected individuals. According to Denscombe (2016) the open ended questionnaire consists of a set of questions that are asked of participants. Open ended questionnaires can be paper - based or digital, and are often used in surveys. They are however, cost effective and efficient when used to collect data from large samples. The use of the open ended questionnaire enabled the standardization of data collection, and made it easier to compare results across groups. However, open ended questionnaires can be limited by their inability to capture complex or sensitive information, and also could be subject to bias if the questions

are not designed carefully. Therefore, the researcher had carefully crafted the questions on the open ended questionnaire.

### 3.5.2 Interviews

An interview guide is a tool that is used to structure an interview and ensure that the same set of questions is asked of each participant. According to Bradley, Daly, Newman, Solomons & Turner (2018) interviews are instruments used for data collection that involves asking participants face-to-face questions or over the phone. Bartunek, Li, and Easterby-Smith (2019), noted that interviews involve conversations between the interviewers (those asking the questions) and the interviewees (the persons being questioned). Interview guides are used in the engagement process. The method can also record non-verbal cues and is primarily used to gather qualitative data. Usually, these are semi-structured in interview guides mostly used in qualitative research, as they help to ensure that the interviewee has the opportunity to discuss the topic in depth (Bogdan and Biklen, 2007). Semi-structured interviews were conducted with CC, Elder`s Council members and some the elderly people in the church.

### 3.5.3 Document analysis

The perusal of books, journals, news papers among other documents is what is called document analysis (Goonewardena, 1991). This data collection instrument is usually used in qualitative research. Document analysis helped researcher gain more insight in the content and context of the documents, and make inferences about the authors and the social or historical context in which they were written. Researcher also adopted document analysis, which typically involved identifying themes or patterns in the documents, analyzing their meaning and significance, and using this information to make interpretations or draw conclusions. The use of document analysis allowed researcher to analyse historical documents, court documents, such as press release, any public relations documents and related material documents about the organisation. This also helped to analyse the nature, visions, values and the mission statement of the Evangelical Church of Zimbabwe.

## 3.6 DATA ANALYSIS

Data was analysed using qualitative methods. Researcher, thus, used thematic analysis methods to analyse the data that was collected. The method used involved coding of data to identify key themes, patterns, and relationships within the interview transcripts and document analysis findings including the questionnaire. However, in addition to these qualitative data

analysis methods researcher combined with a bit of descriptive statistical methods when presenting and analyzing the collected data.

### 3.6.1 Thematic Analysis

The use of thematic analysis allowed the researcher to make sense of large volumes of qualitative data by organizing it into manageable segments. The method allows researchers to reflect on data comprehensively highlighting how themes relate to the study. It is flexible, which makes it applicable to various research questions and types of qualitative data. Braun and Clarke (2012) noted that this flexibility allows researchers to adapt the method to meet the specific needs of their study, whether it involves a theoretical framework or testing an existing theory. In thematic analysis data was coded into themes.

## 3.7 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Generally, ethics are morals that have to do with what is right or wrong, good or bad. Ethics are moral obligations and principles that researcher had to adhere to in carrying out and reporting the study. They are moral principles that guide human conduct. According to Creswell (2014) there are stipulated research principles of ethical conduct that should be implemented.

### 3.7.1 Informed consent

Before undertaking to participate in the study every respondent needs to consent to participate voluntarily. In this study researcher made sure that every participant knew every aspect of the study before consent. This means information was critical before commitment.

### 3.7.2 Anonymity and Confidentiality

These involved ensuring that participants` identities are protected and their data was kept confidential. Sources of information were kept anonymous whilst the information given by the participants and their privacy were protected.

### 3.7.3 Integrity

Integrity refers to adherence to the fundamental principles of honesty, transparency and accuracy throughout the research process. Upholding these principles demonstrated that researcher was committed to observing ethical standards while conducting the research thereby contributing to the credibility and reliability of the study.

### 3.7.4 Consistency and accuracy

Consistency and accuracy involves researcher striving for consistency and accuracy in presenting the research findings, avoiding selective reporting and misinterpretation of data that might lead to biased or misleading conclusions.

### 3.7.5 Respect for participants

Researcher made sure that all participants were fairly treated and held with dignity and respect throughout the study.

### 3.7.6 Avoidance of conflict of interest

This has to do with making sure that researcher is not personally involved in the study in a manner that could jeopardize the outcome or the results. Thus, the researcher was involved at every stage of the research process.

### 3.7.7 Honesty

Honesty means researcher should understand how essential it would be to be honest and truthful in all aspects of the research. The methodology, data collection processes, and analysis methods were all presented clearly to respondents, and made sure fabrication and manipulation of data or manipulated results to support the hypothesis or desired outcome.

## 3.8 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This section of the study presented research methodologies including the interprevist research philosophy used, qualitative research approach and the exploratory research design including the case study research strategy among others. The chapter also addressed the research population issues, sampling, data collection and data analysis methods. The chapter also identified and presented various ethics that were observed during the curse of the study. The next chapter would focus on data interpretation including analysis.

# CHAPTER FOUR: DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

## 4.1 INTRODUCTION

The chapter sought to present, discuss and analyse research findings in relation to the study on leadership wrangles and conflict resolution in the church today. The data was presented, discussed and analysed using thematic analysis with some bit of descriptive statistical methods.

## 4.2 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

- To interrogate and analyse key factors that contributed to a split in the ECZ.
- To examine the effects of split in the church.
- To proffer a working model that resolves conflicts among leadership in the church.

## 4.3 DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILES OF RESPONDENTS

In order to establish confidence in the research responses and findings, various demographic and work-related attributes of the research participants were profiled. These included, gender, academic qualifications, their age and their period of membership status in the church.

### 4.3.1 Gender profiles

One of the attributes significant to the study was the respondents` gender profiles and hence, it was critical to capture. Gender influences people's experiences, opportunities, and challenges in a variety of contexts. This helps to evaluate and contrast the experiences, opinions, and challenges faced by men and women with regard to different models of resolving conflict among church leadership. Thus, table 4.1 illustrates their gender profiles.

**Table 4.1Gender profiles (n=65)**

| Gender/Sex | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Male | 39 | 60% |
| Female | 26 | 40% |

**(Source: Author, 2024)**

Table 4.1 profiled the research participants` gender as this would help to understand the gender disparities in the ECZ. Research findings suggest that 60% of the participants were

males while their female counterparts constituted 40%. Although there was no equal representation it was fair enough to provide varied experiences on the research objectives.

### 4.3.2 Age profiles of participants

The study sought to profile the different ages for research participants in the research. Figure 4.2 shows the age profiles of participants.

**Table 4.2 Age profiles for participants (n=65)**

| Ages in Range | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| 18-35 Years | 7 | 10.77% |
| 36-45 Years | 21 | 32.31% |
| 46-50 Years | 15 | 23.08% |
| 51-60 Years | 10 | 15.38% |
| 61 Years + | 12 | 18.46% |

**(Source: Author, 2024)**

Table 4.2 was meant to determine the age profiles of different members in the Evangelical Church of Zimbabwe as regards this study. Research findings show that the majority, 32.31% of the participants were between 36 and 45, while 23.08% of them were between 46 and 50 years old. Research findings further show that 18.46% of respondents were above 61 years old, while 15.38% of them were between 51 and 60 years respectively. Findings also show that the least, 10.77% were between 18 and 35 years. This shows that the majority, about 89.23% of research participants constitute mature members with much information about the church. Age profiles of respondents are an essential demographic variable that helps to analyze the characteristics of the sample while age related differences also impacted on the various factors such as aptitudes, behaviours, preferences and experiences. This also helped to examine how different age groups had distinct opinions or behaviours related to the subject relating to church operations and history.

### 4.3.3 Educational qualifications of respondents

The study also profiled the highest educational levels for the participants in the study. Table 4.2 shows the qualification profiles of research respondents.

**Table 4.3 Educational Profiles of research participants (n=65)**

| Educational level | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Postgraduate Degree | 3 | 4.62% |
| Degree + | 8 | 12.31% |
| College Diploma | 15 | 23.07% |
| Vocational/Apprenticeship Training | 6 | 9.23% |
| Primary &Secondary education | 33 | 50.77% |

**(Source: Author, 2024)**

Table 4.3 determined the highest educational profiles of all research participants in the study. This helped to ascertain the levels of understanding of the members in the church. Findings suggest that the majority, 50.77% of the participants had attained primary and secondary education while 23.07% of them had college diplomas. Research findings further indicate that 12.31% of the research respondents had university degrees while 9.23% had undergone vocational/apprenticeship training. Findings further show that the least, only 4.62% had postgraduate degrees, preferably master`s degrees. This shows that the majority of church members in the ECZ are reasonably educated to the extent that they are able to understand instructions and can read and write. This was motivated by the values instilled by the missionaries who founded the church.

### 4.3.4 Experience or period of membership in the ECZ

Figure 4.4 shows the distribution of participants according to their length of stay in the ECZ.

**Table 4.4 Period of membership in the ECZ (n=65)**

| Years of Membership | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| 0-10 Years | 13 | 20% |
| 11-20 Years | 17 | 26.15% |
| 21-30 Years | 9 | 13.85% |
| 31 Years + | 26 | 40% |

**(Source: Author, 2024)**

Table 4.3 established the period a respondent has been a member of the ECZ. Research findings show that the majority, 40% of the respondents had been in the church for more than 31 years of membership whilst 26.15% have been members in the church for a period

between 11 and 20 years. Research findings also suggest that 20% of respondents had been in the ECZ for a period between 0 and 10 years while the least 13.85% of have been in the church for a period between 21 and 30 years. Knowledge of the length of membership was critical in that members had information regarding the subject in question and were able to provide valuable insights into leadership and wrangles in the church.

### 4.3.5 Status or Position in the church

Knowledge of the position of the participant was critical as it helped the researcher to understand the church dynamics, causes, sources and methods of resolving the conflict. Table 4.5 shows the distribution of respondents according to their positions in the ECZ.

**Table 4.5 Position of Respondent in the Church**

| Position | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Pastor | 11 | 16.92% |
| Elder/Chairman | 15 | 23.08% |
| Committee Member | 9 | 13.85% |
| Ordinary Member | 23 | 35.38% |
| Deacon | **7** | 10.77% |

***(Source: Author, 2024)***

The study determined the status or the positions of participants in the church. Table 4.5 suggests that the majority, 35.38% of participants were ordinary members while, 23.08% of those who participated in the study were elders or chairmen at local churches. The table shows that 16.92% of the participants were pastors while 13.85% were committee members of either the church council or pastors' council. The least, 10.77% of the participants were deacons. Knowledge of the positions of each of the participants helped in ascertaining the depth of the information collected from the member without any trace of doubt.

## 4.4. FACTORS CONTRIBUTINGTO SPLITS IN THE CHURCH

This part of the research sought to establish factors that contributed or that continue to contribute to conflicts and splits in the church. Data was presented and analysed using qualitative data analysis methods. In this study the data was analysed using thematic analysis which would involve coding of the data into themes. The data was analysed in combination

with themes which would then form the subheadings under which data was presented and findings analysed. This was done with some bit of descriptive statistical methods.

### 4.4.1 Causes of conflicts among leaders in the church.

This section sought to establish the origins and factors contributing to conflicts among church leaders. Research findings suggest that the majority, 55% of participants who responded to both the questionnaire and interviews revealed that disagreements or differences in theological and doctrinal teachings have been the major causes of conflict among church leaders while 23% of them attributed these wrangles to greedy and power. Most of the participants said that some church leaders especially pastors have adopted the posterity gospel and the use of anointing oil which conflicts with the evangelical church statement of faith and ecclesiology. They also cited that some of the leaders have been reportedly in fights for resources and influence in the church. Findings also suggest that 18% of the conflicts among leaders were a result of poor communication involving lack of feedback on critical issues while 4% of the participants cited succession disputes and disrespect of the constitution of the church as one of the major factors leading to leadership conflicts in the contemporary church. Findings showed that the wrangle was caused by a breach of the church constitution with regards to the appointment or election of leaders to positions of authority and the behaviours of church management system. During an interview on the major causes of leadership wrangles in the Evangelical Church of Zimbabwe one Interviewee remarked,

> "*These days we see that the church has been infiltrated by some people who have adopted their own doctrinal teachings against evangelicalism. I believe that this is motivated by church politics which is manifest in the form of greedy and the need for power and nothing else. All they need is to get positions in the church so that they can do whatever they want at will."*

### 4.4.2 Causes of Conflict between TEAM and the Evangelical Church.

The study intended to determine the causes of the conflict that once arose between The Evangelical Alliance Mission (TEAM), and the Evangelical Church of Zimbabwe (ECZ) in the early 1990s which ultimately, split the church with some members aligned and sympathetic to TEAM forming the now defunct Fellowship Church. Research findings suggest that 71% of respondents indicated that the conflict between TEAM and the church was caused by the power politics and control of the church between the missionaries and

church leadership while about 55% of them revealed that racism or racial segregation was the major cause of the dispute. Racism had a negative effect on the relations between TEAM and the ECZ leadership. TEAM missionaries were reluctant or did not want to transfer power to the blacks, which means they wanted to clinch to certain positions of authority. Findings also suggest that 39% of participants felt the conflict was motivated by national or state politics of the day. The wrangle coincided with the government's intention to debate the land issue following the lapse of the ten year period agreed at Lancaster House Conference in 1979. Results also show that 27% of respondents revealed that lack of trust between TEAM missionaries and ECZ leadership while 13% also attributed the conflict to reluctance by TEAM missionaries to declare proceeds from overseas donors and sponsoring partners from the West. In an interview, one of the elderly, coded as Interviewee 1, argued;

> *"In fact it was not just a leadership dispute, but more of a deadlock between two organisations that wanted to merge. The White dominated TEAM felt the ECZ then dominated by natives or blacks wanted equal representation at the apex board which they (TEAM) did not want that to happen. You will realise that this is what instigated the formation of a fellowship group, the Fellowship Church (FC). This group was confined to Karanda Mission Hospital. However, when we reconciled that church was dissolved and everything the church owned was handed over to the ECZ and all the members were readmitted except for the TEAM missionaries who were advised to come on individual basis if they wanted to be members of the ECZ. It was not an easy thing to do but there was no option except to take that route."*

### 4.4.3 Factors that Split the Evangelical Church of Zimbabwe.

The study established the cause of the split of the ECZ. While the church split of 1990/91 could be attributed mainly to a dispute between TEAM missionaries and ECZ leadership the 2015 split was unique and different. Research findings show that the majority, 35.38% attributed the 2015 split to succession disputes while 26.15% felt the split was caused by leadership wrangles among leaders in the church. Findings also indicate that 20% of respondents felt the split was aggravated by doctrinal and theological differences. For example, the breakaway group led by former Bishop Rev Benson Magwojo Makachi adopted the prosperity gospel faith and the use of anointing oil to its congregants. In a comment about this, "Interviewee 2" remarked;

"*To be honest the causes of the two splits were different but the major factor had to do with leadership problems. There have been power struggles among leaders. Both, the 1990/91 split and the 2015 split had elements of leadership wrangles although in different forms and dimensions. While the first one was external, the recent and latest one was internal.*"

## 4.5 THE EFFECTS OF SPLITS ON THE GROWTH OF THE CHURCH

The research also decided how the split impacted the growth and testimony of the church.

### 4.5.1 The impact of the conflicts on the church

The research intended to determine the impact of the disputes on the church. Results suggest that 43.08% of the participants confirmed that conflict has divided and split the church while 26.15% of them felt church conflicts have caused too much spiritual suffering to congregations resulting in decreased participation in worship and church activities among members. Findings also indicate that 20% of participants revealed that the conflict, to an extent led to a scenario where marriages broke down, while some members started attending different churches. However, findings also show that 3.08% of respondents confided that although conflict negatively affects the church the same can also have positive impacts on the growth of the church as it would have brought out some hidden truth. Overall, respondents revealed that conflicts have affected the church socially and religiously.

### 4.5.2 The impact and extent of church splits on members

This part of the study sought to establish the impact and extent or magnitude of the effects of splits to the members in the church. Research findings suggest that the majority, 96.9% of respondents felt that there was spiritual stagnation or doubt among some members while 93.9% revealed that conflict resulted in broken relationships with fellow members from the church. The study also found that 87.7% of participants showed loss of a sense of community and belonging which was impacted by the split in the church while 86.2% of participants revealed that anxiety and depression or sadness were some of the impacts of church split. The study further found that 81.5% of respondents confirmed that members have been felt disconnected from God and the Church while 78.5% of them revealed there developed hatred/confusion and uncertainty among members as a result of the splits in the church. Research findings also suggest that 69.23% of respondents felt some form of betrayal due to

splits resulting from church conflict while 44.6% of them confirmed that some members either left the church or lost their faith altogether due to the split conflict. Overall, the study found that church split or conflict has had emotional, spiritual, rational, psychological and behavioural effects among members in the church. One of the Interviewees said;

> *"The ECZ has suffered two splits; the first one was caused by the TEAM missionaries who did not want to surrender power. They did not want us, the church to know how much they were getting from their overseas donors. They used our name to secure donations but did not want us to know how much they were receiving. The second split is the recent one which is blamed on Rev Magwojo. He did not want to leave office even after the term of Office had expired. It was greedy that caused this split. Again, he was misled by the young guys in his group."*

### 4.5.3 People`s perceptions on how differences on doctrinal or theological teachings contributed to the split of the ECZ

The study also sought to establish individual perceptions on how differences in doctrinal and theological teachings were a major cause of the conflict that split the Evangelical Church of Zimbabwe. Research findings suggest that the majority, 69% of respondents attributed the schism to the differences in doctrinal and theological teachings adopted by the groups. The breakaway group felt there was need to embrace the prosperity gospel and therefore, turned Pentecostal thereby dumping Evangelicalism. The ECZ set up by a team of missionaries from America under the banner of The Evangelical Alliance Mission (TEAM) was founded on evangelical principles. TEAM was evangelical and the church they founded was also evangelical but the splinter group led by former bishop chose to go Pentecostal which then compromised their original statement of faith.

Findings also show that 23% of respondents argued that although differences in doctrinal or theological teachings were a major cause of conflict they still felt the actual bone of contention was greedy and ignorance on the part of the leadership of the time. The least, 9% of research participants in the study argued that differences in doctrinal and or theological teachings were in no way linked to the conflict which split the church. They argued that while doctrinal issues were noted the root or major cause of the conflict was poverty of the

leadership. At the pre-trial conference court at the High Court then Bishop openly told the other party people did not want him to eat although it was his turn. One of the interviewees again coded as "Interviewee 3" had this to say;

> *"If you compare the causes of the two splits you will see the distinction between them. Beside these other factors our conflict with TEAM was also motivated by the national politics of the day. You will agree with me that the ten year period which the Lancaster House Agreement prescribed the new Government would not amend the Constitution had ended. The Zimbabwe government wanted to amend the constitution and alter the willing buyer will seller clause on land question. So it was almost the same time TEAM had agreed would hand over power or control of the church to the blacks, which the missionaries were reluctant to do. However, the recent fall out was caused by power and greedy, and differences on doctrinal and differences on theological teachings. Our brother had adopted the wealth creating gospel of prosperity."*

### 4.5.4 Anticipated leadership styles in the church

The study also presented the type of styles that would be anticipated in the church to help avoid conflict that degenerate into splits. Research findings suggest that the majority, about 29.23% of respondents revealed that servant leadership would be preferred in place of other styles while 23.08% of them felt spiritual leadership is ideal in a church setup. The findings also indicated that 15.38% of research participants felt relational leadership should be adopted in the church in order to prevent conflict while 13.84% suggested adopting the conflict resolution leadership in the church. Findings further show that 10.77% of respondents were in favour of stewardship leadership to be preferred while the least 7.69% felt transformational or situational leadership style would be ideal if adopted in the church.

### 4.5.5 Church splits and the credibility, testimony and mission of the church

This area of the study sought to establish the level of impact of splits in the church on its standing, testimony and mission. Results suggest that the majority, 46.54% of respondents revealed that the credibility, testimony and mission of the church was adversely affected to the extent of becoming next to none while 32.31% confirmed the conflict crippled the

church`s ability to fulfill the Great Commission. Findings also suggest that 21.15% of respondents noted that the split threatened the testimony and mission of the church.

## 4.6 DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

### 4.6.1 Factors Contributing to Splits in the Church

The research findings provide light on the fundamental causes that have contributed to leadership conflicts and splits within the Evangelical Church of Zimbabwe. These findings may be understood and debated in connection to the third study aim, which is to propose a practical model for resolving disagreements among church leaders. According to the research, the top causes of conflict and division in the ECZ include conflicts over theological and doctrinal teachings, power struggles and greed among church leaders, inadequate communication and accountability, including succession issues. The ECZ-TEAM split, for example, was partly fuelled by the missionaries' unwillingness to surrender authority and hand up power to indigenous African leaders. This racial dynamic and power mismatch produced a toxic environment that ultimately led to the separation of the two entities.

More recently, the 2015 split within the ECZ was principally caused by succession issues and leadership disagreements. The data show that a large percentage of the disagreement was caused by leaders taking different doctrinal viewpoints, such as the prosperity gospel and the usage of anointing oil, which strayed from the church's evangelical declaration of faith. This ideological division, along with power battles and a disregard for the church's constitutional administration, shattered the ECZ's cohesiveness and led to the development of a breakaway group led by then bishop.

These findings highlight the critical need for the working model to address the underlying factors that caused conflict, promote transparent as well as accountable leadership, establish clear constitutional and governance structures, and foster a culture of unity, spiritual renewal, and Christ-centered decision-making. By applying a comprehensive approach that addresses the varied character of the ECZ's difficulties, the church can navigate its leadership squabbles and progress towards reconciliation and long-term stability (Greenleaf, 1977; Kouzes & Posner, 2012). The goal should be to create an environment in which leaders are empowered to serve with humility, while differences are reconciled through open dialogue and adherence to biblical principles with the church being able to carry out its divine mission of spreading

the gospel and ministering to its members (Scazzero, 2015; Northouse, 2021). Furthermore, the model must emphasize continuous monitoring and assessment to maintain the reforms' long-term viability and ECZ unity (Kgatle, 2018; Adewuya, 2020).

As Greenleaf (2002) articulates, servant leadership rooted in a deep commitment to the greater good is essential for resolving complex organizational conflicts. Similarly, Kouzes and Posner (2017) highlight why it is crucial to foster a mutual dream, cultivating collaborative relationships, and empowering others - all of which are critical for the ECZ to navigate its leadership challenges. By embracing these principles, the church can reclaim its credibility, testimony, and missional impact within the Zimbabwean context (Osei-Bonsu, 2017; Mounce, 2022).

### 4.6.2 Effects of splits on church growth

The study's findings clearly show how leadership disagreements and church splits can disturb the development, unity, as well as the witness of the ECZ. Research emphasizes how internal disputes may seriously weaken the church's legitimacy, spiritual vitality, and capacity to carry out its divine purpose (Adewuya, 2020). According to the research, ECZ disagreements have resulted in a fragmented congregation, lower engagement in worship and ministry activities, and even the departure of certain members (Koehler, 2019). This not only has an impact on the church's numerical growth, but also undermines the sense of community and belonging that a healthy body of believers should have (Kgatle, 2018). Spiritual stagnation, broken connections, and disillusionment among members exacerbate the situation, limiting the church's capacity to effectively minister to its flock (Anyomi, 2021).

Furthermore, the analysis demonstrates that leadership squabbles and theological differences inside the ECZ have significantly harmed its credibility and public testimony (Osei-Bonsu, 2017). When the community sees the church's incapacity to manage internal issues using biblical principles, it questions the church's claim to be a beacon of unity, love, and moral authority (Iroegbu, 2015). This, in turn, limits the ECZ's ability to carry out its purpose of evangelism, discipleship, and social transformation (Mounce, 2022). Damage to the church's public reputation can also make it more difficult to attract new members, get funding, and form meaningful collaborations in the larger community (Kouzes and Posner, 2017). If the ECZ wants to restore its spiritual and moral influence, it must prioritise restoring its credibility and witness as a united group of believers dedicated to the gospel and societal

improvement (Adewuya, 2020). Additionally, the church's incapacity to preserve unity and settle problems in a Christ-like manner can have long-term detrimental implications for its own members' confidence and trust, which can limit their spiritual growth and devotion to the church and the Great Commission.

The findings emphasise the need for the ECZ to embrace leadership styles and structures that prioritise servant-hood, spiritual development, conflict resolution, and relationship harmony. By cultivating a culture of humility, accountability, and commitment to the body's unity, the church can rebuild trust, reconcile its divisions, and reclaim the moral and spiritual authority required to effectively minister to its members and the broader community. This shift in leadership strategy will be critical in addressing the core reasons of the ECZ's disputes and divides, opening the path for true restoration and revitalization (Kgatle, 2018).

Furthermore, implementing these biblically-based leadership principles will not only heal the church's internal wounds, but also increase its legitimacy and effectiveness in carrying out the Great Commission mandate (Mounce, 2022). By demonstrating Christ-like leadership, the ECZ may become a beacon of hope and transformation, persuading its members and the larger community to embrace the gospel's reconciling power (Kouzes& Posner, 2012). Ultimately, the adoption of these leadership approaches will help the ECZ achieve unity, spiritual vibrancy, and Kingdom influence.

Finally, the study emphasises the importance of the ECZ implementing the previously proposed working model, which would address the root causes of conflict, strengthens governance structures, and fosters an environment of spiritual renewal and Christ-centred leadership (Greenleaf, 1977). Only then will the church be able to overcome its leadership challenges and recover its proper status as a light or beacon of hope, healing, and transformation in Zimbabwe. By embracing this complete strategy, the ECZ may not only settle internal divides but also position itself as a uniting force in the larger society, bringing reconciliation, restoration, and renewal (Anyomi, 2021; Osei-Bonsu, 2017). This will need a constant commitment from church leadership to exemplify servant leadership, humility, and a never-ending pursuit of God's Kingdom (Scazzero, 2015; Northouse, 2021). With God's direction and the body's unity, the ECZ may emerge from its current struggles stronger, more resilient, and more able to carry out its holy duty of becoming a light in the darkness.

## 4.7 CHAPTER SUMMARY

In summary, the research findings reported in this chapter provide a comprehensive knowledge of the fundamentals that led to leadership disputes apart from church divisions within ECZ. The findings show that theological differences, power battles, governance concerns, and succession disputes have been the leading causes of church split and dissension. Notably, the struggle between the ECZ and the Evangelical Alliance Mission (TEAM) in the 1990s, as well as the more recent 2015 separation, has had a negative influence on the legality of the church, spiritual vigour, and capacity to accomplish its divine purpose although some have said this managed to spread the gospel in another direction.

# CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND THE MODEL

## 5.1 INTRODUCTION

This part of the study provides a complete description of the important results of the study, including the development of a practical strategy to handle leadership issues and church splits in the Evangelical Church of Zimbabwe (ECZ). Building on the insights gathered from the data analysis in the preceding chapter, the dissertation's last part describes a comprehensive approach to fixing the church's fundamental concerns. The suggested model is based on recognized theories and best practices in organisational leadership, dispute resolution, and ecclesial governance, with the purpose of allowing the ECZ to navigate its obstacles, restore unity, and accomplish its holy vocation more effectively. The chapter would conclude with the development of a practical framework for church use and expand upon as it starts on a road of reconciliation, regeneration, and change.

## 5.2 CONCLUSIONS

The study identified the key factors contributing to leadership disagreements and divisions within the Evangelical Church of Zimbabwe. The findings show that doctrinal and theological conflicts, power battles, resource disputes, and succession difficulties have been the primary causes of division and dissension within the church. Disagreements over the adoption of prosperity gospel teachings and the use of anointing oils, for example, have caused major schisms among church leaders. Secondly, the research dwelt on the root causes of the conflict between the ECZ and The Evangelical Alliance Mission (TEAM) during the early 1990s. The findings suggest that this dispute was fuelled by the need for control between TEAM missionaries and the native church leaders, as well as underlying racial tensions and reluctance to transfer authority to the indigenous Zimbabwean leadership.

The study also unveiled the exact circumstances that contributed to the more recent 2015 divide inside the ECZ. The findings show that succession issues, leadership squabbles, theological divisions, and constitutional violations were major factors to this polarizing event, which had a disastrous influence on the church's spiritual vitality, public credibility, and mission efficacy. Furthermore, the study investigated the far-reaching consequences of these church disagreements and splits for ECZ members. The findings show that the splits have

caused spiritual stagnation, broken relationships, a loss of community, worry, and, in some cases, utter disillusionment and flight from the church.

The study looked into the sorts of leadership styles and tactics that the ECZ should use to solve internal issues and restore unity. The research shows that servant leadership, spiritual leadership, conflict resolution, relational leadership, and adherence to biblical principles of governance and decision-making would be critical in this respect. Embracing these ideas will allow the church to rebuild trust, reconcile its divides, and recover its proper role as a symbol of hope and development in Zimbabwe. Furthermore, the research emphasizes the need of the ECZ implementing a holistic working model that tackles the fundamental causes of conflict, enhances governance institutions, and promotes spiritual renewal and Christ-centered leadership. Only by using this comprehensive perspective can the church manage its leadership wrangles and progress towards long-term reconciliation and stability. Thus, the study proposed a working model or framework which would be useful to churches for conflict resolution or management when ever confronted by such conflicts.

## 5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the results of the study, some commendations were made herein that;

- The ECZ must prioritize theadopting servant leadership as the guiding concept for its governance and decision-making processes. As Greenleaf (1977) eloquently stated, servant leadership based on humility, responsibility, and a strong commitment to the greater good is critical for resolving complex organizational disputes. By developing a culture in which leaders are empowered to serve the congregation and community rather than their own self-interests, the ECZ may begin to rebuild trust, heal its divides, and recover its moral and spiritual authority.

- Combined with servant leadership, the ECZ must also embrace a more holistic approach to spiritual leadership. As Scazzero (2015) and others have emphasized, effective church leadership requires a deep commitment to personal and corporate spiritual formation, grounded in the principles of the gospel. By prioritizing prayer, bible study, and the cultivation of Christ-like character, the ECZ's leaders can model the virtues of unity, compassion, and a relentless pursuit of the Kingdom of God - qualities that are crucial for navigating the church's internal conflicts.

- By equipping its leaders with the skills to navigate interpersonal tensions, mediate disputes, and foster reconciliation, the ECZ can transform its internal conflicts into opportunities for growth, restoration, and spiritual renewal. This holistic approach, grounded in servant leadership, spiritual formation, good governance, and relational harmony, will be crucial in the ECZ's journey towards unity, credibility, including Kingdom impact.
- The church leadership structures must be able to accept the need to observe Biblical counsel whenever there are disagreements or conflicts, and avoid litigation.
- The leadership of the church needs to engage independent church mediators especially those from representative organizations or bodies.
- The ECZ need to consider amending the constitution and remove those sections that have always brought disputes among members.
- There must be clear succession policies and ensure strict adherence and observance to constitutional provisions.
- There is need for constant training of leaders and other lay persons on leadership development among other areas of need.
- There is need for a deliberate motion and ensure conferences are attended regularly.
- Different church ministries should be given the opportunity to meet regularly where they will be able to share and discuss how they can move in their area of service without colluding with others.

## 5.4 MODEL DEVELOPMENT: ECZ RECONCILIATION AND RENEWAL MODEL

Basing on the study outcomes, a working model was suggested to ensure that conflict resolution within the church is done efficiently. For peace and reconciliation to prevail, there are certain issues that need not to be ignored. The model shall be summarized in figure 5.1.

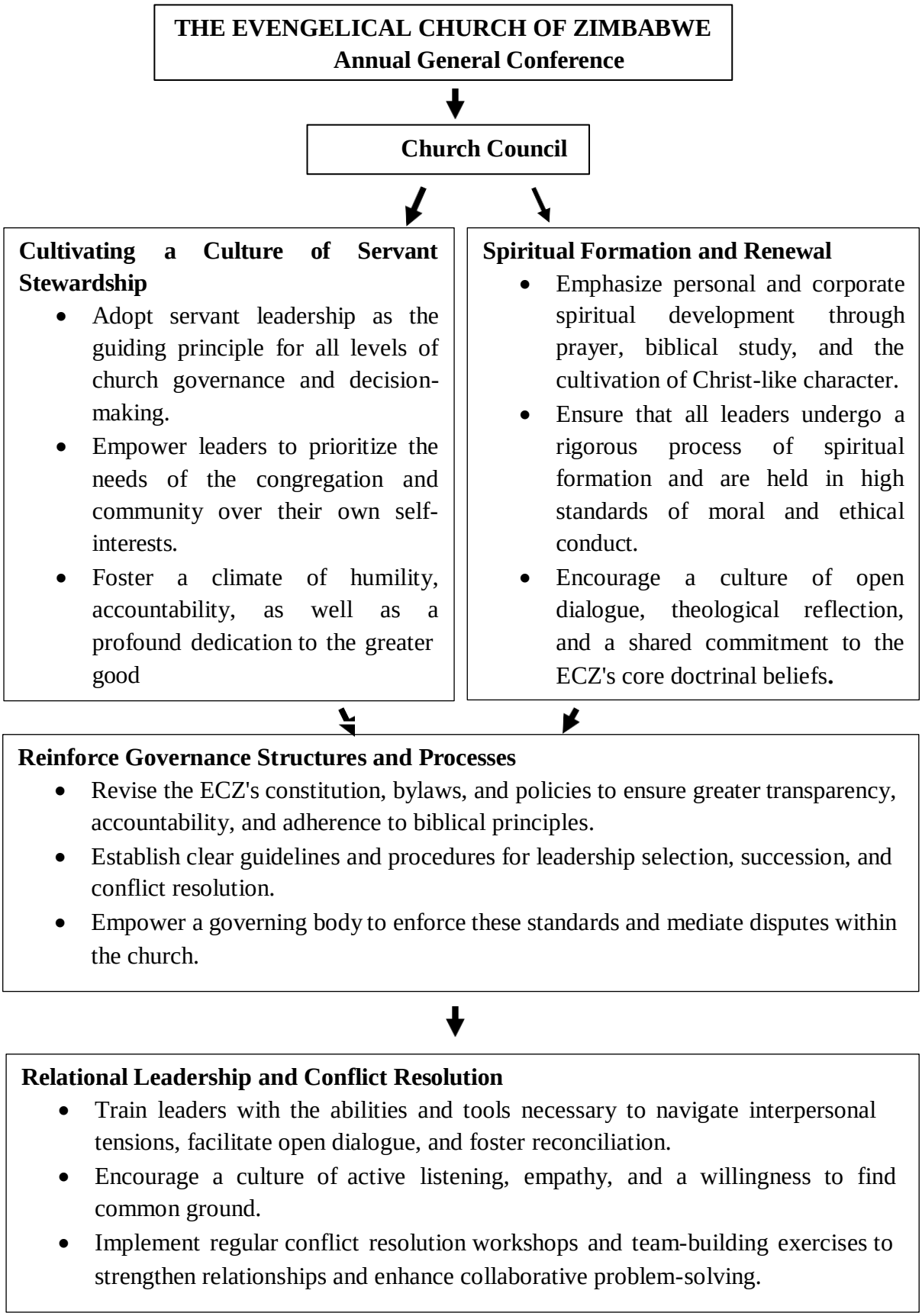



***Figure 5.1: ECZ Reconciliation and Renewal Model***

***(Source: Author, 2024)***

The model may have the following sections;

### 5.4.1 Cultivating a Culture of Servant Stewardship

The church should at first;

- Adopt servant leadership as the guiding principle for all levels of church governance and decision-making.
- Empower leaders to prioritize the needs of the congregation and community over their own self-interests.
- Foster a climate of humility, accountability, and a deep commitment to the greater good for the growth of the church.

### 5.4.2 Spiritual Formation and Renewal

- Emphasize personal and corporate spiritual development through prayer, bible study, and the cultivation of Christ-like character.
- Ensure that all leaders undergo a rigorous process of spiritual formation and are held to high standards of moral and ethical conduct.
- Encourage a culture of open dialogue, theological reflection, and a shared commitment to the ECZ's core doctrinal beliefs**.**

### 5.4.3 Reinforce Governance Structures and Processes

- Revise the ECZ's constitution, bylaws, and policies to ensure greater transparency, accountability, and adherence to biblical principles.
- Establish clear guidelines and procedures for leadership selection, succession, and conflict resolution.
- Empower a governing body to enforce these standards and mediate disputes within the church.

### 5.4.4 Relational Leadership and Conflict Resolution

- Train leaders with the expertise and tools necessary to steer interpersonal tensions, facilitate open dialogue, and foster reconciliation.
- Encourage a culture of lively listening, empathy, and a commitment to find common ground in the church.
- Implement regular conflict resolution workshops and team-building exercises to strengthen relationships and enhance collaborative problem-solving.

### 5.4.5 Monitoring and Evaluating the Model

- Regularly evaluate the implementation and effectiveness of the ECZ Reconciliation and Renewal Model.
- Gather feedback from church members, leaders, and key stakeholders to identify areas for improvement, and course correction and adapt the model as necessary to ensure its long-term viability and the ongoing unity and spiritual vitality of the ECZ.

## 5.5 AREAS FOR FURTHER STUDY

After interrogating the shortcomings of this current study, some areas for further study were identified, which would complement the findings in this study. These areas include;

*i.* ***Comparative Analysis of Conflict Resolution Approaches in AEC***

This study focused specifically on the Evangelical Church of Zimbabwe, but it would be valuable to carry out a proportional examination of conflict resolution strategies and best practices across a broader sample of Evangelical churches in Africa. This could help identify common themes, culturally-relevant approaches, and innovative solutions that could be applied more widely to address leadership conflicts and church splits within the African Evangelical context.

*ii.* ***The Role of Spiritual Formation in Strengthening Church Governance and Unity***

The proposed working model emphasizes the importance of spiritual formation and renewal as a key component in resolving conflicts and restoring unity within the ECZ. Further research could explore deeper into the specific practices, curricula, and implementation strategies that most effectively cultivate Christ-like character, biblical literacy, and a shared dedication to the church's mission among its leaders. This could provide valuable insights for other churches seeking to incorporate spiritual formation as an integral part of their governance and conflict resolution approaches.

*iii.* ***Long-Term Impact Assessment of Reconciliation and Renewal Initiatives in the Evangelical Church of Zimbabwe***

Given the chronic nature of the conflicts and divisions that have plagued the ECZ, it would be crucial to carry out a longitudinal study assessing the long-term impact and sustainability of the proposed Reconciliation and Renewal Model. This would involve

tracking the church's progress over an extended period, evaluating the model's effectiveness in healing past wounds, preventing future conflicts, and strengthening the ECZ's overall spiritual vitality and missionary impact. Findings from such a study could inform ongoing refinements to the model and provide valuable lessons for other churches embarking on similar journeys of reconciliation and transformation.

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## APPENDICES

## APPENDIX A: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PARTICIPANTS

**BINDURA UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE EDUCATION**

**FACULTY OF COMMERCE**

**GRADUATE SCHOOL OF BUSINESS**

**"Where Great Minds Meet"**

**MASTER OF LEADERSHIP AND CORPORATE GOVERNANCE**

**Introduction**

My name is Brain Kahondo Chitumba, and I am a student with the Graduate School of Business at Bindura University of Science Education, am currently pursuing a Masters of Leadership and Corporate Governance Degree. As part of the requirements for this degree, I am required to carry out an academic research based on a related topic of interest. Therefore, I am carrying out this study on "***A working model towards resolving leadership wrangles in the church: A case of The Evangelical Church of Zimbabwe."*** I therefore, humbly ask you to assist in soliciting data by responding to the questions.

**Ethical declaration**

I declare that the information gathered through this questionnaire shall strictly and only be used for academic purposes. Also note that the information collected shall strictly be kept confidential while the identities of sources of information shall remain anonymous. I further declare that responding to this questionnaire is entirely voluntary and no participant will be

coerced into responding to any of the questions on this questionnaire. Participants reserve the right to withdraw from the participation at any stage of the research process if they so wish.

**Consent form**

I allow the researcher to use any of the information I will provide in fulfillment of this academic research.

---------- -----/-------- / 2024

**Signature** **Date**

**SECTION A: DEMOCRAPHIC DATA PROFILES**

A1. What is your gender? (*Tick which applicable*).

Male ☐ Female ☐ Other ☐

A2. How old are you? (*Tick the applicable box*).

| 18-35 Years | 36-45 Years | 46-50 Years | 51-60 Years | 61 Years + |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | |

A3. What is your highest level of education? (*Tick the appropriate box*).

| **Educational level** | **Response** |
|---|---|
| Primary Education | |
| Secondary Education | |
| College Diploma | |
| Degree Level | |
| Postgraduate Degree | |

A4. How long have you been a member of this church?

| **0-10 Years** | **11-20 Years** | **21-30 Years** | **31 Years +** |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | | |

A5. What is your position in the church? (*Tick the appropriate box*).

Pastor ☐ Overseer ☐ Elder ☐ Deacon ☐ Member ☐

**SECTION B: FACTORS THAT CONTRIBUTED TO THE SPLIT IN THE ECZ**

B1. Have you experienced or witnessed a church split? (Tick the appropriate box).

| | |
|---|---|
| Yes | |
| No | |

B2. If ye, what were the primary reasons for the split?

.....

.....

.....

B3. What do you think were the major causes of the conflict between TEAM and the church which split the Evangelical Church of Zimbabwe in 1990/91?

.....

.....

A4. How much do you think racial segregation contributed to the leadership wrangle which split the ECZ in the early 1990s?

| **Least Contributed** | **Contributed** | **Fairly Contributed** | **Contributed** | **Strongly Contributed** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **1** | **2** | **3** | **4** | **5** |
| | | | | |

B5. Do you agree that church doctrinalor theological teaching differences largely contributed to the conflict which split the church in 2015?

| **Strongly disagree** | **Disagree** | **Not Sure** | **Agree** | **Strongly Agree** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **1** | **2** | **3** | **4** | **5** |
| | | | | |

B6. Do you think the church`s governance system contributed to leadership conflict that split church splits? (Yes /No), if yes can you explain.....

.....

.....

**SECTION C: EFFECTS OF SPLITS TO THE CHURCH**

C1. How much have church splits affected your congregational growth? (*Tick correct box*).

| Effect | Response |
|---|---|
| Negatively impacted growth | |
| Had no impact | |
| Not sure | |
| Have had a positive impact | |

C2. What have been the major effects of church splits on members? (*Tick the correct box*)

| Emotional effects | Response |
|---|---|
| Hate/Confusion | |
| Anger/Frustration | |
| Disillusionment | |
| Sadness/Grief | |
| Broken hearted | |
| Reduced church attendance | |

C3. How much have church conflicts impacted and undermined the credibility of your church`s community outreach/ mission?

……..

……..

C4. What sort of leadership should be anticipated in the church?

……

……

……

**SECTION D: LEADERSHIP MODEL THAT CAN HELP RESOLVE CONFLICTS AMONG LEADERS IN THE CHURCH**

D1. What strategies have been effective in resolving church conflicts?

| Strategies | Response |
|---|---|
| Mediation | |
| Counseling | |
| Prayer/Fasting | |
| Open Communication | |
| Other | |

D2. How important is leadership training in preventing church splits?

……

……

D3. What strategies or what do you suggest should be done in order to resolve further church conflicts and prevent/reduce splits in the church today?

……

……

……

**THE END**

## APPENDIX B: THE INTERVIEW GUIDE

**THE QUESTIONS**

1. How old are you?
2. Are you a member of the ECZ?
3. For how long have you been in the ECZ?
4. From your understanding what do you think caused the 1989/90 church split?
5. To what extent was racial segregation the major cause of leadership wrangles which ultimately caused the 1989/90 church split?
6. Do you think there is a relationship between the causes of the 1989/90 split and the 2015 split in the Evangelical Church of Zimbabwe? If so explain**……..**
7. How much damage has been made to the church by these splits?
8. How much can you say leadership wrangles have affected the ECZ?
9. Can you explain how the 1990/91 church was resolved if you understand what happened?
10. What do you suggest should be done to prevent and or resolve future leadership wrangles before they can damage the church?

**THANK YOU**

## APPENDIX C: GSB LETTER TO CARRYOUT RESEARCH

BINDURA UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE EDUCATION

P Bag 1020
741 Chimurenga Rd, Off Trojan Road
Bindura, Zimbabwe

Direct Line: +263 66210 – 6284
Tel: +263 66210 – 7615, 7531/2, 7622/4
Cell: +263 772 749 583
gsb@buse.ac.zw
jmwenje@buse.ac.zw

GRADUATE SCHOOL OF BUSINESS
*Where Great Minds Meet*

7 October 2024

**TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN**

**REF: REQUEST TO CARRY OUT RESEARCH: Kahondo Chitumba Brain [B1541411] MASTER OF LEADERSHIP AND CORPORATE GOVERNANCE (MLC), PART 2.1 STUDENT**

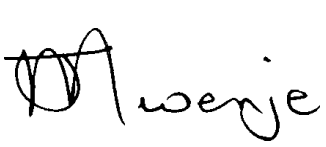
This letter serves to confirm that **Kahondo Chitumba Brain [B1541411]** is a Master of Leadership and Corporate Governance student in the Graduate School of Business at Bindura University of Science Education.

The student is the final stage of study which requires him to carry out a research. His dissertation is titled ***"A working model towards resolving leadership wrangles in the church: A Case of the Evangelical Church of Zimbabwe."***

We would be grateful if you could give him any assistance he may require.

For more details, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours faithfully,






Dr J. Mwenje
**Director, Graduate School of Business**

**THE EVANGELICAL CHURCH OF ZIMBABWE**
**National Offices**
**MINISTRY CENTRE**
**CORNER MILFORD & 6th AVE, PARKTOWN**

**Bishop`s Office**
**+263 77 263 2729**
**+263 77 369 0284**

01 November 2024

**Attention: Brain Kahondo Chitumba (B1541411: MLC)**
Bindura University of Science Education
**BINDURA**

**Re: Application for permission to carry out a dissertation within the Evangelical Church of Zimbabwe**

This matter refers.

In response to your application for permission to carry out your research within Evangelical Church of Zimbabwe please be advised that your request has been accepted and granted. You can therefore, go ahead and conduct your study. However, note that we would be grateful if you can furnish us with a copy of the report once it has been completed.

Should anyone request for more information please feel free to refer them to the undersigned or the Bishops Office.

Yours in Christ

Rev Emmanuel Kagoma
**National Chairman - Administration Committee**
***for* The Evaneglical Church of Zimbabwe**

THE EVANGELICAL CHURCH OF ZIMBABWE
NATIONAL OFFICE
24 NOV 2024
P.O. BOX W389
WATERFALLS HARARE