

## Modern Views of Conflict and Pauline Model of Conflict Resolution in I Corinthians 3:1-10 and Its Implication for the Nigerian Christian

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### Abstract

Conflict is inevitable in the society of humans. The church community is not an exception. Conflict was present in Paul's church community and even in the contemporary church in Nigeria. Using the methodology of conflict resolution, the study examined Pauline model of church conflict resolution in 1 Corinthians 3:1-10 and seek to apply same to the contemporary church in Nigeria. The paper showed that the conflict that was addressed by Paul in 1 Corinthians 3:1-10 was that of schism caused by promotion of personality instead of God. The paper argued that Paul's model of church conflict resolution can be imbed by both ecclesiastical and secular leaders in the handling of church and secular crisis. Paul's approach in general is a lesson that must be learnt by both political and church leaders especially those who scheme to gain cheap popularity and self ego by running others down.

### 1. Introduction

The propelling factor for the choice of this work is the situation of schism in the contemporary church in Nigeria (Akhilomen, 2011:228-243). The early New Testament church was characterized by multifarious crisis. 1 Corinthians 3:1-10 is one of such typical crisis in the early church. The nature of the crisis was that of division which arose from personality influence. It was divided along leadership lines. This could be called the predecessor versus the successor syndrome. This syndrome creates unnecessary and unconstructive comparisms between the predecessor and the successor thereby trying to establish some sort of superiority of one over the other. This unhealthy comparism is done among the people. This was the case between Paul (predecessor) and Appollos (successor). While some of the church members in Corinth chose to belong to Paul, others chose to belong to Appollos. This brought schism to the church. Paul addressed the issue by applying the principle of division of labour in order for the church to understand that Paul's area of ministry is planting of churches and that of Appollos was that of nurturing. This quite explains the principle of division of labour which Paul some times referred to as *charism* in 1 Corinthians 12.

Therefore, the methodology adopted for this paper is the conflict resolution model. This model tends to address conflict situations with some social and conflict resolution mechanisms. The main aim of this work is to use the Pauline model of conflict resolution as exemplified in 1 Corinthians 3:1-10 and to apply same to the contemporary church in Nigeria. Being that the society of humans cannot be totally free from conflicts, the church being consisted of humans cannot also be freed from crisis. Therefore, the church in Nigeria shall be situated in this context here. Although the church is seen by Christians as a spiritual

body, it must also be understood that the church as a spiritual body exists in a physical and human world (Ottuh, 2014:67).

## 2. Contemporary Context of Interpretation of 1 Corinthians 3:1-10

The contemporary context of the interpretation of 1 Corinthians 3:1-10 in this paper is the situation of church conflict and church conflict resolution in Nigeria. Church conflicts ensue in the church in Nigeria as a result of many factors. It could be either as a result of personal interest, wrong precedence or doctrinal issues. One of the major crisis that is rocking the church in Nigeria is the hyper commercialization clamour among clergies. This clamour is a drive for materialism which they feel will make them relevant before the members and the society (Iheanacho, 2012). Clash of interest among church leaders and even among church members are not new in the contemporary church in Nigeria (Adamolekun, 2006:20).

Unhealthy rivalry and show of superiority in Nigerian Christianity have caused a lot of conflicts in the church. Another point of conflict in the Nigerian Church is the decline of true spirituality among some clergies. On this note Iheanacho (2012:) states that it may not be overstatement to state that the practical spiritual life of Nigerian Christians is not commensurate with their numerical nthat the more proliferation of the churches in Nigeria, the more the faith experience decline in spiritual commitment, morality and practical Christian living. Instead, many of the churches are significantly occupied with the here, and now affairs of this world as shaped by the Nigerian social system. The scenario facilitates rapid secularization of Christian spirituality. The implication is that the practice of Christianity in modern Nigeria is deviating from its intrinsic worth and value, to some motives which are at variance with its fundamentals. Fake Ministers, Prophets, Evangelists and sundry clergy-men are ubiquitous, vending ‘individually framed, and false imaginations’, in place of Divine revelations and fervour. Such practice presents God, not as He is, but as suits their selfish motives. One common practice among the Pentecostal Charismatics variety is shouting and ‘commanding’ God to ‘obey’ and respond according to their wish, not by the will of God.

In the opinion of Ogunwale (2006:322-331) corruption is the source of conflict in the Nigerian Church. Ogunwale categorized corruption in the Nigerian church as: financial corruption, sexual corruption and political corruption. Looking at the church in Nigeria as an ecumenical body, Akhilomen (2011, 228) states:

after a century of the birth of the modern ecumenical movement in the Edinburgh Conference of 1910 and at the beginning of the second decade of the twenty-first century, the scandal of Christian rivalry and disunity of churches remains embarrassingly rife in Nigeria. Despite the advances in inter-faith dialogues and ecumenical endeavours, nationally and globally, the vexed problems associated with the divisive character of the church stares all in the face. Apart from the scandalous effect on missionary enterprises, the divisions and disunity among churches have brought the Christian faith to ridicule in the eyes of non-Christians; especially with the increasing proliferation of churches in Nigeria mainly accountable to schisms.

Mindful of the imperative of Christian unity as requested in Jesus Christ’s prayer in John 17:21, the ideal of *oikoumene* had remained desirable hence prior to the twentieth century, efforts were made at repairing divisions and restoring Church unity. The church in Nigeria

no doubt is interested in resolving their conflicts. This is why Paul's model of Church conflict resolution in 1 Corinthians 3:1-10 can become a recipe for conflict resolution for the Church in Nigeria.

### **3. Modern Views of Conflict: A Comparative Analysis**

There are several views about conflict. Odeh (2008:226-227) presents three types of views about conflict. Liberal view of conflict, the Marxist approach to Conflict and liberation wars approach. In the liberal view of conflict, many liberal scholars see conflict as being managed through reason and Goodwill and a readiness to compromise and agree. Conflict seen from this Point of view has its disadvantages. These Liberal conflict scholars like George Simmel, John W. Burton K.E. Boulding, R.E., Park, E.W., Burgess and L.A. Cozer see conflict as a form of integrative tendency (Max, 1957: 69-75). For instance, for George Simmel, conflict is one of the central forms of interaction among men. He further stated that, conflict is designed to resolve divergent misconceptions (Onoja, 1996:15). Not only that, it is a way of achieving some kind of unity even if it is through the annihilation of one of the conflicting parties. Park and Burgess treat conflict as a form of interaction that helps to stabilize the society. But in contrast to some of these views, some other liberal scholars see conflict as a dissociative process. G. A. Lindberg stated that, conflict is a suspension communication between the opposing parties (Mitchell, 85). Likewise, L. Wilson and W.L. Kolb see conflict as a disjunctive process; for them, conflict takes place between individual, organizations or groups who seek to possess the same objective, occupy the same space or exclusive position, play incompatible roles, maintain incompatible goals and undertake Mutually the same means for achieving their purpose and interests (Otite and Olawale, 1991: 88).

The Marxist approach to conflict takes a different stand from the liberal view point. The Marxist approach believes that conflict comes about because of the contradictions in the human environment through class struggle. It can be understood that, conflict is inevitable in human society. As a matter of fact, the Marxist scholars viewed conflict in the society as resulting from the interaction between social aggregates/classes. Hence, conflict is inherent in the class system and it is incapable of solving the class distinction within system. Crises such as mutual exploitations, enslavement, unequal distribution of scarce resources, and thingification are some of the manifestations of conflict or struggle between contending classes. Evidently, these approaches focus more on class antagonism with no recognition that other kinds of conflict such as ethnic, religious, economic and political conflicts exist within the society. Apart, conflict also has three dimensions, viz. Bitter end or joint survival conflict (both of the parties are likely to survive). Fundamental or accidental conflict and manageable or unmanageable conflict e.g. Korean war of (1950-1952) and Vietnam war Tutsi and Rwanda -1965-1972 (Rupesingbe, 145).

The liberation war approach, view conflict from a colonial and imperialist domination. Colonialism which is the process of taking political, economic and social control of a state without the consent of its owners by another state is an action which degenerates into conflict. This leads to a conflict when patriotic citizens of the occupied state, with the spirit of nationalism, rise up to their responsibilities and kick against foreign rule and domination. The action of the nationalists whose results are usually based on unity of purpose to liberate their motherland and seek sovereign status is normally carried out through liberation wars. We are living witness in Africa where nationalist groups in Southern Africa especially in Mozambique, Namibia, Zimbabwe, South Africa and Angola have waged protracted liberation wars in order to liberate their colonized territories. These liberation wars never paid off handsomely because all the colonized territories mentioned above, have gained political independence in their respective areas. However, in Angola rival nationalist

groups are still waging war against the government in power in order to gain control or the central machinery of power of the government. This has resulted into unnecessary loss of life and property with socio-economic and political set back .

#### **4. Socio-Historical Context of 1 Corinthians 3:1-10**

Some people identified only as "those from Chloe" have arrived in Ephesus and have told Paul that there were divisions among the Corinthians, as well as other unflattering things about the Corinthians. Paul wrote 1 Corinthians after he had heard this information about the Corinthians from "those from Chloe (Smith, 2013)." Paul's statements in 1 Cor 1:12 "Each one of you is saying, "I am of Paul," and "I of Apollos," and "I of Cephas," and "I of Christ" " and 4:6 "In order that no one of you will become proud on behalf of one against the other," indicate that some of the Corinthians have given their adherence to Christian leaders other than Paul. So it is possible that what is implied by someone saying that he or she is "of Apollos" etc. is a rejection of Paul and his authority. In 1 Cor 4:3, Paul's claim "To me it is a very small thing that I may be examined by you, or by any human court" could indicate that he is aware that his apostolic ministry has come under criticism by some of the Corinthians. In 1 Cor 4:18-20, Paul explicitly identifies some in the Corinthian church who have become arrogant towards him and are questioning his authority over them; they are saying that he is not coming back to the city, possibly because he is afraid of them: "Now some have become arrogant, as though I were not coming to you" (4:18). For this reason he warns, "I will come to you soon...and I shall find out, not the words of those who are arrogant but their power" (4:19). In 1 Cor 9:1-11, Paul sees the need to defend his rights as an apostle, presumably because these are in question: "My defense to those who examine me is this" (9:3). It is possible that Paul's question in 1 Cor 10:30 "If I partake with thankfulness, why am I slandered concerning that for which I give thanks?" indicates that some of the Corinthians were condemning him for his liberal policy of eating meat sacrificed to idols. Finally, when he says sarcastically, "If anyone thinks he is a prophet or spiritual, let him recognize that the things which I write to you are the Lord's commandment" (14:37), Paul could have in mind some of the Corinthians who, because they are supposed to be "spiritual," claim to have to have prophetic inspiration and thereby reject Paul's apostolic authority (Smith, 2013). All of these scriptures mentioned above, buttressed the deepness of the problem in Corinth at the era of Appolo's leadership in the church.

The Corinthians also succumbed to their society's partial attitudes toward the privileged. It is very likely that the incestuous man of 1 Corinthians 5 was a man of high social status. The Roman system of jurisprudence was partial to those with great clout, providing legal advantages for those of high status. Paul argued that the Corinthians must not share this same partiality (Vincent, 2003). This partiality toward the elite combined with the Roman way of expressing zeal for one's favorite teacher converged in elite believers from the Corinthian church using their status to defend the teacher to whom they were partial. Not everyone had the right to prosecute in the Roman colony of Corinth. "Generally, lawsuits were conducted between social equals who were from the powerful of the city, or by a plaintiff of superior social status and power against an inferior" (Winter, 2001: 60). It appears that two of the leading Christians in the Corinthian community were taking their strife and jealousy over Christian leadership into the Roman court system to conduct a power struggle that was leading to greater hatred and division within the church. According to Paul, this was no activity for "brothers" (1 Cor. 6:6), and thus he sought to shame those involved (1 Cor. 6:5).

Unlike those of lower status whose options were limited, the elite had the luxury of "doing whatever they wished" (1 Cor. 6:12; 10:23). The unholy trinity of gluttony,

drunkenness, and sexual immorality was a common feature of Corinthian brothels. First-century Platonic anthropology (the body is made for pleasure), philosophical hedonism (one's immortal soul is unaffected by one's conduct), and Roman social conventions are the reasons behind Roman justification of loose living. Only those who possessed status would have the right to pursue such indulgences. This temptation would be particularly strong when eighteen year-old males received the Roman toga virilis - "a symbol of adulthood and the assuming of responsibility for one's actions" (Winter, 2001:90). Though socially accepted, Paul argued that to participate in the excesses of this rite of passage is nothing other than fornication (1 Cor. 6:13, 18). Contrary to Platonic anthropology, the body is God's and made for God (1 Cor. 6:13-20). This fundamental misunderstanding concerning the importance of the body also underscores Paul's extended treatment of bodily resurrection in chapter 15. The temptations of gluttony, drunkenness, and sexual immorality would also arise for those Roman citizens privileged enough to attend the dinners given during the Isthmian games. Unger (2005:256) states that the setting of the church community of Paul in Corinth was concerned about deepening divisions, increasing contentions and unjudged sin in the church and that the factions were due not to open heresies, but to the carnality of the Corinthians and to their being carried away by admiration for Greek wisdom and eloquence.

### **5. Analysis of 1 Corinthians 3:1-10 and Its Implications**

**A. ἀδελφος (adelphos):** The Greek word *adelphos* means brother and. *Adelphos* is from the etymology *delphus* meaning the womb (Thayer and Smith, 1999). It is a word extensively and variously used in scripture. *Adelphos* could mean children of the same father or mother or people of blood relations. It could also mean people of the same tribe or nation. It could also mean people of the same religion. It was the name by which the early Christians were known before they were called Christian in Antioch (Harrison, 2004:105; Vos, 2005:186). Figuratively, *adelphos* means likeness of disposition, habits and jobs. Its Hebrew equivalent is אֶחָד (ah) and means neighbour, brotherhood, people of the same nationality, etc (*ibid*).

**B. σαρκικος (sarkikos):** Paul made use of the Greek word *σαρκικος* three times in the passage. The Greek word *σαρκικος* means carnality, corruption, fallen nature, lust, etc (Trent, 2006: 271-273). Thus the ε;rga th?j sarko<j in 1 Corinthians 3:3,4 and Galatians 5:19-21 are not merely those sinful works that are wrought in and through the body, but those which move in the sphere and region of the mind as well (Trent, 2006:270). By this understanding, *σαρκικος* does not mean the physical flesh of man but a condition of the fallen nature of man in which he is being controlled by the impulse of human weakness. Paul referred to those church members who were causing the problem as being carnal. Paul used some words to explain the nature of the people's canality. Such Greek words include ζῆλος, ἔρις and διχοστασία.

**i. ζῆλος (zelos):** The Greek word *zelos* means emulation. Jenkins (2000) postulates that "Emulations" is from the Greek word *zelos*. The word is used in both good sense and bad senses in the New Testament. Our English dictionaries point out that "emulation" means to try to equal or excel another. This sounds quite harmless because we often try to equal or excel another perhaps in sales, or grades, or athletics (Jenkins, 2000:1). This type of zeal is even needed in the church of the Lord as we emulate the lives of faithful Christians. But in a bad sense, *zelos* means "jealousy, envy" (Arndt and Gingrich, 1979:338). Thayer (1889: 271) defines it as "an envious and contentious rivalry, jealousy." Some scholars consider *zelos* and *phthonos* (envyings) as synonyms (Jenkins, 2000:2). In Greek cultural milieu, *zelos* was a good thing. If one saw another in possession of some good thing, he would be sorry that he did not possess the good thing. Envy, on the other hand, would cause one to be sorry at the other person's good fortune (*ibid*). While *zelos* can be noble ambition, *phthonos* can never be

anything else but ill-natured and embittered jealousy" (Barclay, 1962:47). Trench (2006:88-89) points out that "it is only too easy for this zeal and honorable rivalry to degenerate into a meaner passion." He says that the zeal which degenerates may assume two shapes: (a) "...that of a desire to make war upon the good which it beholds in another, and thus to trouble that good, and make it less...", and (b) "...where, there is not vigour and energy enough to attempt the making of it less, there may be at least the wishing of it less; with such petty carping and fault-finding as it may dare to indulge in...." This word illustrates a point often made about the works of the flesh; everyone of them is a perversion of something good (Barclay, 1962:39). It is in the context of the negative usage of *zelos* that Paul addressed the members of the church that were having such behaviour especially as it concerns him and Appolos.

**ii. ἔρις (*eris*):** The Greek word *eris* means strife, variance, discord, wrangling and contention (Arndt and Gingrich, 1979:309). Vine (1940) sees *eris* as the expression of enmity. Jenkins (2000:1) states that the Greek word *eris* is used nine times in the New Testament (Rom. 1:29; 13:13; 1 Cor. 1:11; 3:3; 2 Cor 12:20; Gal. 5:20; Phil. 1:15; 1 Tim. 6:4; Tit. 3:9) and that most usages have to do with conduct within the church and as it is seen as a real problem for Christians as they work together. *Eris* divided the church into sects and parties (1 Cor. 1:11; 3:3; 2 Cor. 12:20). It is even possible to preach Christ out of *eris* (Phil. 1:15). In church life, especially in terms of relationships, Barclay (1962:44) opines that:

*Eris* invades the church and becomes characteristic of the church, when the leaders and the members of the church think more about people and about parties and about slogans and about personal issues than they do about Jesus Christ. Here is our warning. Whenever in a church Jesus Christ is dethroned from the central place, all personal relationships go wrong. When a man begins to preach, not to exalt Jesus Christ, but to exalt his own personal and private view of Jesus Christ, that is to say, when a man preaches a theology rather than a gospel, when a man begins to argue to demolish his opponent rather than to win him, then *eris* comes in. No sin more commonly invades the Church than *eris*; none is more destructive of Christian fellowship; but *eris* cannot even gain an entry to the Church, if Christ be supreme there.

In its parallel reading in Galatians 5:20 *eris* is understood to mean selfishness, selfish ambition" (Arndt and Gingrich, 1979:309). On the hand, Vine (1940) says *eris* denotes ambition, self-seeking, rivalry, self will being an underlying idea in the word; hence it denotes party making. By this understanding, *eris* is associated with *erithos*. Paul referred to this act as act of σαρκος (*sarkos*), that is the act of the flesh (carnality).

**iii. Διχοστασία (*dichostasia*):** The Greek word *dichostasia* means dissension (Arndt and Gingrich, 1979:199) or division (Thayer,1889: 153). Vine points out that "the root indicating division, is found in many words in various languages." The word is found in the New Testament only in Galatians 5:20, Romans 16:17, and 1 Corinthians 3:3. In a literal sense, *dichostasia* depicts a standing apart, that is, a state in which all community, all fellowship, and all togetherness are gone. The state of division as sported by Paul in the Corinthian Church is common among humans in a society being it a church or other organization (Barclay,1962: 57). Primarily, διχοστασία means a parting, distribution and it denotes a discussion, dissension, division or discord, breaking up as of family ties (Vine, 1940). The term can also be found in Luke 12:51, where it is contrasted with *eirene* (peace). Another word which describes division in Pauline corpus is the Greek word σχίσμα or σχίσμα (*schism* or *schisma*). The word may simply describe a rent or a cleft (Mt. 9:16). It is translated

“division” in 1 Corinthians 1:10 and 11:18, and “schism” in 1 Corinthians 12:25 ASV). The word is used interchangeably with “heresies” or “factions” in 1 Corinthians 11:18-19.

**C. Διάκονος (*diakonos*):** Primarily, the Greek word *diakonos* means servant, minister, deacon, etc. In a broader sense, *diakonos* has many implied synonymous meanings in the New Testament. First, θεράπων (*therapon*) which means an attendant, servant: of God spoken of Moses discharging the duties committed to him by God as could be seen in Hebrew 3:5. Its Hebrew equivalent is עֵבֶד ('ebed) in Numbers 12:7 and it means slave, servant, man-servant, subjects, servants, worshippers (of God), servant (in special sense as prophets, Levites etc), servant (of Israel) or servant as form of address between equals (Strong, 2001:1431). Second, δοῦλος (*doulos*) which means a slave, servant, bondman or an attendant. Metaphorically, it means one who gives himself up to another's will and those whose service is used by Christ in extending and advancing his cause among men devoted to another to the disregard of one's own interests (Strong, 2001:1491). Third, οἰκέτης (*oiketes*) which means a house servant , a domestic slave or a steward (Strong, 2001:1518). It also has its Hebrew equivalent as עֵבֶד ('ebed). Fourth, ὑπηρέτης (*hyperetes*) which means servant , officer, attendants, an assistant , preacher of the gospel and its Hebrew equivalent is קִילַי (kîlay or *kēlay*) which also means scoundrel, knave (Strong, 2001:1403). All of these Greek word are used in contexts. The context in which Paul used in 1 Corinthians 3:3 is that of a preacher of the gospel and as servant of the Lord Jesus Christ. He saw himself and Appolos as co-workers in God's vineyard and as such no need to use them as a basis for quarrel and divide of the church.

**D. χάρις (*charis*):** The Greek word χάρις means that which affords joy, pleasure, delight, sweetness, charm, loveliness: grace of speech good will, loving-kindness, favour of the merciful kindness by which God, exerting his holy influence upon souls, turns them to Christ, keeps, strengthens, increases them in Christian faith, knowledge, affection, and kindles them to the exercise of the Christian virtues what is due to grace the spiritual condition of one governed by the power of divine grace the token or proof of grace, benefit a gift of grace (Strong, 2001:1541). When χάρις is used in the context of the problem being addressed by Paul in this passage, χαρισμάτα is more appropriate in the sense that it gives the understanding of spiritual gifts (Ottuh,2014:19). The term *charism* is derived from the Greek word *charisma*. Its plural form is pronounced *charismata*. This is a rare and late word in Koine Greek. In the New Testament, it occurs only in the Pauline corpus with an echo in 1 Peter. It is linked in its root to *charis* (favour, grace) and denotes the result of *Charisma*, that is proof of favour, benefit and gift. In general, it means all the gifts of God especially the gift of grace which comes to believers through Christ (Ukpong, 1995:69). Ukpong further buttresses that there are three different categories of gifts to which Paul applies the term *charisma*. First, Paul uses the term to describe the essential grace of redemption and eternal life (cf. Rom. 5:15-21; 6:23). Second, he uses the term to described particular gifts of divine favour, as his deliverance from death (2 Cor. 1:10) and the privileges of the chosen people (Rom. 11:29). Third, he uses the word in a distinctive way for gifts in association with the Christian community as a Body of Christ. Our modern usage of the word “*charism*” corresponds to this category. The term applies to the following types of endowments: ordinary human endowments (e.g. teaching, rendering assistance, etc.); ordinary human endowments exercised to an intense degree (e.g. exceptional ability to lead-charismatic leader); and extra-ordinary endowments, like the gifts of healing. In popular usage the term is often associated with exceptional gifts as in, for example, “charismatic leader.” When associated with authority, it denotes a particular personal magnetism or spiritual quality that enables the possessor to exert influence over broad masses of people and elicit their support” (Schatzmann, 1987:95). In the Pauline corpus, there are four major lists of *charism* – Rom. 12:6-8; 1 Cor. 12:28-31 and Eph. 4:11-12. In the last list, the technical term is absent but

addition, there are some complimentary texts – I Cor. 7:7; 13:1-12; 14:1; I Tim. 4:14; 2 Tim. 1:16. Outside the Pauline corpus we have I Peter 4:10. Technically these charisms are understood in terms of the presence of the Holy Spirit who is manifested through these gifts (George and Grelot, 1973: 69). The context of Paul's usage of χάρις in 1 Corinthians 3:10 is the division of spiritual grace which gave him the power to plant and which also gave Appolos the power to nurture the Church and God gave the increase. Hence no need boast for the growth of the church. Both Paul and Appolos were products of the same grace.

## **6. The Pauline Model of Church Conflict Resolution in 1 Corinthians 3:1-10: A Recipe for the Contemporary Church in Nigeria**

The Pauline model of church conflict resolution gives some insight into contemporary approach of conflict resolution in the Church. This can be adopted by the church in Nigeria on how to settle church disputes. In an attempt to address the crisis of schism caused by personality influence in the Corinthians Church, Paul decided to explore the following models.

- i. **A self denier model (vv.4-5):** Paul removed self from his approach to the issue. He dismissed the importance of his personality and that of Appolos. In this matter, neither himself nor Appolos do not matter. What matters is the work the duo have been sent by God to do. He did this so as to turn down the perception of those who see him as a superior personality to Appolos and as such, the people declined to see God as the ultimate important personality in the church, not Paul or Appolos. Although, Paul did not say that himself and appolos are not important but not to the extent of shifting the glory of God to themselves. Unlike some power and applaud seeking church leaders in Nigeria who shift the members attention from God to themselves, Paul shifted the attention of the people to God. This is a lesson every church denomination in Nigeria must learn especially, when the church is being faced with crisis.
- ii. **Division of labour model (vv.6-8,10):** Paul made it clear to the Corinthian Church that the ministry of planting (Paul) and nurturing (Appolos) are division of labour in God's vineyard called the church. By this understanding, no one is more important than the other. It is an interconnected and collaboration labour/effort formula geared towards a common purpose and corresponding rewards. Both the work of planting and nurturing of the church complement each other. This type of understanding should be taken by the leadership and membership of the church in Nigeria. One individual should see himself as the most important figure of the church, rather leaders and members should see themselves as co-workers.
- iii. **A Theo-centric model (v.7b):** This has to do with "the God factor." Paul pointed it out to the people that the ultimate factor for the growth of the church was not as a result of any human technical or administrative skills but by the power of God Almighty. God gave Paul and Appolos different assignments to do and when they did God did His own part. This understanding places God at the centre of attention and basis for congregating the people as a church and as such God must be seen as the one doing the work through men. Nigerian Christians should also learn to ascribe Glory to God in all things and put God at the centre of importance in the church. That does not mean that church leaders should not be respected but not to the extent of making them take the place of God in the church. This can sometimes bring crisis as leaders would like to fight to rise to the status of importance in the church community.
- iv. **Socio-dynamics model (vv.1-3):** Paul used the Greek word *adelphos* (brethren) to introduce the subject matter. This indicates a personal relationship with the people he was intending to address. He reminded them of how they related in the past and draw

their attention to the issue on ground. This relationship made him to scold the people in such a way that they understood his point. Even those who are on his side were equally scolded for causing schism in the church of God. He did not align with them against Appolos. This is a lesson Nigerian church leaders must also learn. Paul's dynamics on the resolution of the crisis was that of a neutral position. Those church leaders in Nigeria who cause faction in the church should learn to present themselves as the leader of all and not some. Church leaders in Nigeria should create good relationships among the people of God and when there is crisis they should remain neutral so as to resolve it. A leader should not be biased in handling crisis.

- v. **Philosophical Model:** Paul was able to ask the people some questions in such a way that the people were able to read in between the lines. The questions were raised to make the members of the Corinthian Church to reason and see the truth for themselves. This could be referred to as wisdom approach. Church leaders in Nigeria should seek wisdom from God in time of crisis in the church. Good and relevant questions can be asked so as to illuminate the minds of the feuding parties and see reasons to give peace a chance.
- vi. **Communication model:** Paul had an oratory skill in which he convince people. According to Odeh (2008:230), communication skills and channels are crucial in conflict management. Paul communicated with all the parties involved in the conflict in the Corinthian church. This is a model Nigerian church leaders should adopt in church conflict resolution. Leaders should learn and master the skill of communication so their message can be powerful wise and powerful enough to convince feuding parties to see the need for peace.

## 7. Conclusion

No human society is free from conflict. It does not matter whether such society is a church. The Church community of Paul was also faced with various conflicts in his era. Such type of conflicts are being replicated in the contemporary church in Nigeria. It is evidence in the schism among leadership and membership of the contemporary church in Nigeria.

Paul's model of church conflict resolution is a recipe for church conflict resolution in Nigeria. Secular leaders can also learn from these models so presented. Paul's selfless approach made him to be able to address the schism in the Corinthian church. Both sacred and secular leaders should learn to be selfless in their approach to leadership and issues. Paul's approach in general is a lesson that must be learnt by both political and church leaders especially those who scheme to gain ship popularity and self ego by running others down.

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