

## **EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION AS AN IMPETUS FOR CONFLICT MANAGEMENT IN A MULTI-STAFF PASTORAL MINISTRY**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The paper titled “Effective Communication as an Impetus for Conflict Management in a Multi-staff Pastoral Setting” is descriptive research that explore the conflict management models, communication tools in Multi Pastoral setting. Knowing fully well that the work of ministry is enormous, there is therefore the need to engage more than one pastors in a local church to effectively facilitate ministerial assignments. Accomplishing this comes with several changes, conflict inclusive. Hence, the researcher interest in engaging meaningful communication to salvage conflict among members of pastoral staff. Thus, the paper clarifies the concepts, multi-pastoral Staff ministry, effective communication, and Conflict management. The work further probes into nature of conflict in multi-pastoral staff ministry and addresses the issue of managing conflict using effective communication principles. The research discovered that conflict among members of pastoral team can be managed when all pastoral team prepared to communicate well and clearly; they are ready to not only seek to be understood but to also understand, they are mindful of their tones as well as the basic content of the message; they consult with others whenever major decisions are to be taken, among others.

*Keywords:* Communication, Conflict Management, Multi- Staff, and Pastoral Ministry.

### **INTRODUCTION**

Multi-staff has been from the beginning of the world. The idea of God calling the three heavenly beings to cooperate with Him in creation of mankind is the starting point of multi-staff ministry as recorded in the book of Genesis 1:26, *then God said, let us make man in our image, in our likeness,*

*and all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.* Multi-pastoral staff ministry as an approach in leading church is not a new concept anymore (Ayo-Obiremi 2017, 278). While this fact remains, the relationship between the members of pastoral team has been breeding misunderstanding which often times leads to conflict between the senior pastors and the other pastors. Since no body is immune against conflict, the thrust of the paper is therefore to address how to manage conflict among members of the pastoral team in a local church through effective communication. Thus, the paper clarifies the concepts, multi-pastoral Staff ministry, effective communication, and Conflict management. The work further probes into nature of conflict in multi-pastoral staff ministry and addresses the issue of managing conflict using effective communication principles.

### **CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATIONS**

#### Effective Communication

Communication is without question the most valuable skill any manager can possess. It is the link between ideas and action, the process that generates profit. Communication has also been seen as glue that binds people together in meaningful relationships, be it personal and professional. In an organization, it is the ability to communicate that connects people to others in an organization, an industry, and society (Baron et al 2008, 285). This statement stresses the vitality of communication, and effective one for healthy and productive organizations, society, and family. This makes its skillfulness as important as the very heart of the enterprise, private or public, function effectively.

Communication is more than just a way to get ideas across or exchange points of view. It is a process by which people interact with others and seek out information essential to their daily lives, allowing them to control the circumstances in which they work. This implies that communication is relational and there can never be communication without an appropriate relationship between two or more persons. Hence, communication can be said to be a process that involves sender and receivers who encode and decode messages that are transmitted by various media and that may be impeded by noise (Baron et al 2008, 286). It worth noting from this definition that human beings are not the only being that communicates. Everything that has life has the capacity to send and

receive a message from another being. Also, inanimate objects like sands, ocean, books, chairs, wood, iron could communicate to other being but may not be able to receive the feedback. People are the only living organisms known to communicate not just with signals and signs, both through the use of symbols with mutual meaning.

Hence, effective communication is stressing the important of mutual understanding of the meaning intended for a particular message without any bias. Baron Butresses that if communication is taking a transfer of meaning, then for everyone who is a party in the communication process, successful communication implies mutual understanding of the sent message, (Baron et al 2008, 286). Communication, therefore, becomes effective as both the sender and the receiver decode the intended meaning of the message sent with an appropriate response for feedback.

Generally, there are four levels of communication; these are intrapersonal, interpersonal, organizational, and mass/public communication. Within the framework of this paper, the writer will dwell more on interpersonal and organizational because the topic deals with communication among churches that relates with one another within a particular organizational setting which is religious. While intrapersonal communication entails sending messages to various parts of the body; interpersonal deals with communication between people verbally and non-verbally with the hope of transferring meaning from one person to another. Organizational communication on the other hand takes place in the context of an organization where messages are sent through various layers of authorities using various channels to discuss topics of interest with the group members and the last level which is mass or public entails sending messages from one person or source to many people simultaneously, through television, the internet, or print media (Baron et al 2008, 287).

### **Conflict Management**

The word conflict comes from the latin word *fligere* which means “to strike together.” To have a strike, there must be two different objects coming against each other. Conflict could therefore arise between two or more people. Conflict has been defined by many scholars, ranging from Rush Myron, Adetunji Oluwaponmile, Motty Bauta and others. Rush (1983, 202) opines that conflict is an open and hostile opposition occurring as a result of differing viewpoints. Joyce Hocker and

William Wilmot in the words of Adetunji (2010 123) holds that “conflict is an expressed struggle between at least two interdependence parties who perceive incompatible goals, scarce rewards, and interference from the other party in achieving their goals.” This definition implies that for conflict to happen, there must be two opposing view as earlier noted by Rush. Furthermore, Motty (2016, 6) asserts that conflict is a disagreement where in people involve hold a sense of threat to their needs, interest or concerns. Thus, for conflict to occur there must be at least two parties, viewing issues from different perspectives without interest to understand from the opposing angle. Conflict occurs everywhere and among everybody who comes together to achieve common goal. Because of fundamental background issues like language, culture, maturity of the people that makes up the organization, there would always be differing opinions which must be properly managed. However, there are occasion that individual experience personal conflict which happens when one considers issues from different perspective.

Conflict management could therefore be said to be ways of minimizing effect of conflict on the individuals involved and, on the organization, they belong to. It helps to control, and coordinates the efforts of the aggrieved parties or a group of persons to accomplish desired goals and objectives using available resources efficiently and effectively (Motty 2016, 9). Motty further notes that the goal of managing conflict is not resolution but a process of returning the aggrieved parties to normal relationship as they accept legitimacy of the other’s identity and aspirations, apologies for, and forgives the other for past aggressive or violent acts (2016, 9). Reason for this position is that conflict management theorist/practitioners’ belief that conflict can only be controlled; it can never be totally resolved. While transformational conflict managers have interest in turning conflict to opportunities instead of threat, conflict resolution focuses more on bringing about end to issues that have aggravated conflict in an organization. From the reviewer perspective, conflict management have the chance to bring about growth and development to organization as each party involved critically analyses actions, possible bridge in communications that lead to the crisis and areas of where individuals have failed in addition with how they ought to have responded. Conflict resolution on the other hand may not capture some of this area since the aim is just to ensure that the conflict is brought to an end.

Conflict resolution on the other hand has been defined as variety of approaches aimed at terminating conflicts through the constructive solving of problem according to Miller (2003, 8) in the words of Best (2006, 94). In conflict resolution, the deep-rooted sources of the conflict are expected to be addressed and resolved such that the actions of the parties become positive, less violent, and no longer hostile (Miall et al 2001, 21 in Best 2006, 94.) Thus, while conflict management aims at minimizing the negative effect on both the individuals and the corporate body, the interest of resolutions is to totally reduce to zero level the negative impact of the conflict.

Furthermore, according to Speed Leas in the words of Adetunji (2010, 126), conflict can be experience in three different ways. These are Intrapersonal conflict, interpersonal and substantive conflict. Intrapersonal conflict happens when different parts of a person compete with one another. It comes through psychological dynamics of individual owns mind (Motty 2016, 29) and it could be the genesis of all other forms of conflicts (Owolabi, 2005, 533). Interpersonal occurs through personality differences that are not related primarily to issues. It is also known as interest based or needs based conflict (Motty 2016, 28). Substantive conflict on the other hand occurs through disputes over facts, values, goals, and beliefs. According to Leas, four kinds of substantive conflict that exist are: Conflict over the facts of a situation, conflict over method or means, conflict over ends or goal, and conflict over values (Adetunji 2010, 127).

Moreover, conflict can be categories into three major phases even though some have identified more than three faces. According to Lamle (2015, 33), three phases of conflict are pre-escalation, escalation, and post-escalation. At pre-escalation phase, the conflict is still brewing trying to find root and attachment so as to grow. It could be said to be planting stage in agricultural term. Pre-escalation phase is very hard to discern except in a situation whereby previous actions have led to escalation among the members of the organization before (Lamle 2015, 34). Identifying certain disposition at this phase, Lamle notes that facial expression, postural and vocal display, such as shouting, aggressive movements, and muscle and muscle flexing are common (2015, 34).

At escalation phase, there is high tension in the mind and reaction of the aggrieved parties. Lamle (2015, 34) opines that under the escalation phase, one is immune from political violence, whether living a healthy wealthy democracy or in a country undergoing the economic development.

Emotion at this phase is usually explosive since it involves physical violence. The response of individual at post-escalation phase is largely depend on the perception of the aggrieved parties on the outcome of the resolution's agencies according Lamle (2015, 35).

### **Multi-Staff Pastoral Ministry**

Obiremi asserts that multi-staff pastoral ministry is a system where a local church engages the service of more than one pastor in a single pastorate (2017, 278). It is a ministry of a local church under the leadership of one pastor who is being assisted by one or more other pastors who are called and trained in their specific areas of ministry. Nihinlola also opines that “multi-staff ministry is team work and it refers to the context where two or more pastors are called to work together simultaneously to minister to one congregation (2017, 2). He further explains that in multi-staff ministry setting, the senior pastor works with other pastors who are given different designation and assignment: associate pastor, assistance pastor, minister(s) of education, minister of music, minister of children, minister of youth, outreach and mission, minister of recreation etc. (2017, 2). From Oladeji point of view, multi-staff ministry is “a group of Christian persons who in response to the divine and ecclesiastical calling, willingly covenanted with God, a local congregation and one another, to live out their vocational mission sharing responsibility, and authority for enabling the ministries of the church to perpetuate” (Adedeji 2018). From these definitions, it is glaring that multi-staff ministry has to do with ministering to a congregation through the ministerial gifts or areas of specialization of different pastors who allows for one single shepherd to coordinate how others carry out their tasks.

According to Nihinlola (2017, 4), the following are probable reasons for multi-staff ministry as drawn from Exodus 18:1-26: God does not expect any pastor to do church work alone (v, 14); Church work is “too heavy” for a person to handle alone (v. 18b); the need for effective leadership transition. 20-21, 25-26. Several scholars such as Maxwell 1995, 69; Ayo-Obiremi (2017, 279); Hybels (1993, 16); Halmilton (2001, 41); Henderson (2001, 47); and Ishola & Oparinde 2017, 273 give principles that will enhance team work in the church. These principles include Respect, Engagement, Collaboration, Delegation, Communication, Socialization, clearly stated and written Job Description, Conflict Resolution, Regular staff meeting, and Prayer

## **NATURE OF CONFLICT IN MULTI-STAFF PASTORAL MINISTRY**

Conflict in multi-staff pastoral ministry can be classified as church conflict. The reason is because, it occurs between assumed Christian workers who are specially called into pastoral functions to work together towards leading the church to achieve the great commission. Adetunji (2010, 127-128) gives three truths about church conflict as follow:

1. Church conflict is the struggle within the fellowship of the church between the fellowships of the church, between the will of man, expressed through human nature as illustrated in Romans 7:18-25. Pastoral members are human and they could react differently to issues in their fellowship even though they are expected to demonstrate high sense of ministerial decorum.
2. Church conflict is particular members (staff) attempting to divide the church fellowship (staff meeting) into two or more conflicting factions as seen in Matthew 6:24. One of the pastoral staff is usually being used as instrument to start a conflict which if not properly handled could result to division amidst the ministerial staff.
3. Church conflict is Satan using his evil forces to weaken and make dead witnessing ministry of the church by dividing the strength and the unity of the church. Since pastors are God's means of raising men and women with great passion for the gospel, Satan always create confusion amidst them so that their impact can be less felt on the church members.

Addressing the purpose of conflict in the church, Adetunji asserts that when a church objectively face conflict, they have the chance to constructively learn to be creative towards proper ways of handling people and in the management of human/material resources (2010, 130). Conflict will also make the church to be bold to face all manners of issues and not to avoid them. For the church, conflict makes her draw upon the resources of faith to handle the matter.

Just like it could happen in any other types of organization, conflict in multi-staff pastoral ministry could also take the form of intrapersonal as a result personal challenge of a staff, job dissatisfaction, and deny of promotion. When any members of pastoral team feel cheated in the aforementioned matter, it may lead to interpersonal struggle where in certain decision would be made. From the writer's perspective, instead of suffering from killing intrapersonal conflict, it is advisable for the aggrieved party to make his/her case know to the head of the pastoral team so that the organization



will not be affected negatively. Most importantly, anyone who will be part of the multi-staff pastoral team must be one with emotional intelligence capacity. The reason is because, many issues will warrant thorough process without interference of another person. In other words, the person who will be able to overcome intrapersonal conflict in multi-staff ministry must be a maturing Christian who is also ready to learn.

Another form that multi-staff pastoral conflict could take is interpersonal which manifests in the relationship with other staff, group assigned duties, and moral/ethical values. Each pastor comes from a different background, have different attitudes to work ethic and hold on to differing moral and ethical values. These differences are enough to breed disagreement which may eventually turn to conflict among the pastoral team. For example, when a pastor fails to carry-out assigned responsibilities as expected, this may lead to conflict. If is not properly managed, it may affect work ethics of other pastoral team members.

#### **METHODS OF MANAGING CONFLICT**

There are various approaches to managing conflict as suggested by many scholars based on the nature of the conflict being handling. These scholars include Adetunji 2010, Motty 2016, Best 2006, Ojiji 2006. Apart from the three major forms of conflict noted by Adetunji in his book titled “Leadership in action”. Other types of conflict that may requires different management approaches are Cross-cultural, spiritual conflict, ethnic conflict, economic conflict, political conflict, social conflict, and religious conflict. Even though the writer aims at addressing the three major conflicts that could take place within a small organizational setting like church which could in turn affect the productivity and the relationship of the members of the staff; it is essential to be aware of other forms of conflict noted above which may attract several management styles which this paper may not cover.

Some of the Conflict management and resolution approaches noted by the above-mentioned scholars includes withdrawing or avoiding, dominance, competing, accommodating, compromising, collaboration, win-win, win-lose, lose-lose, and confrontation. Other elements of the collaborative process for conflict management according to Best (2006, 101) are grassroots community-based activities, good governance, communication, collaboration, negotiation,



conciliation, mediation, arbitration, adjudication, and crisis management. The writer will streamline discussion on the previous approaches because of the limitation of the topic and the paper.

Withdrawing or avoiding as a conflict management style most at times deny the existence of conflict because of the intension to avoid aggressive situation which may leads to open confrontation. According to Motty (2016, 101), this style is characterized by delegating controversial decisions, accepting default decision, and not wanting to hurt anyone's feeling. As good as this may sound to hear, it later turns out to disastrous on both parties and the entire organization because the issues are left unattended to. When this style is adopted by any party or by the organization, symptoms like the following may be seen: relocation/resignation, divorce, voting one out of office, silence at the meeting, and murder/suicide.

Dominating or competing style tries to enforce certain decision on the parties involved in the conflict which may not be favorable in most occasion. In this case, corporate goal or personal goal of the person in authority is taken to be of utmost importance than other members' goal. Motty (2016, 108) however notes that this style can be useful when there is an emergency and a decision needs to be taken very fast; when the decision is unpopular, or when defending against someone who is trying to exploit the situation selfishly.

Accommodating conflict management style allows for conscious attempts to neglect one's needs and focus on satisfying those of the other party (Ojiji 2006, 122). This can be said to be more of sacrificial because it tries to apportion blame to a particular person even when the person seems to be on the right track. Motty (2016, 111) opines that the fact that this style ends in win-lose solution is not good as the one accommodating bears the brunt of the person being accommodated. Thus, this style is not always encouraged in the organization. It is known as "Your way."

Compromising style of conflict management can be said to be the opposite of accommodating as all the parties involves bears the pains and the gain equally. Each party will have to shift ground in order to have win-win end result. According to Motty (2016, 112), this style is useful when the cost of conflict is higher than the cost of losing ground, when equal strength opponents are at a standstill and when there is a deadline looming. This is called "Half Way."

Collaborative style in the words of Ojiji (2006, 122) is related to the disposition of being assertive and cooperative where the parties do not avoid the conflicts but rather work with each other to find a solution that is satisfactory to both of them. Though this seems like compromising but it is different as all the parties involved are ready to confront the reality of the conflict with intention to derive logical reasons for the cause and lessons that they could learn from it. It is known as “Our way” or “win-win.”

Another conflict management style is confrontation which its result is always devastating on the individuals and the cooperate body. The parties who engage in confrontation could threatening each other, insult each other, and generally engage in violent attack such as bullying, hitting with iron or any other materials (Ojiji 2006, 124.) This often results to lose-lose situation as none of the parties are ready to shift ground for each other. When this happens in the church, it often requires the effort of elderly ones or legal advocate to bring back peace.

Another important conflict resolution or management style noted by Ojiji is Problem Solving. This style makes attempts to focus on the problem and not the personality of the individuals in the conflict. “The approach involves parties constructively listening to each other with the intention to understand the underlying elements in the conflict and to deal with the issues” (Ojiji 2006, 124). Under normal circumstance, is expected that problem solving approach to conflict management and resolution should bring about lasting solutions to the conflict in the organization or between the parties the parties that are involve.

In addition, it worth noting that in handling conflict most times, there is a need to engage mediator in mediation process to serves as intermediary between the two conflicting parties to analyses the situation so as to bring about reconciliation. corroborating this, Moore (1996, 15) in the words of Godongs (2006, 132), aver that mediation is the intervention in a negotiation of conflict of an acceptable third party who has limited or no authoritative decision- making power but who assist the involved parties in voluntary reaching a mutual acceptable settlement of issues in dispute. Hence, a mediator assumes moral and legal responsibility, or even liability in the conflict.

Godongs (2006, 134-135) identifies three major types of mediators which are: social network mediator, authoritative mediator, and independent mediator. Social network mediators are

individuals or groups who share common values or a network of relationships with the disputants. The basis and strength of their mediatory roles are drawn from the fact that they are part of the social network and therefore are known and trusted by the disputants. Authoritative mediators are those who occupy positions of relative importance and power with the disputants within the same organization. The workplace conflict in many cases engages authoritative mediator. Independent Mediator on the other hand is individual or group that has no concern on any of the issues in conflict but by the virtue of the expertise and professionalism, they are expected to bring lasting peace to conflict between the disputed parties.

Generally, the mediator serves as: the opener of communication channel, the legitimizer, the process facilitator, the trainer, the resources expander, the problem explorer, the agent of reality, the scapegoat, and the leader according to Moore in the words of Godongs (2006, 136). More so, in mediation, there are certain principles that must guide the process. These include the principal impartiality, confidentiality, self-determination, voluntariness, and principle of empowerment and determination (Godongs 2006, 137).

### **MODES OF COMMUNICATION AMONG CHURCH STAFF**

For members of the church staff to communicate effectively and to perform efficiently, there is a need for them to understand and select appropriate modes of communication that best suit their organization. The church, if seen as a corporate organization can consider conventionally formal organizational communication structure to be of great help. Hence, this aspect aims at discussing basic types of communication as well as formal organizational communication structure.

There are two major types of communication. These are communication-based on channels and communication based on purpose and style. The communication that is based on the channel has two forms which are verbal and non-verbal, and the communication that is based on purpose/style includes formal and informal.

Under the communication based on channel, verbal communication is referred to the communication in which message is transmitted verbally or orally; it is majorly done by words of mouth or by writing (Wambiu, Kibui, & Gathuthi 2012, 2; Certo 1989, 332). When communicating verbally, members of church staff must ensure that they keep the information short and simple

(KISS). Also, verbal communication requires the sender to put him/herself on the side of the table and think from the receivers' point of view if they would understand the message and how it would be perceived on the other side of the table.

Non-verbal communication according to McConnell in the word of Wambui, Kibui, & Gathuthi (2012, 6), is behaviors other than writing or spoken communication, that creates or represent meaning. It could be expressed facially, body movements, and gestures, and symbols. Unspoken words universally carry a deeper meaning than even what the sender intends to give them. As it could be effective, it could also be destructive to individuals and organizations because of the popular adage that says "actions speak louder than voice/words." In some occasions, non-verbal could prevent embarrassment as symbols are put to use according to Rosenthal et al in words of (Wambui, Kibui, & Gathuthi 2012, 8). Its primarily functions include expression of emotion, expression of interpersonal attitudes, accompanying speech, self-presentation of one's personality, and ritual purposes (Argyle 1988).

Another form of communication that should fall under non-verbal communication is visual communication which may come inform of media whether printed or electronic. It could as well include the use of signs, maps, or drawing as well as color or graphic design. They usually help in reinforcing verbal communication. It could as well aid the speaker to remember important points or topics.

The communication that is based on purpose and style include formal and informal communication. Formal communication follows the organizational chart and it is downward, upward, or lateral. While downward organizational communication concerns the direction of the employees, upward organizational communication provides organization feedback from employees to the top management; and lateral organizational communication involves planning and coordinating (Certo 1989, 334).

Informal organizational communication on the other hands follows the pattern of personal relationship among organizational members (Certo 1989, 334). Informal communication pattern allows for the use of foul language, slangs, signs that are not generally expected in the organization. In an organization, informal communication helps in finding out staff grievances as people express

more when talking informally (Wambiu, Kibui, & Gathuthi 2012, 9). It tends to healthily build relationships among the members of the organization as people relate without any form of pretense. However, it must be properly guided so as not to be abused.

### **COMMUNICATION AND CONFLICT MANAGEMENT IN A MULTI-STAFF PASTORAL MINISTRY**

When members of the church multi-staff pastoral team are intentional about effective communication, it would not only manage conflict after its occurrence, it will prevent unnecessary conflicts from happening. Since most of the causes of conflict are traceable to misunderstanding which manifest in mis-management of information, effective communication therefore becomes a tool with which conflicts can be prevented and well managed in among the members of multi-staff pastoral team in the local church. To achieve this, the following principles must be taken into consideration:

All pastoral team must be prepared to communicate well (Utake 2019, 117). Since everything starts from the heart, every member of the pastoral team must be encouraged by the leader to develop a positive mindset to communication. Apart from the fact that all church staff must have an understanding of the components of the communication process, they are equally expected to understand various messages inherent in communication which according to Gangel (1989, 311) includes what the message intends to say, the source says, what the source has said, what the receiver wants to hear, and what the receiver hears. All these must be taken into consideration by all the parties involved in communication among the pastoral staff. Many a time, communication is affected by non-preparation in terms of inadequate skill to properly communicate by a member or some members of pastoral team.

Pastoral team must practice open communication with honesty (Utake 2019, 119). Open communication with honesty is very critical to the efficiency and cooperation of all pastoral team. This would help to carry all members along and it would give equal opportunity to all personnel to be aware of the happening in the organization. Also, they would be opportune to communicate their perspective to the appropriate quarters. Open communication which is also referred to as “congruent communication” is both supportive and confrontational but is necessary for a healthy

organization. Robinson in the words of Utake 2019, 119) opines that failure to communicate openly and honestly will destroy interpersonal relationships between the church ministers (staff), especially in multiple ministries. Hence, those serving in leadership capacities should model and champion the course of open communication throughout the organization (Anthony & Estep 2005, 237).

Multi-staff pastoral members must be ready to carefully listen to verbal communication and thoughtfully process other means of communication before feedback. The more systematic members of an organization analyze the problem of ideas to be communicated, the clearer it becomes. Many communications have been said to fail not because the information is defective but because of inadequate planning (Certo 1989 330). Thus, church staff whose desire is to achieve effective communication must understand good planning which considers the goals and attitudes of those who will receive the communication and those who will be affected by it.

Members of pastoral team must examine the true purpose of each communication. There is a need to always ask the question of the need whenever communication is to take place whether it is to obtain information, initiate action, and change another person's attitude? Certo opines that members of the organization must identify the most important goal and then adapt their language, tone, and total approach to serving that specific objective (1989, 330). From certo's submission, the implication of discovering the purpose of communication first is to help the parties involve select appropriate means of responding to any message receive and in an appropriate manner. In other words, the purpose of communication would help staff members to appropriately select the methods and manner of communication. Therefore, if one cannot pinpoint the reason for communicating particular information to the targeted audience, there is no need to speak (Baron et al 2010, 310).

Members of pastoral team and the lead pastor who is the chief administrative officer must consider the total physical and human setting. Communication does not take place between parties only, it happens in a particular context or environment, and a particular situation. Supporting this, Certo (1989, 330) equally asserts many factors influence the overall impact of communication ranging from a sense of timing, physical setting (private or public), custom, and practice of the

organization. The degree of communication is expected to conform to and not depart from the expected of other staff members. Therefore, pastoral team must be conscious of the circumstance under which an announcement or a decision is to be taken, and the social climate that pervades work relationships within the church to achieve effective communication which will, in turn, bring about the efficient staff.

Church pastoral team must consult with others whenever major decisions are to be taken. There is power in consultation as all members of the organization would have a sense of belonging. Where pastors solely take decision over a very important matter that ought to have been communicated to other church staff, the resultant effect is always bad. On the good side of consultative communication, Certo (1989, 331) states that it leads to additional insight and objectivity of the message to be passed across; and those who are actively involved in planning the communication would provide commensurate support.

Members of the pastoral team must be mindful of their tones as well as the basic content of the message. The tones of voice, language, expression, receptiveness to the response of others do have a magnitude effect on the intending receiver because they subtly affect the listener reaction to the message (Certo 1989, 331). Thus, whoever is communicating among the members of the church staff should carefully select the right tone, right gesture, correct language, and show some level of receptivity to his/her audience. This would not only make the audience create interest to clearly understand what the sender is passing across, but it would also encourage them to make clarifications on the grey aspect of the communication. From the writer's point of view, crisis and conflict resulting from communication could be arrested as the sender allows enabling environment where members of the organization could clarify unclear information.

Furthermore, whoever is passing across information among the members of the pastoral staff must follow up the communication? The purpose of the communication can be easily defeated and the sender may be ignorant of whether the information sent was clearly understand or not if proper follow-up is not done. This follow-up could be achieved by asking questions, by encouraging the receiver to express his or her reactions, by follow-up contacts (one on one), and by subsequent review of performance through feedback (Certo 1989, 332). The sender of the information may



ask the receivers about their perception of the message. They may equally be asked to express their responses through actions or in writing. When these are done, appropriate feedback is given and the sender would be able to know the next action plan.

All members of pastoral team must be ready to not only seek to be understood but to also understand. This happens as the one communicating prepares to listen to the reaction of his audience. According to Certo (1989, 323), listening is one of the most important, most difficult, and most neglected skills in communication as it demands that the communicator concentrate not only on the explicit meanings of another person is expressing, but also on the implicit meanings, spoken words, and undertone that may be far more significant. Hence, church pastoral staff must be ready to engage the inner ear to know the inner person to understand information others are trying to pass across for efficient discharge of their respective duties.

## **CONCLUSION**

It could be seen from this paper that conflict is inevitable in any form of relationship. In fact, conflict has been seen by some evangelical scholars as a symbol of healthy relationship. Notwithstanding, its negative effects which often comes through mismanagement must be guided against. In the context of this paper, Conflict in the Multi- Pastoral staff ministry could also be prevented and properly managed (minimizing the negative effects) when it eventually occurs so as to restore healthy social and working environment among the concerned ministers. Achieving this requires an established effective communication among the members of the pastoral team members through the application of communication principles that will help the members to understand themselves without complications.

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