'A holistic model of conflicts

in a multicultural urban congregation in Britain:

Towards a comprehensive and systematic approach'

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates conflicts in a multicultural congregation in an urban area in the U.K. Although diverse types of conflict occur in the research field, there is no theoretical framework to analyse and interpret them from a combined range of perspectives that could produce a comprehensive account of conflict. Furthermore, there is no systematic method to classify the various types of conflict and to employ appropriate approaches to deal with them effectively. This research uses an ethnographical methodology not only to provide a thick description of conflict in the research field, but also to develop an original analytical tool for categorizing the multi-dimensionality of conflicts and to propose practical suggestions as application. For a comprehensive understanding of conflict, I used a multidisciplinary perspective synthesizing a sociological and theological approach to conflict in order to analyse and interpret not only people's social and cultural beliefs and behaviours, but also the structural and contextual issues in the organization. I also used a multidimensional perspective to analyse and interpret multifactorial and multifaceted conflicts in order to provide a more profound explanation of the dynamics of conflict phenomena. For practical application, I established a typology as an analytical process to classify diverse conflict types according to their scales, intensity and nature. I also created a systematic formulation to suggest the most effective conflict approach and its strategies to a particular conflict type. The significant contribution of this research is to establish a holistic model which provides not only rich details of ethnographic stories for a comprehensive understanding of conflict, but also a practical demonstration from analysing conflicts to handling them for peace-making, peace-keeping and peace-building in a multicultural congregational setting. This thesis is generalizable to similar multicultural Christian congregational settings in urban areas in the UK as it offers theoretically informed professional practice as well as a theoretical framework to analyse and interpret diverse conflicts in multicultural congregations.

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An Ethnographic Study of Conflict in a Multicultural Congregation

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Middlesex University

February 2016

Oxford Centre for Mission Studies

DECLARATION

This work has not previously been accepted in substance for any degree and is not being concurrently submitted in candidature for any degree.

Signed

Date   29th February, 2016

STATEMENT ONE

This thesis is the result of my own investigations, except where otherwise stated. Where correction services have been used, the extent and nature of the correction is clearly marked in a footnote.

Other sources are acknowledged by midnotes or footnotes giving explicit references. A bibliography is appended.

Signed

Date   29th February, 2016

STATEMENT TWO

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Abbreviations

CVC – Chad Valley Cluster

GEC – Grace Evangelical Church

GEFC – Grace Evangelical Free Church

KMC – Kingdom Mission College

LC – Lighthouse Church

BMM – Britannia Medical Mission

BMMC – Britannia Medical Mission Church

Chapter One

Introduction

1.1 Research Background

This research was undertaken with the personal difficulties that I experienced in a multicultural church called Grace Evangelical Church (hereafter, GEC) located in an urban area in the United Kingdom. I had joined GEC in December, 2003 and been involved in pastoral ministry for more than seven years until I left it in April, 2011. It was a fearful experience that I was suddenly exposed to a strange multicultural environment that I had never experienced before. I was born, raised and educated in South Korea, which was a mono-cultural country where people's cultural beliefs and behaviours were not very different. I was culturally ignorant that I did not know how to behave when I met a person from a culture I knew little about. One of the particular difficulties in my ministry was to handle conflicts between church members from different social, theological, and cultural backgrounds.

There are mainly two types of multicultural society: One is the 'melting pot' model and the other is the 'salad bowl' model (Yang, 2000: 86). The 'melting pot' model implies that cultures are synthesized in a multicultural society so that later it becomes difficult to identify each one's characteristic. On the contrary, the 'salad bowl' model is when cultures meet together and each one remains unchanged with its strong characteristic in a multicultural society. GEC is like the 'salad bowl' rather than the 'melting pot'. GEC has about twenty nationalities among approximately one hundred and twenty regular attendees every Sunday. It seems to be the heavenly worship in the Book of Revelation, when people from different nations, languages, and cultures stand

and sing together in the Sunday morning service. However, the reality of congregations' lives at GEC is not always like the heavenly worship atmosphere. In fact, people suffer from different types of conflict situations caused by diverse factors.

Christians believe one Body, one Spirit, one Lord, one faith, one baptism and one God (Ephesians 4:4-5) so that theoretically there may be no division when Christians from other cultural backgrounds gather in a place. However, in reality, it is difficult to create oneness in cultural diversity because people's cultures are seedbeds of their value systems, beliefs, morality, and behaviour. Furthermore, culture enormously influences a person's religious faith, and vice versa. In this respect, I agree with Kraft (1979: 300):

> God, the author of reality, exists outside any culture. Human beings, on the other hand, are always bound by cultural, subcultural, and psychological conditioning to perceive and interpret what they see of reality in ways appropriate to these conditionings. Neither the absolute God, nor the reality created is perceived absolutely by culture-bound human beings.

Therefore, it is normal that believers in a multicultural congregation have different perspectives and opinions on various issues, such as priorities in their lives, interpretations of some particular Scriptures and their applications, and moral judgments.

I have found that members at GEC felt vulnerability and confusion when diverse characteristics and intensities of conflicts constantly emerged. Personally, I had a limited understanding of multiculturalism, and Christian ministry in a culturally diverse and theologically plural context. I honestly acknowledge that my intrinsic cultural perspective and embedded theological knowledge formed in Korea have become barriers preventing me from identifying conflict issues accurately and handling them appropriately. The existing church members, including the two elders who were part of the leadership team with me, were also not prepared to deal with these conflicts. In particular, the two elders and their followers were embroiled in a power struggle since

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GEC and Lighthouse Church (hereafter, LC) were merged in 1998. The two congregations were more interested in seizing power from the power struggle than being equipped with cross-cultural skills to effectively guide the multiculturalization process that began in 2004 at GEC. The ethnic minorities from other cultural backgrounds were not equipped as well in relation to dealing with those complex conflicts at GEC. They carried their cultural baggage without serious consideration for the consequences in the multicultural context. It means that no one at GEC was prepared with theories and practical skills to handle diverse types of conflicts to bring peace and create unity at GEC.

1.2 Research Problems

In order to clarify my research problems, it should be mentioned that I do not intend to investigate 'multicultural conflicts', but 'conflicts within a multicultural congregation'. If my focus is on multicultural conflicts, then the research perspective is limited to only the cultural aspect of conflicts at GEC. The causes of conflicts in a multicultural congregation could be more diverse such as social, racial, political, relational, ethical, and theological. A conflict situation in a congregation is an explicit recognition of the existence of multiple realities (Lederach, 1988: 39). This phenomenon is more severe in a multicultural congregation where people whose personal, cultural, social and theological backgrounds are different struggle to create a common meaning among incompatible understandings of the reality. In fact, conflicts observed at GEC are complex and diverse in terms of their scale, nature and intensity. It implies that the traditional strategies and methods to conflict resolution have become less efficient to analyse and interpret complex conflicts in a multicultural congregation. Therefore, a necessity for a systematic investigation into complex conflicts in a

multicultural congregation has emerged in order not only for better understandings on various conflict situations, but also for being better equipped with practical skills to deal with them appropriately.

To put it more concretely, there are mainly three serious problems in my research context in terms of perceiving, categorizing and approaching diverse conflicts. Firstly, GEC has no specific method to view, analyse and interpret the diverse conflicts. This is a serious problem that there is no multidisciplinary theoretical framework for a comprehensive understanding of complex conflict situations without undermining the multiple realities of a multicultural congregation. A multicultural congregation is located in a specific social and cultural setting so that its sociological and anthropological realities must be considered along with its theological reality to make the analysis and interpretation on conflict situations more relevant and trustworthy.

Secondly, there is no systematic method and standardized criteria to classify the various types of conflict. The classification of conflict into different types is critically important to clarify people's beliefs and behaviour as well as the structural and contextual issues in order to disambiguate the nature, scales and intensity of conflicts. It also plays a significant role in relation to selecting appropriate approaches to deal with different types of conflict. Therefore, there is a need to create a system that provides not only categories for classification of conflicts, but also criteria for employing effective countermeasures towards them.

Finally, conflict approach at GEC is monotonous, although conflict phenomena are complex and intricate. The dominant conflict approach at GEC is structural functionalism which influences people to view conflict as a cause of instability and dissonance in the community. This approach is well related to the metaphor in the Bible that the church is like a body and each part should function together as a whole. If a part

does not function effectively, it causes the whole system to suffer. This particular approach has caused people at GEC to view conflict only in negative perspective and has encouraged them to develop one particular mechanism, which is conflict resolution, to deal with conflicts regardless of their characteristics, scale and intensity. This monotonous and one-sided approach does not reflect the complex nature of conflict factors as well as multidimensionality of conflicts in the multicultural setting. It also prevents people at GEC from considering other useful approaches to handle conflicts in a variety of ways.

In order to undertake a vigorous research to improve those problems addressed above, I established the research question and other research questions.

- **Research question**

Why and how do different types of conflicts occur and develop in a multicultural congregation, and how can Christian leaders handle them in the most effective ways?

- **Research sub-questions**

1. How do social, cultural and theological interactions among members in a multicultural congregation and its organizational structures become the underlying factors causing different types of conflicts?

2. How do individuals or groups react in different types of conflict and how do their cultural beliefs and behaviour as well as their theology and Christian morality play their roles in terms of escalating or de-escalating the conflict phases?

3. What can be appropriate applications toward conflicts of different types in nature, scale and intensity in order to constructively and creatively ease, handle or resolve them in a multicultural congregation?

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The primary purpose of this research is to generate a local theory regarding analysing and interpreting different types of conflicts, and proposing appropriate approaches to handle them effectively at GEC, with a strong expectation that the theory will be also applicable in other similar contexts. Therefore, this research is primarily undertaken to equip myself as a researcher as well as the leaders of GEC with theories and practical skills to handle diverse conflicts in the most appropriate manner. Secondly, this research is to enable Christian leaders in similar multicultural ministry settings to prevent and handle conflicts effectively.

There are some specific procedures in this study to achieve the purpose of generating a local theory from perceiving to handling conflicts appropriately. Firstly, I am going to identify conflict domains through comparison and classification of data to clarify the diverse conflict issues at GEC. According to Schensul and LeCompte (1999: 29), there are two kinds of domains in ethnographic research: the dependent domain and independent domains. A dependent domain is one that changes in response to changes in other domains (Schensul et al., 1999: 29). This dependent domain determines the research topic. An independent domain logically precedes a dependent domain, and change is not in response to changes in the dependent domain (Schensul et al., 1999: 29). In other words, a dependent domain is a social or cultural phenomenon that an ethnographer wants to investigate to know what is going on and an independent domain is a major factor influencing or affecting the dependent domain. In this regard, the dependent domain in my research is 'conflicts in a multicultural congregation' and I am going to identify independent domains that affect the dependent domain in terms of escalating or de-escalating the conflict phases and intensities.

Secondly, I am going to establish a framework to classify different types of conflict through synthesizing theological perspectives and sociological perspectives on conflict in the theoretical background chapter. One of the important features in this study is to provide criteria to categorize conflict types in a balanced view between theological understanding and sociological understanding of a local congregation. There is an inclination within the independent evangelical churches in the UK that a local congregation is regarded as a sacred divine community so that its sociological cultural realities are undermined. From my observation, GEC is no exception in this respect and this has become a reason of a partial understanding of diverse conflict phenomena at GEC. This biased perspective must be overcome for a more comprehensive understanding of complex conflict phenomena and for categorizing them accurately. This accurate categorization will be a useful tool to link each independent conflict domain to a type of conflict and eventually become a theoretical foundation to propose appropriate applications to each independent conflict domain.

Thirdly, in order to produce a thick description[1] of the social and cultural phenomena caused by people's beliefs and behaviour in conflict situations, I am going to investigate each independent domain to extract the underlying factors from items and variables. The next step is to analyse and interpret the factors to have deeper and better understandings of beliefs, behaviour and reactions of people who are involved in conflicts as well as of social and cultural contexts of conflicts to write ethnographic stories. Afterwards, I am going to link each independent domain into a particular type of conflict, according to the result of the analysis and interpretation. This is a vital process to clarify and confirm the nature, characteristics, scale, and intensity of conflicts in each

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[1] Influenced by Gilbert Ryle, Clifford Geertz (1973: pp.3-30) developed his own ethnographic method called thick description which explains not only a human behaviour, but also its cultural context for better understanding of the behaviour.

independent domain in the light of the framework that is established in the theoretical background chapter.

Finally, I am going to suggest possible approaches to each independent domain. My aim in undertaking this research is not only to explain particular social phenomena from cultural, social and theological perspectives, but also to suggest practical methods to handle the phenomena effectively in the research context. I have been influenced by the contextual theology of Bevans (2007: 5), whose emphasis is on the application of theology as follows: "A theology that is not somehow reflective of our times, our culture, and our current concerns is a false theology". Boff (1978: 46) also emphasized the 'primacy of orthopraxis over orthodoxy' in his Christology to stress the importance of correct actions of the church as well as correct thinking about it. Therefore, I aim in this research not only to investigate a problematic context to know what is going on, but to resolve problems in the context.

1.4 Key terms

1.4.1 A Multicultural Church

A multicultural church is a Christian congregation located in a specific place, made up of culturally different believers. I do not mean that 'cultural differences' are domestically different sub-cultures or cultural differences between generations in the same ethnic group. It would rather be distinctive cultural differences among diverse ethnic groups from different countries. In this regard, a multicultural church may have various ethnic or racial groups. However, I do not want to interchange 'multicultural church' with 'multiethnic church' or 'multiracial church' because the focus of this research is to deal with conflicts caused by cultural diversity rather than racial issues.

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1.4.2 Conflict

The definition of the term 'conflict' is various. Firstly, in this study I clarify 'conflict' according to its scale and intensity: macro-level conflict and micro-level conflict. The macro-level conflict occurs between groups, communities, and countries when the parties experience discrepancy in their goals, policies, or obligations (Nicholson, 1992: 11). Thus, a macro-level conflict is referred to as a structural conflict caused by factors that are beyond the control of individuals involved in the conflict, such as social policies and institutions or organizational culture and structure. A conflict also exists when two individuals wish to carry out acts which are mutually inconsistent (Nicholson, 1992: 11). This is a micro-level conflict which is referred to as an interactional conflict. In this study, I include both aspects of conflict as I have observed both structural intergroup conflict and interpersonal conflict between individuals.

Secondly, I clarify conflict according to its location: internal (latent) and external (manifest) conflict. Generally, conflicts between two parties are visible and tangible because their discontents are expressed in various ways, such as complaints, arguments, and violence. This is the external conflict. On the other hand, the internal conflict is when people feel anxiety or some sort of discomfort when what they desire or need does not match what has, is, or could happen (Sato, 2003: 8). I regard this invisible and internal conflict caused by emotional trauma or psychological wounds as a type of conflict in this research. I have observed that some members at GEC have suffered from unresolved emotional problems caused by the inappropriate cultural or moral manners of others. I define this type of conflict an intrapersonal conflict which is not manifested externally because of one's personality or cultural tendency hiding the problem for a peaceful church life.

1.5 Research Context: A Brief History of GEC

1.5.1 Foundation and Development (1875 – 1937)

The Britannia Medical Mission (hereafter, BMM) was founded in 1875 as a medical charity (Sale of Work, 1949). It was evaluated as one of the best organized among other Medical Missions in the UK (Guinness, 2009: 309). There had been a weekly prayer meeting at a clergyman's house for the express purpose of pleading with God to awaken hearts to take an interest in matters of the poor, and a band of those who were pledged to the undertaking and had been quietly working for its accomplishment (The Britannia Magazine, 1902: 2). A leaflet upon the subject was circulated and in February 1874 meetings were held and in the following May a Medical Mission Committee was formed by leading doctors, ministers, and business men of the town (Burtler, 1908: 29). The work of the Mission began on the 15th February 1875 in a rented room (Annual Report, 1884-85: 7). During the initial several months, the work developed slowly (Britannia Daily, 22nd Feb. 1886), but suddenly it began to grow due to the great demand for the medical treatment of the poor (Dowkontt, 1886: 153). In 1879, BMM completed building its own premises to provide a better medical service and to execute more effective mission works (Annual Report, 1924: 2).

BMM was founded with the definite object of working among the poor in the urban area, providing medical attendance for them combined with the preaching of the Gospel and other measures calculated to improve the spiritual, physical, and social condition of the poor (D7, 1944). BMM was the only institution in the urban area and its vicinity that combined these ministries of healing and preaching and coupled them with social work (D7, 1944). Indeed, it would be true to say that the doctors were instruments in saving souls (D18, 1990) by their demonstration of the love of Christ in

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faithfully carrying out their medical skills and showing kindness and compassion toward patients (Annual Report, 1897-8: 9).

Even though BMM had a threefold purpose, its greatest aim was the spiritual work to win souls for Christ (Britannia Gazette, 19th Gen. 1900). According to the Annual Report of 1897, BMM had already developed different ministries for evangelism and the spiritual maturity of believers such as Sunday school, young women's Bible class, young men's Bible class, the introduction class, gospel temperance meeting, mothers' meeting, and the Bible band (Annual Report, 1897-8: 10). Along with these spiritual works, its social work made a real difference in the lives of the poor. Sewing Classes in winter months equipped young girls (Britannia Post, 19th Gen. 1900). During the winter months, BMM lent blankets for the children of poverty and in the spring of the following year blankets were returned (Annual Report, 1897-8, 11). Garments, coats, trousers, flannel vests, etc., and pairs of boots and shoes were given to needy cases, and greatly appreciated (Annual Report, 1897-8, 11). Through these kinds of good works, BMM gained a nickname, 'Good Samaritans', among the residents (Britannia Gazette, 26th Oct. 1903). The medical work was developed tremendously. As well as treating patients at the premises, doctors and nurses visited the homes of the sick who were too ill to attend at the Mission (Annual Report, 1902-3: 5) so that BMM established a branch to treat more patients (Annual Report, 1897-8: 1). In 1902, an adjacent factory was taken over and adapted for the purposes of the Mission (Annual Report, 1924: 2).

Twenty-five years after its foundation, BMM's success in both medical and spiritual aspects was addressed by the local newspaper (Britannia Post, 19th Jan. 1900):

> Since the mission started, twenty five years ago, 109,122 cases had been dealt with, involving 460,658 consultations. The committee did not attempt to tabulate the spiritual results, but they were able to say that the testimony of changed lives and of

many a rejoicing death-bed was convincing proof that the labours of the mission in
this respect had not been in vain.

The social and spiritual impact that BMM had made for the poor in the city centre was

evaluated by the local newspaper as follows (Britannia Daily Gazette, July 10th 1901):

> In the slums of our city, amid surroundings to the awfulness of which the people are
> at last awaking, there works with infinite patience and undeniable results an agency
> called the Britannia Medical Mission… It exerts such an influence for good among
> the suffering poor as should commend it to the support of all. Year after year its
> work goes on. It combats physical disease and spiritual want. It seeks the soul, and
> finds it through the body. So a dual blessing follows in its train. And how great is its
> scope in Slum Land!

1.5.2 Moving its Headquarters (1938 – 1948)

Another new branch of BMM was opened in 1938 in an area where the most

deprived people lived in the city. The secretary of BMM described well about the local

people's situation of the area as follows (D5, 1946):

> We have seen more poverty in the homes here than we experienced in the last several
> years; there is more illness too, with a very great deal of tuberculosis. The war has
> brought a good deal of strain into homes where the menfolk have been serving
> abroad, and in many directions poverty abounds.

There were two reasons for opening this new branch. Firstly, the area of its headquarters

became industrialized so that the residential area was demolished, and factories and

warehouses were built (D5, 1946). Secondly, the area became an urban slum where the

crime rate increased (D7, 1944). Local residents were moving out into new housing

estates in the outer suburbs and the use of the Mission consequently declined (Britannia

Post, 26th Oct. 1939). As a result, there was a rapid diminution of the work at the

headquarters and the balance of the work gradually transferred to the new site (Sale of

Work, 1940: 3). Eventually, the original premises of its headquarters closed down in Oct. 1945 (D2, 1947).

On the new site, BMM continued to get involved in medical, spiritual, and social works for the poor (D2, 1947 and D1, 1948):

> Medically – patients are mostly women and children who are unable to afford to pay for a private doctor. Consultations take place in the Mission premises; at present there are clinics one or two mornings and one afternoon weekly. The committee is desirous of seeing this work extended, and also specialized clinics started.
>
> Spiritually – Sunday school and adult services are held; also a service on a week evening for adults, which is conducted by one of our teachers, but under the supervision of the medical superintendent. Services are held for the patients before the morning consultations by one of the doctors, the staff sharing.
>
> Socially – There are clubs for men and women, which have a spiritual basis. In addition to clubs, there is a home visitation by the staff, convalescence is arranged, and various means are used by the staff for the alleviation of distress etc. among the patients.

Its medical work was remarkable for the poor on the new site. In correspondence, the secretary shared about a life-changing story that one of his patients experienced through the medical treatment and mission work of the BMM (D11, 1943):

> Michael Day, age 2 weeks, was brought to us on the 21st June. He was discharged from the hospital and his mother told that he would probably not live more than two weeks; he had a deformity of the spine known as Spina Bifida and he was extremely ill. I am thankful to say that, by the Grace of God, he has made considerable improvement in the four weeks that have now elapsed, and one hopes that this may continue. He is the only child of elderly parents, and the mother was heard to remark yesterday to another patient: "I came here the first time weeping because I was told there was no hope for him: I go out from here every time weeping for joy.

Its spiritual work was very successful during this period (D9, 1944). For instance, in March 1946 the committee had to consider the best means of enlarging the premises. The need for space was felt particularly in the Sunday school where the attendance exceeded two hundred (D6, 1946).

Its social work had a huge impact on local residents who were poor and ill. This was especially so during the Second World War (1939-1945) since the difficulties were naturally greater than in times of peace (D7, 1943). BMM increased the material assistance to the poor and needy of the district year after year during this period (D12, 1950). In order to carry on the social work, the Ladies' Auxiliary Committee held the annual fundraising event called 'Sale of Work' and part of its fund was spent for the 'Convalescent Home' expenses and helping the poor (Sale of Work, 1942:2).

1.5.3 Transition Period from BMM to BMMC (1948 – 1959)

In 1948, the British government founded the NHS and consultants, senior hospital doctors, and family doctors were won over to the NHS (Taylor and Field, 2003: 199). Soon after, a new General Practitioner (GP) was established by the government in the area at the distance of five minutes' walk from BMM and the superintendent of BMM was in charge of the GP to look after patients (D1, 1948). In spite of this suddenly happening, BMM continued the medical work along with its spiritual and social work in its own premises for a while (D1, 1948). However, Christian doctors who had been working at BMM moved to the GP surgery (D15, 1975) as numbers of patients increased.

In correspondence to members of BMM, the superintendent asserted that the Medical Mission was continually needed regardless of the scheme of the government to establish the NHS (D4, 1947):

> The question must have occurred to many of you, is there any need now for a Medical Mission when the Government is going to provide medical care for every man, woman, and child? My answer is 'Yes', for two main reasons. Firstly, the

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> National Health Service is not yet in existence; there is much present need and the likelihood that this will be more widespread during the next year because of uncertain employment. Secondly, even when the new scheme is under way, there will still be room for those who can take part in the Service and give that something extra which may, with God's blessing, meet the need of the whole man - spirit, soul and body.

One year after the foundation of the NHS, the Superintendent addressed the matter of the identity of BMM and its future direction as follows (D3, 1949):

> The National Health Service has inevitably influenced the past year…. While the medical work is now self-supporting, there is as much need as ever to provide the spiritual and social services rendered by the Mission.

During this transition period, BMM was more involved in spiritual work, such as 'door to door evangelism' (Prayer Bulletin, Sep. 1957 and Prayer Bulletin, Sep. 1952), 'open air witness' during the summer months (Prayer Bulletin, Nov. 1953 and Prayer Bulletin, May 1954), and 'showing Christian films' during the winter months to contact young people of the area (Prayer Bulletin, Jan. 1951 and Prayer Bulletin, Sep. 1952). The Sunday school continually grew in numbers so that a new branch Sunday school was opened in its neighbouring area (Prayer Bulletin, Sep. 1951) because many children had been on the waiting list for months (Prayer Bulletin, July 1950). Soon after, this new Sunday school branch became overcrowded (Prayer Bulletin, May 1952). For example, over four hundred children attended the Christmas parties arranged by the various departments of the Sunday school, including the new branch (Prayer Bulletin, Jan. 1952). A number of young people professed conversion through 'the youth hour' (Prayer Bulletin, July 1949). A number of young boys and girls contacted through 'the boy and girl campaigners' trusted Christ as Saviour (Prayer Bulletin, Jan. 1952 and Prayer Bulletin, May 1952). Most of all, BMM was committed to prayer during this transition period. Each day 'morning prayer meeting' was held in the patients' waiting room prior to surgery hours (Prayer Bulletin, Jan. 1951). In particular, on a Tuesday

night a number of believers gathered for the Bible study and had powerful prayer meetings afterward (Prayer Bulletin, Nov. 1953). As the result of these spiritual works, it was reported that Sunday congregations had been increased year by year (Prayer Bulletin, May 1952, Prayer Bulletin, Nov. 1953 and Prayer Bulletin, Sep. 1954).

The last medical superintendent resigned at BMM, in Aug. 1959 after ten years work due to his age and his wife's poor health (Annual Report, 1959). At the annual meeting, he announced that a pastor was going to replace him as the new superintendent in BMM (Annual Report, 1959 and D16). The annual meeting marked a turning point in the history of BMM in terms of its transformation from a medical mission to a local church. From its inception, the medical superintendent had been the responsible person in terms of day to day administration and spiritual works. However, that period was over and the responsibility moved to the new pastor. There had been pastors at BMM before this new pastor was appointed, but they were not the senior spiritual leaders at BMM. They were associate workers involved in Sunday school, youth hour, men's club, boy campaigners (Annual Report, 27th Oct. 1949), and evangelism (Prayer Bulletin, May 1952).

1.5.4 Transformation into an Independent Church (1959 – 1998)

After the last medical superintendent's retirement, BMM lost its identity as a medical mission simply because there were no doctors anymore to treat the patients. Without any radical change, BMM was transformed into an independent church by the mutual efforts of both the first pastoral superintendent and the existing members of BMM. They took several steps to complete the transformation process. Firstly, in a church meeting, new members of the committee were appointed (Minutes, 15th Sep.

1959). Secondly, the new constitution of the committee was agreed and its name was changed from BMM to the Britannia Medical Mission Church (hereafter, BMMC) in another church meeting (Minutes, 28th Sep. 1959). Simply the word 'church' was added after BMM because the members of BMM wanted to retain their long term identity, legacy and tradition in its name. Thirdly, a church membership system was adopted because there were many members of BMM, who actually were not believers following Christ, but came to BMM for their medical treatment (Minutes, 24th Nov. 1960). Fourthly, the new Church Constitution was established and agreed by the members without amendment (Minutes, 17th Oct. 1962). Finally, a new church building was built in 1963 (Minutes, 21st Mar. 1963). The whole transformation process took almost five years.

There were two remarkable changes at BMMC during this period. One is that BMMC began to change their focus from a domestic mission to an overseas mission. According to a report on the missionary work of the missionary secretary, BMMC gradually increased its spiritual and financial support for overseas' missionaries, so that by the time of 1995, it had links with nineteen full-time missionary organizations or individuals, and provided regular financial support for almost all of them (D13, 1995). The other is that they tried to intensify their identity as a non-denominational independent church in terms of its governing system and an evangelical church in terms of its theological inclination (Constitution and Statement of Faith, 1971). A new pastor commenced his ministry in 1989 (Weekly Paper, 21st May 1989) and the church began to be informally called 'Grace Evangelical Free Church' (hereafter, GEFC). It was used in documents such as 'Weekly Paper' and 'Minutes of Deacons Meeting' under its official name, BMMC. Eventually, in a deacons meeting in 1991, the deacons agreed to officially change its name from BMMC to GEFC (Minutes of the Trustees Meeting,

Nov. 21st 1991). It was an event worthy of note because it was their first trial to leave the past glory and tradition by removing 'Medical Mission' from its name.

1.5.5 Merger (1998 – 2003)

A new external trustee was nominated and appointed in June 1987 at the trustees meeting (Minutes of the half yearly Trustees Meeting, 1987). He was a solicitor and the senior pastor at LC. According to the minutes, he mentioned that the pressures of his pastorate were forcing him to devote more time to this role, to the point of full-time work (Minutes of the half yearly Trustees Meeting, 1987). Several years after his involvement as a trustee, he proposed a discussion on the matter of a merger between the GEFC and LC in Oct 1995 (Minutes of the Deacons Meeting, 5th Oct. 1995). Therefore, the two churches had meetings to address issues and agendas relating to the merger (Minutes of the Deacons Meeting, 12th Sep. 1996 and 14th Nov. 1996). Alongside with these official discussions, the two churches occasionally had joint prayer meetings and worship meetings (Minutes of the Deacons Meeting, 12th Feb. 1998). Eventually, on the 8th April 1998 they proposed a motion regarding the merger of the two churches. In the document, they addressed the purpose, a wider vision, a renewed leadership and constitution, and commitments from both sides (GEFC / LC Link-up, 1998). Afterwards, the two churches had two joint Sunday morning services and two Thursday Bible studies for a month. GEFC had an extraordinary members' meeting on 30th June 1998 to discuss several issues in relation to the merger (Minutes of Members' Meeting, 30th June 1998). One serious matter raised in the meeting was about how to elect elders and who would be elders because GEFC had never had elders in its whole history, but only deacons elected by votes. In order to resolve this matter, both churches had a meeting to discuss about the difference between eldership and diaconate

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in a local church (GEFC / LC Link-up, 1998:3). After this discussion, voting took place at GEFC for the final decision. There were 23 votes for the merger with LC and only one vote against it (Minutes of Members' Meeting, 30th June 1998). Eventually, the two churches agreed the draft constitution that consisted of a statement of faith, leadership, membership, trustees, and church meetings (Draft Constitution – GEC, 21st Sep. 1998).

GEFC faced many difficulties and troubles since the merger, according to a report to the trustees (D20, 2004:1):

> Those who have been involved since the two churches came together are aware of the strains, struggles, and blessings of the exercise. We have experienced heartaches, despair, disappointments, frustrations and a fire.

The merger served as the fundamental cause of political conflicts for power struggles between the two congregations. Nevertheless, GEFC had grown with all the troubles and frustrations, so that the elders considered organizing more cell groups and planting a new church (D20, 2004:2). The merger brought a change of its name from GEFC to Grace Evangelical Church (GEC). Both congregations agreed to remove the word 'Free' from its name to avoid confusion with the Episcopal Free Church of England (Trustees Report, June 30th 1998).

1.5.6 Multiculturalization (2004 - present)

The Kingdom Mission College (hereafter, KMC) was launched in October 2003 by the association of churches in the area and missionaries from America, Brazil and South Korea. The vision was to bring young people from different countries to train and equip them to live mission-oriented lives (KMC information booklet, 2004: 12). GEC was designated as the venue of educational activities so that students from other

countries such as South Korea, Brazil, Romania, Portugal, Kazakhstan, and Germany began to attend the church. There were a few ethnic minorities from Africa and Jamaica at GEC, but KMC set the stage for the multiculturalization process and to accelerate it. As a result, GEC had about twenty nationalities among the one hundred and twenty regular attendees each Sunday by the time when KMC celebrated its second anniversary (D21, 2005:1).

GEC welcomed those young people warmly as spiritual families and it was a challenging time for GEC members to practice their hospitality (D20, 2004:2). The members opened their houses and invited them after Sunday services. The local ethnic minorities could observe a positive change at GEC that the premises were crowded with young foreign students attending mission and English classes during the weekdays and being involved in church ministries including evangelistic activities in the area at the weekend. This change helped the local ethnic minorities to re-evaluate GEC's receptivity to cultural diversity and they began to join GEC. The existing members took a positive view of this multiculturalization process at GEC, especially from the perspective of evangelism as follows (D20, 2004:1):

> There is a good and lively atmosphere in the building, and this can only be of assistance in reaching out to people in the neighbourhood. Those from Brazil and South Korea are here not only to learn English and Theology, but also to assist in evangelism in the community.

In this respect, the vision of KMC, which was to transform individuals and societies through cooperation with fellow brothers and sisters from all nations (KMC information booklet, 2004: 2), was partially fulfilled. However, KMC was unfortunately closed down in 2006 after its three years' operation because of several internal problems. Initially, the multiculturalization process positively contributed to the political conflicts at GEC. Both parties temporarily ceased the political strife in order to help the ethnic

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minorities settle down at GEC. However, it eventually aggravated the situation as the ethnic minorities became a formidable force in the power struggle dynamic and were embroiled in the political conflicts.

Chapter Two

Theoretical Background

2.1 Introduction

Christ's incarnation implies that Christ came into the Jewish culture of the time, so that His life and ministry cannot be understood apart from the culture (Sweet et al., 2003: 14). In the same manner, a balanced view is needed to understand the concept of the church in terms of its relationship with society and culture, as this research is undertaken in a local church. According to McKim (1996: 49), the term 'church' has two different implications:

> It refers to all believers following Jesus and His teaching. This is the universal sense on the church. It also refers to a local congregation located and situated in a particular social and cultural setting.

Therefore, a church must be understood as a social organization as well as a body of believers (Mickelsen, 1986: 256). In this respect, I assert that conflicts in a multicultural church must be understood from both the theological perspective and the socio-cultural perspective. Conflicts occur in churches not only by theological differences, but also by sociological complexity and flux (Yeo, 1995: 85). It means a proper understanding of our social and cultural world is useful to analyse and interpret conflicts in churches.

I intend to investigate sociological and theological understandings of conflict to establish the theoretical background of this research in this chapter. The purpose of establishing the theoretical background in this research is twofold. Firstly, the theoretical background will provide the theoretical criteria for data analysis and interpretation. Secondly, the theoretical background will provide a foundation to

establish a framework for classifying conflict types. I am going to formulate a system for classification of conflicts by synthesizing sociological and theological perspectives on conflict. Another significant role of this chapter is to briefly explain the reality of conflicts in general congregations, multicultural congregations, and merged congregations in terms of their aspects and factors in order for the better understanding of conflicts at GEC that is both a multicultural congregation and a merged congregation.

2.2 Theories and Perspectives on Conflict

2.2.1 Sociological Understanding of Conflict

There are two major perspectives in sociology to analyse and interpret social phenomena: macro-sociology and micro-sociology. Macro-sociology referred to as structuralism asserts that everything is decided by the social structure and seeks to describe how a society works by maintaining its social stability. On the contrary, micro-sociology referred to as interactionism asserts that things are decided by normal people's everyday interaction. Interactionism attempts to explain that individual behaviour results from a continuous and multidirectional interaction between characteristics of the person and the characteristics of the situation (Griffin and Moorhead, 2010: 18). I assert that a particular phenomenon must be understood in both macro and micro levels of sociology because the social structure influences people's everyday life and also people's interactions influence a social structure. Therefore, conflict as an obvious social phenomenon must be understood on both levels of sociology. Furthermore, conflict must be viewed from the conflict theorists' viewpoint that a society develops through conflicts in both individual interactions and structural problems. Conflict theorists do not separate social realities between macro and micro problems (Rössel and Collins, 2006: 509), but have an integrated viewpoint to integrate

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analysis of individual interactions with the structural approach and analysis of structural issues with the interactional approach. In particular, conflict theorists' viewpoint will be used in this study to analyse and interpret conflicts from the political and economic perspectives.

2.2.1.1 Functionalism

Functionalism originates in the work of Durkheim (1858-1917), who analysed how society remains relatively stable (Anderson and Taylor, 2006: 20). Functionalism views that society is made up of parts and each of the society's parts is interdependent and functions to maintain a large system (Ferrante, 2008: 28). In other words, functionalists view society as a system of interrelated and interdependent parts (Zastrow and Kirst-Ashman, 2010: 499) like a living organism. Talcott Parsons (1902–1979) is one of the major scholars who made functionalism a dominant theory in sociology for many years in the 20th century. One of Parsons' momentous contributions was to discover and formulate four functional characteristics, the so-called the AGIL system[1], in a society to operate its systems: 1) Adaptation, 2) Goal attainment, 3) Integration, and 4) Latency (Parson, 1967: 260; Andersen and Kaspersen, 2000: 224). AGIL represents four functional requirements of all action systems in a society. In other words, a society is stable and effective in terms of maintaining equilibrium and continuing existence of its system and sub-systems when these functional components are met adequately (Delaney, 2014: 197).

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[1] AGIL is an abbreviation of Adaptation, Goal attainment, Integration, and Latency. Adaptation implies how well the system adapts to its material environment. Goal attainment means ability of individual or group to identify and pursue goals. Integration connotes dimensions of cohesion and solidarity. Finally, Latency implies maintenance of basic and general values. See Edles, L. D. and Appelrouth, S. (2011) *Sociological theory in the contemporary era: Text and readings*, Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Pine Forge Press, p. 33.

Functionalism was further developed by Robert Merton (1910-2003). Merton had doubts about the assumption of functionalism that all social and cultural elements in a society function positively in order to contribute to unity. In order to analyse social phenomena in the most accurate way, Merton established a programme built on a typology of different kinds of functions (Andersen and Kaspersen, 2000: 230). The typology is based on two distinctions: one is a distinction between manifest and latent functions and the other is a distinction between functions and dysfunctions (Merton, 1968: 51). The former is related to two criteria of a typology, intentionality and awareness, by which the functions of a society are categorized into four types: 'intended and recognized', 'intended but not recognized', 'unintended but recognized later', and 'unintended and not recognized' (Andersen and Kaspersen, 2000: 230). The latter is related to two types of consequences of functions: beneficial and harmful. Merton argued the universal functionality that all elements of a society function positively to produce constructive consequences should be rejected because it simply ignores dysfunctions in a society.

Then, how do functionalists view conflict? Functionalism emphasizes maintenance of stability and continuation of social order in a society. Functionalists believe that all social systems have a tendency to stability. Thus, from the functionalist perspective a society resists changes because social problems are the result of disorganization that frequently stems from broader changing processes like the industrial revolution or globalization (McVeigh and Wolfer, 2004: 7). For society to function, all parts of the whole must have a general consensus established by shared public values and norms. Consensus within a society implies a widespread agreement among social members by which the society can be in a state of equilibrium. Thus, functionalists take the view that social stability is the absence of conflict. From their viewpoint, conflict is anti-social. Furthermore, social changes that sometimes naturally

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accompany conflicts are regarded as opposition to unity and stability because conflict implies that shared values are broken down and some parts of the society do not meet people's needs any longer.

2.2.1.2 Interactionism

Interactionists believe that the nature of the human being is like a *tabular rasa*[2] (blank writing tablet) at birth and it is formed and developed by interactions with others. Interactionism assumes that individuals' behaviour is determined by continual interactions between individuals and situations (Shajahan and Shajahan, 2004: 16). It means individuals' behaviour involves making decisions and decisions are based on the meaning of the situation, and on personal values and subculture. Although interactionism is in micro-sociology, interactionists believe that they can understand macro-social structure through interpreting daily social interactions between individuals or groups. Interactionism focuses not only on social interactions, but also on their meanings to the persons behaving and to the other parties. In this regard, interactionism is also called 'interpretive sociology' (Jones, 2007: 102).

Mead (1863-1931) is regarded as one of the progenitors of interactionism. According to Blumer (1986: 2), Mead's interactionism stands on three premises:

> The first premise is that human beings act toward the physical objects and other beings in their environment on the basis of the meanings that these things have for them. The second premise is that these meanings are derived from the social interaction between and among individuals. The third premise is that these meanings are established and modified through an interpretive process used by the person in dealing with the things he encounters.

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[2] *Tabula rasa* is the epistemological theory that the mind of people at birth is empty and people learn and develop knowledge from experience and perception (Drew and Hardman, 1999: 138; Dancy, Sosa, and Steup, 2010: 763).

O'Brien (2006: 41) evaluates that Mead's interactionism regards human beings as purposive agents confronting a world that they must interpret in order to act rather than a set of environmental stimuli to which they are forced to respond. Another important contributor to interactionism is Goffman (1922-1982) who developed the 'dramaturgical approach' which likens social life to role-playing as actors on the stage (Baert and Carreira da Silva, 103). He described routine social action as a theatrical performance in many different dramas. According to Goffman, we as social actors need to maintain our social performances in diverse situations with a clear understanding of social order with its rules and conventions, although the scripts and stages are relatively unchanging (Riggins, 1990: 72).

Conflict, according to interactionism, is caused by incompatible goals, thoughts, or emotions among social members that lead to opposition and disagreement (Rad and Anantatmula, 2010: 82). In other words, conflict from the perspective of interactionists is a clash of values and sub-cultures among social members in relation to reaching agreements or making choices in various situations. Sometimes, individuals in a society disagree on a social matter because their values and interpretations are different. NIMBY[3] phenomenon is an example about social conflicts from the interactionism perspective. We often observe in a plural society that the behaviour and choices of individuals are varied, for their values and meanings of the situation are different. Different sub-cultural groups are consequences of constant social interactions developing different systems of meanings. Therefore, when one party finds social and cultural prejudices in the other party, they arise against each other.

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[3] The acronym NIMBY is short for "Not In My Back Yard!" and was coined in the context of nuclear plants and the sitting of nuclear waste repositories (Davy, 1997: 16).

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2.2.1.3 Conflict Theory

Conflict theorists believe that a society always changes through disputes and conflicts that contribute to the development of the society. From the viewpoint of conflict theorists, the main causes of conflict in a society are economic interests or political power struggles and the society is sustained by the suppression and compulsion of a minority toward the majority. Thus, the relationship among sub-systems is not based on collaboration, but competition. This is a macro level analysis of society in conflict theory. On the other hand, conflict theorists see each component of society as being in a struggle with each other over limited resources like money, power, status and prestige (McVeigh and Wolfer, 2004: 7). The component can be not only social organizations as the sub-systems of society, but also individuals as the atoms of society. Therefore, conflict theory also includes a micro level analysis of society.

Conflict theory began as a macro sociological theory. In the 1950s and 1960s, people began to doubt the assumptions of functionalism. Conflict theory came to the fore in responding to the radical social changes and turmoil that people faced in America and Europe after the Second World War.[4] However, the original concept of conflict theory is attributed to Karl Marx (1818-1883) who viewed human society as a process of development that would end conflict through conflict (Campbell, 1981: 113). He realized that there was a new social class system in the economic structure under capitalism. He could observe that there were always competing groups between 'the haves' who had power, wealth, and privilege through controlling economic resources and 'the have-nots' exploited by 'the haves'.

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[4] America faced serious social turmoil in 1950s and 1960s. Social problems such as illegitimacy and family break-up correlated with low income. The racial discrimination was emerged as the rate of immigration was increased. Unemployment, criminal activity, and drug addiction greatly increased in this period. See Patterson, J. T. (2000) *America's struggle against poverty in the twentieth century*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.

Different from Marx's macro approach to conflict, Georg Simmel (1858-1918) viewed conflict as a form of social interaction shaping individuals and society (Wolff, 1959: 23). Simmel used a bottom up approach to observe the social interactions of individuals in micro level in order to finally identify how macro social structural problems emerged (Farganis, 1993: 133). In this regard, Simmel's contribution was to reveal the conflict between individuals as free agencies making decisions creatively and the social systems constructed by accumulated social norms and traditions forcing individuals to conform. However, Simmel believed that this conflict is an intrinsic and functionally necessary part of social life and is not necessarily anti-social (Rossides, 1998: 176). Randall Collins (1988: 386) is another conflict theorist who tried to analyse conflict in combination of micro and macro perspective from very small entities such as nonverbal communication to very large entities such as economic world systems. Collins developed a multidimensional analysis of conflict through which he could observe conflict in all areas of social life at the micro level of social interaction and at the macro social structure as a result of people's ongoing struggles to improve their position in terms of material resources, status, and power (Johnson, 2008: 368).

Representative modern conflict theorists are Dahrendorf (1927-2009) and Coser (1913-2003) who developed the conflict theory in the 20th century. Dahrendorf believed that society has two faces, conflict and consensus, and social changes occur through conflict. He thought that every society is always in the process of its change. He agreed with Marx that the main social conflicts happened between social classes. Both of them viewed conflict as a clash between classes. However, Dahrendorf based his analysis not on the ownership and non-ownership of the means of production, but on participation in and exclusion from power (Slattery, 2003: 79). In other words, he took a political perspective on social conflict, whereas Marx viewed it from an economic perspective. The main contribution of Coser to sociology is that he was the first

sociologist to bring functionalism and conflict theory together. He believed that conflict played important roles and that they concern the relative stability and vitality of societies and groups[5] (Lopreato and Hazelrigg, 1972: 62). He contended that conflict was an endurable process improving the stability of social systems, rather than jeopardizing them.

2.2.2 Sociological Approaches to Conflict in Congregations

2.2.2.1 Structural Conflict in Congregations

Structural conflict is understood as a type of conflict in organizations that is caused by the way a situation is set up (CDR Associates, 2007: 79). Therefore, the structural approach to conflict is to find causes of organizational conflict in specific organizational structures and situations (Cheldelin et al., 2008: 273). Organizations have various types of governance structures, policies, and operating procedures. In an organization, conflicts are naturally expected to arise between sub-groups because they have different goals, cultures, and approaches (Sims, 2002: 248). Specifically, Furlong (2005: 34-35) classifies three common causes of structural conflicts: limited resources, authority problems and divergent priorities. Limited resources often cause parties to compete and the competition is developed into a conflict. Authority issues in organizations are related to obtaining political power for achieving the party's goal. Finally, there is no collaboration, but tension and discord caused by divergent priorities when each department concentrates on achieving the respective goal, rather than the common goal. Sometimes, these structural conflicts occur when organizations initiate

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[5] For instance, conflict often results in an at least temporary removal of the disagreements and dissociating elements of a society, thereby re-establishing social unity. See Lopreato, J. and Hazelrigg, L. E. (1972) *Class, Conflict, and Mobility: Theories and Studies of Class Structure*, San Francisco: Chandler.

change. When organizations move forward in a determined and vigorous manner, other forces are often simultaneously working to maintain the existing situation, causing the organization to oscillate back to the status quo (Coe, 1997: 168).

This structural conflict is also observed in Christian congregations. I would like to explain this structural conflict in congregations with some examples in the New Testament from the viewpoint of macro-sociology. The Bible uses what might be called a functionalist approach in order to explain the church and its common functions as a community: "Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it" (1 Cor. 12:27). The apostle Paul employs this metaphor that the church is like a living organism: "The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ" (1 Cor. 12:12). The unity and cohesion of the church as a body in the Scriptures can be referred to as the same shared values in functionalism, especially the idea of 'organic solidarity'[6] among its members who have different roles and tasks, but work for the common goal. In this respect, as long as a community is viewed as a living organism, its solidarity and cohesion are under threat, if a party does not function properly in the community. It is because that unity and solidarity mean that all parts of the community contribute to order and stability within the community, according to the viewpoint of functionalists. Therefore, it is understood from the viewpoint of functionalism that any form of conflict in the church is the result of the sinful behaviour of believers (Halverstadt, 1991: 25) so that the Scriptures emphasize repentance, forgiveness, and reconciliation within the Christian community.

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[6] Emile Durkheim mentioned the two types of social solidarity to explain about "How do societies manage to hold together?" One is mechanical solidarity which refers to the social cohesion of preindustrial societies, in which there is minimal division of labour and people feel united by shared values and common social bonds. The other is organic solidarity that refers to the social cohesion found in industrial (and perhaps post-industrial) societies, in which people perform very specialized tasks and feel united by their mutual dependence. See Kendall, E. D. (2010) *Sociology in Our Time: The Essentials 7th ed.*, Australia; Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Cengage Learning. Andersen, M. L. and Taylor, H. F. (2010) Sociology: The essentials, Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Cengage Learning.

Conflict theory is used in a socio-cultural context not only to de-escalate destructive conflicts, but also to utilize constructive conflicts (Bartos and Wehr, 2002:1). From the viewpoint of conflict theorists, managed conflict may contribute to social stability. The Bible does not hide conflicts in the Christian community. Winter (2001) asserts that the problem of divisiveness in the church at Corinth emerged from both a political power struggle among groups and an economic class conflict between the rich and the poor. From the viewpoint of conflict theorists, the Bible views conflict in the church as a challenge to be more mature as well as a risk of schism. The apostle Paul stressed through the metaphor of planting the seed, watering it and causing it to grow (1 Cor. 3:6-9) that people from each group are not competitors, but God's fellow workers. Paul had an integral viewpoint on conflict that sometimes conflicts are observed because it seems that everyone competes, but in fact each person plays a different role to contribute to growth. In relation to the social class conflict due to economic strata (1 Cor. 11:17-34), the apostle Paul tried to restore the unity through warning the rich who humiliated the poor. This manifestation of conflict in the church at Corinth contributed positively, to a certain degree, to the realization that each one, regardless of their economic strata, was an important part that formed the body of Christ (1 Cor. 12: 12-31).

2.2.2.2 Interactional Conflict in Congregations

Conflicts occur not only because of structural problems, but also because of symbolic issues that are referred to as meanings given to situations. Interactionists argue that conflict occurs when social members have different interpretations of the same situation because of the incompatibility of their goals and values. Sometimes, interactional conflicts in organizations arise between members, and they are simply related to the characteristics of those involved (Bronwynne et al., 2007: 298). These are

often termed interpersonal conflicts caused by personality clashes. Individuals' different attitudes and experiences in an organization can also cause interpersonal conflicts. In this respect, interpersonal conflict is the most basic form of interactional conflict in organizations. Some conflict theorists, such as Simmel, who analyse conflict at the micro-level assert that conflict may help individuals to stabilize, concentrate and purify their personalities as well as promote social adaptation (Rossides, 1998: 176)

One of the best examples to describe the interactional conflict in the New Testament is the parable of the prodigal son (Luke 15). The prodigal son came back to his father's house after spending everything. This particular situation was given to the father and to the older son. However, their interpretations on returning of the prodigal person were different. The father welcomed him and had a feast. The father interpreted that the prodigal son had been lost and found so that he began to celebrate. On the other hand, the older son became angry when he heard that his brother had come back home so that he refused to go in. He interpreted that his brother had squandered his father's property. The older son finally argued with his father about his unfair treatment. There is an interactional conflict between the father and the older son due to different viewpoints rooted in their values. Therefore, interactional conflicts may be caused by diverse factors within a Christian congregation, as the interactional conflict occurred between the father and the older son in the story. Although members in a congregation believe in the same God and follow the same Scriptures, their choices as reactions to a particular given situation may differ because their interests and interpretations in the same situation differ.

2.2.3 Theological Understanding of Conflict

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Ecclesiology is the doctrine of the church. Normative ecclesiology deals with the historical origins of the church and the variety of forms of the church, whereas contextual ecclesiology deals with issues of churches situated in different political, social, cultural and theological contexts (Kärkkäinen, 2002: 12-13). The former allows scholars to approach its topics only in theology, such as soteriology, church history, and Christology. However, the latter uses the human sciences, particularly social anthropology, as tools to listen more deeply to local communities, to discover what is actually happening, and to test this against the rhetoric and espoused values of these communities (Bosch, 1991). This contextual ecclesiology dealing with diverse issues of the church in reality, not in abstract ideals, is referred to as congregational studies (Croft and Croft, 2008: 197).

2.2.3.1 Ecclesiological Understanding of Conflict

When the church is regarded as a living organism, the most important ethos in this ecclesiological understanding is an organic unity among its parts (Ephesians 4:4-6). At the Edinburgh conference of 1910, it was agreed that the vision of the goal of unity is to "realize the idea of the church as one living body", as a "living organism, with the diversity characteristic of a healthy body"[7] (Fuchs, 2007: 53). Then, what brings this unity among believers in the church who have diverse cultural, moral, and theological backgrounds? In John's Gospel chapter seventeen, Jesus prayed for the unity among His disciples and believers because in John's theology the source of the unity is only God. On a more practical level, Berkhof (1996: 29) asserts that the unity of the church demands doctrinal agreement. Apostle Paul emphasizes the unity of the church that all

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[7] Fuchs cited the first quotation from Harold E. Fey, ed., A History of the Ecumenical Movement, Volume 2: *The Ecumenical Advance 1948-1968,* 3rd ed., Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1993, p. 147. The second quotation is from *DEM* (Dictionary of the Ecumenical Movement), 1st ed., 1991, p. 1042.

members of the church ideally attain to the unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God (Ephesians 4:13). It implies that the church must formulate its understanding of the truth so that its unity is based on the confession of a common dogma (Berkhof, 1996: 30). A doctrine and dogma are often interchangeably used as an assertion of opinion or belief formally handed down by an authority as true and indisputable (Haviland et al., 2007: 62). Dogma in its original Greek context means what seems right and Christian doctrine connotes a corpus of dogma promulgated by the church. According to Wiley (2002: 88), Christian doctrine has a twofold function. Firstly, it marks a truth affirmed by the church as grounded in divine revelation. Secondly, it denotes a belief necessary for salvation that must be accepted by believers. Personally, I assert that there is another important function of the doctrine that is to defend the faith against misinterpretation and error caused by those who refuse the truth because of their own beliefs, identities, cultures and values. These people were regarded as heretics in the early church and by them the unity of the church was threatened. In this respect, conflict in ecclesiological understanding means schism or division caused by people who have different frames of understanding Christian doctrine regarding church and faith. This type of conflict is destructive and it is high-intensity conflict that is unhealthy and difficult to handle because it occurs between two different frames.

2.2.3.2 Understanding Conflict in Congregational Studies

For the last several decades, congregational studies have been developed as an academic discipline to provide a better understanding of the lived reality of faith communities. According to Ebaugh (2006: 355), until the 'Handbook for Congregational Studies' (Carroll, Dudley and McKinney, 1986) was published, neither religious leaders nor sociologists were paying appreciable attention to local

congregations. Congregational studies focus on congregational life from sociological and theological perspectives to understand organizational dynamics of local congregations (Wind and Lewis, 1994: 6). Particularly, Thung (1976: 171) stresses that congregational studies have contributed to understanding the internal structures of formal and informal power and authority as they operate in congregations.

When a church is regarded as an organization, it implies that it is a community of believers in its own time and place. Even if they have the same end, individuals and sub-groups may have different interests. Congregational studies view conflicts as results of everyday church life among congregations. There is no conflict-free space in the world where more than two people gather and church is not an exception, even though it emphasizes the love of Christ and its application. In this regard, conflict in a congregation means dispute or disagreement over many matters when people work together for the same goal. It is low-intensity conflict that can be observed in any organization. This type of conflict is disruptive, but healthy and easier to handle because it occurs within the same frame.

2.2.4 Theological Approaches to Conflict in Congregations

According to the ecclesiological understanding, conflict in congregations is based on different values, beliefs, doctrines and identity. It means that the two parties involved in a conflict have different frames of understanding the situation. On the other hand, from the viewpoint of congregational studies, conflicts are diverse types of common clashes among people that can be also observed in many social organizations. These conflicts are based on characters, personalities and interests. Becker (1999: 18-19) clarifies the two different types of conflict in congregations: 'within-frame conflict' and

'between-frame conflict'. Within-frame conflict is caused by a violation of shared values and beliefs, whereas between-frame conflict is caused by the clash of two fundamentally different sets of values and beliefs. Within-frame conflict is often painful, but usually amenable to being resolved by some previously existing organization routine (Becker, 1999: 18). On the other hand, between-frame conflict is more fundamental conflict over the nature of the congregation's identity and core tasks (Becker, 1999: 19). Between-frame conflict is much harder to resolve because it stems from divergent standards of what is right or different expectations about how things ought to be done (Emerson and Woo, 2008: 146). Therefore, it is natural that between-frame conflict is more common in multicultural congregations than culturally homogeneous congregations.

2.2.4.1 Within-frame Conflict in Congregations

Within-frame conflict is also referred to as content-based conflict that is related to what people view as facts or opinions (Fielding, 2006: 82). Content-based conflicts occur when members of an organization have different opinions or disagreements on insignificant issues. Conflicts sometimes occur when people disagree about issues of a factual nature without checking the fact, but dwell in the argument on 'who is right or wrong' (Weiten, 2009: 225). This is a fact-based conflict. Conflicts also occur when people disagree about how to handle a particular situation (Weiten et al., 2009: 227). This is policy-based conflict. Within-frame conflict is the over-arching term to cover various types of conflicts based on fact, content, interest, and policy.

One of the examples about this within-frame conflict in the Bible is the conflict between Hebraic-Jewish widows and Greek-Jewish widows about the unfairness of the

daily distribution of food (Acts 6). Woodley and Dawson (2004: 67) argue that this conflict was the first ethnic or cultural conflict in the early church. However, I do not agree with their opinion that the Greek-Jewish widows were racially discriminated against by the Jewish leaders. The chapter clearly addresses that the cause of the conflict was the unintended unfair treatment of Greek-Jewish widows because of the sudden explosion of numbers of believers. If this conflict was caused by racial discrimination, it could have been developed as an unhealthy, an intractable, and a long-lasting between-frame conflict based on different values and identities. However, it was simply and quickly resolved when the twelve disciples appointed seven deacons in order to change the policy on distribution.

2.2.4.2 Between-frame Conflict in Congregations

Between-frame conflict is also known as value-based conflict that is destructive and difficult to deal with because people regard their values as fundamental to their existence (Fielding, 2006: 81). Values are beliefs that people use to evaluate the worth of various aspects of life so that differing personal values can lead to conflicts (Weiten et al., 2009: 227). Becker (1999: 13) has found four different bundles of ideas and discourses about 'who we are' in order to classify different patterns for local culture, or congregational models: house of worship, family, community, and leader. According to her explanations, each local congregation has a particular dominant model and 'how we do things here' is related to 'who we are'. It is phenomenologically assumed that conflicts occur because of different methods or ways of implementing projects, but the essence of those conflicts is based on identity and values of the parties involved. In these identity-based conflicts, winning over the other party is more important than finding an effective solution to satisfy both parties.

A representative example regarding the between-frame conflict in the New Testament is described in Acts chapter fifteen. The chapter reports that some of the Jewish believers who belonged to the party of the Pharisees emphasized that the Gentiles must be circumcised and required to obey the Law of Moses. Even Peter, who saw the vivid vision of unclean animals and experienced the baptism of the Holy Spirit upon the Gentiles (Acts 10), changed his attitude and put Gentiles down when the circumcision group visited Antioch (Galatians 2). It was a destructive between-frame conflict that the early church faced. There were also some other between-frame conflict issues such as eating meat sacrificed to idols and containing blood practiced by the Gentiles because they did not have a background of Levitical laws. Obviously, these practices of Gentile Christians in Antioch greatly offended the Jewish Christian community. Even though Jews and Gentiles became Christians through believing in Christ, there were conflict issues based on their different cultures, religious backgrounds, traditions, values, identities, and social and moral norms.

2.3 Formulating a System for Classification of Conflicts

There are various causes and aspects of conflict in the research field. It means that types of conflict are multiple and complex. As the research made progress, I have realized that categorizing conflicts into types is useful not only to understand their complex nature and realities, but also to handle them in effective ways. However, there is no theoretical and practical framework in conflict studies designed for congregational settings, providing guidelines for classifying conflicts into different categories on the basis of their intensity, scale and nature. Therefore, I established a system for categorizing conflicts into different types through synthesizing the sociological and theological understanding and perspectives. The sociological understanding and

perspectives of conflict provide a foundation to classify conflicts according to their scales: Interactional and Structural conflicts. On the other hand, the theological understanding and perspectives of conflict inform us that conflicts can be classified according to their nature: Within-frame and Between-frame conflicts. Figure 2.1 depicts how I formulate the four types of conflict in congregational settings.
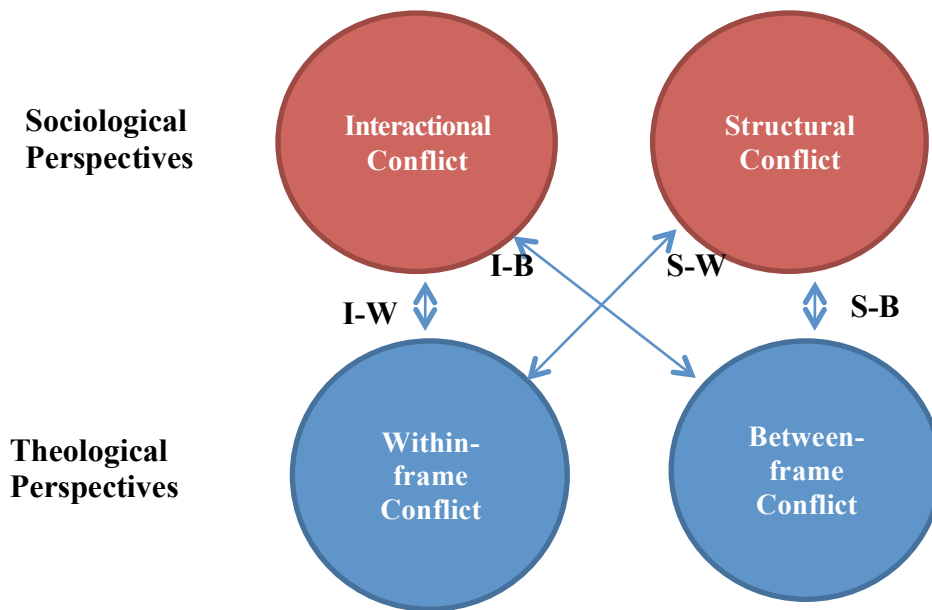
Figure 2.1 Four types of conflict formulated by synthesizing sociological and theological understanding and perspectives on conflict

I-W is 'Interactional and Within-frame' conflict that is the most common conflict observed in organizational settings. Character flaws and faults, clashes of interests or opinions, and communication problems among members are normal factors in I-W type of conflict. Therefore, this is an interpersonal conflict caused by the character and behaviour of individuals. This is a low intensity conflict and healthy in many cases because it often makes the congregation mature in the freedom of expressing opinions and in understanding differences of each individual. This I-W conflict is easily resolved unless it is developed to attack someone's integrity.

I-B is 'Interactional and Between-frame' conflict that is interpersonal conflict among members of a congregation because of different personal identities and beliefs. One's personal identity and belief imply the cultural, social, ethnic, economic, political and theological foundation of existence. When one's foundation of life is offended by someone, automatically he reacts to it as his defence mechanism. It is quite a high intensity conflict and easily developed into an unhealthy situation when conflicts are shifted to emotional wars that there is no more consideration of rational approaches to find an effective solution. This type of conflict can be limited or reduced through agreement among individuals for a common goal in the congregation. In order to induce cooperation among members, leaders have to help individuals turn their focuses from their interpersonal matters to the common goal.

S-W is 'Structural and Within-frame' conflict that is observed when different departments carry out the same goal in an organization. The causes of this kind of conflict may be different ways of doing something or competitions in the situations in which resources are limited. As a form of intergroup conflict, S-W type is difficult to bring to a resolution until the structural issues of the organization are resolved. Therefore, the main aim of the conflict handling approach for this type of conflict is to reduce the conflict intensities to a certain manageable level through mitigation, containment, arbitration or adjudication if necessary. However, as a form of within-frame conflict, it is presumed that the two parties have the capability to negotiate the situation because the conflict is caused by different methods in a competition for achieving the goal that both of them have pursued or by different ways of reasoning in perceiving the reality. Sometimes, this kind of conflict contributes constructively to establish better administration structure in the organization.

S-B is 'Structural and Between-frame' conflict that is an intergroup conflict caused by a clash of fundamentally different values and identity between the parties. It is the highest intensity conflict in a congregation that is often not easily and peacefully resolved. The problem-solving approach or inducing cooperation is not effectively applicable to this kind of conflict. In the majority of cases, negotiation does not work because each party is more interested in a bloody triumph than a peaceful compromise. Parties involved in this type of conflict do not have the capability to find a solution as well as to handle conflicts effectively so that mediation of a third party is necessary in most cases.

This system for classifying conflict types has brought three important contributions to the conflict handling process in this research. Firstly, it has provided a framework to categorize complex conflicts into the four types on the basis of their nature and scales. Secondly, it has provided a standard method of measuring the intensity levels of conflict. The four types of conflict can be set at different levels, dependent on the degree of their intensities. It is crucial to measure the intensity of a conflict through identifying its scale and nature in order to eventually select the most appropriate approach to handle it for the best outcome. Finally, the system has enabled me to establish a conflict-handling model. The realities of conflict situations are exposed by data analysis and interpretation. However, there is no formulated way of connecting the realities of conflict to the existing conflict approaches. This system has enabled me to connect the conflict realities categorized into different types to the different conflict approaches through establishing a conflict handling-model. This conflict-handling model has emerged through constant conversations between the conflict realities revealed by analysis and interpretation of the primary data and the theoretical and practical conflict approaches informed by the existing secondary sources. Figure 2.2 depicts the conflict handling-model established by the functions of the

system (the four types of conflicts) as a bridge to connect between conflict realities and conflict approaches.
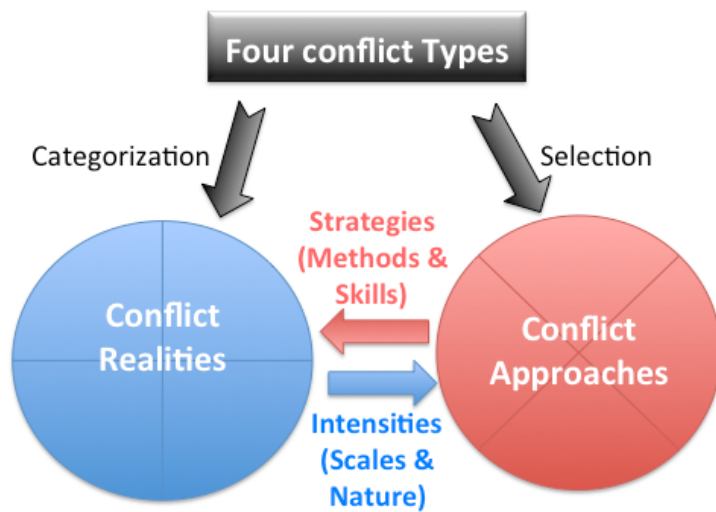
Figure 2.2 Conflict handling process in relation to the functions of the four conflict types

2.4 Reality of Conflict in Congregations

2.4.1 Understanding of Conflicts in General Congregations

Conflict in the church is the uncomfortable reality, which is confirmed by both Scripture and experience (Lathrop, 2015: 185). McKay (2009: 1) states that according to a national survey of over 14,000 congregations in the USA in the year 2000, over 75% of those congregations had faced some level of conflict in the five years prior to the survey[8] and he says that the results would be similar to congregations in the UK on the basis of his experience. It implies that congregational conflict is normal and inevitable as long as a church is a place where humans gather. Therefore, the question should be not only on why it occurs, but also how to lessen the frequency of conflict and how to constructively handle it when it arises (Lawrenz, 2009: 21).

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[8] McKay quoted this from Dudley and Breeden (2007), *Insights into Congregational Conflict*, Hartford, CT: Faith Communities Today, Hartford Institute for Religion Research.

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2.4.1.1 Factors of Conflict in General Congregations

Wilmot and Hocker (2001:41) define conflict as an expressed struggle between at least two interdependent parties who perceive incompatible goals, scarce resources, and interference from others in achieving their goals. In a variety of contexts, interpersonal conflicts generally occur by those three things. However, factors of conflict in organizations, especially faith-based congregations may differ because not only interpersonal factors, but also structural factors are involved. Becker et al. (1993: 198) identified three broad domains of conflict in congregations:

1) Theology, doctrine, or other ideal issues (seen as cultural issues);
2) Resources, such as money, personnel or physical plant (seen as economic issues);
3) Church authority (seen as political or administrative issues).

Pneuman (2001: 45-53) identified nine common sources of conflict to explain explicitly about general factors of conflict in congregations from his consultancy experience:

1) Members disagree about values and beliefs;
2) The congregation's structure is unclear;
3) The pastor's role and responsibilities are in conflict;
4) The structure no longer fits the congregation's size;
5) The clergy and lay leadership styles do not match;
6) The new pastor rushes into changes;
7) Communication lines are blocked;
8) Church members manage conflict poorly;
9) Disaffected members hold back participation and pledges.

These nine general factors can be grouped into three areas: organizational structures (items 2, 3 and 4), matters of church culture or practice (items 5, 7 and 8), and factors involving leadership and membership (items 1, 6 and 9). In summary, there are three common domains of general conflicts in congregations: cultural issues, structural issues,

and political issues. Becker and Pneuman suggest that conflicts in congregations are caused by both structural and interactional factors. Their studies also suggest that the nature and characteristics of conflicts in congregations are both between-frame and within-frame.

2.4.1.2 Intensities of Conflicts in General Congregation

According to a survey of American pastors' experience of conflict, over 90% of pastors recognized that conflict could have positive outcomes (McKay, 2009: 2). Lederach (2003: 15) views conflict as a potential catalyst for transformation and growth, even though many times conflict results in long-standing cycles of hurt and destruction. According to Bullard (2008: 5) conflict can be an empowering force, if it is handled appropriately at a lower intensity before it becomes a destructive force at a higher intensity of conflict.

Some conflicts may be healthy and some may be not. Some are in the transitional situation from 'healthy' to 'unhealthy'. It means that there are levels of conflict, which are called 'intensities of conflict'. In order to intervene in the conflict to take effective actions, it is critical to assess the level of conflict intensity accurately. Boyd-Macmillan and Savage (2008:76) suggest that misjudging the conflict level will cause at best an ineffective result and at worst a counter-productive result. Speed Leas (1985: 17-22), the pioneer in assessing conflict situations, has provided a framework for identifying the different levels of intensity of conflict in a congregation as follows:

> **Level 1: Problems to Solve**. This is a normal and entirely healthy level of conflict. At this level, people involved focus on the problem, not on the other party so that their communication is clear because they intend to resolve the problem.
>
> **Level 2: Disagreement.** It is also a normal level of conflict because many congregations experience this level of conflict. At this level people involved are

more concerned with self-protection than problem-solving so that communication is less clear for people who do not want to reveal their information which may be used by the other party.

Level 3: Contest. It is not unusual for congregations to experience this level of conflict. However, this is the first level of win-lose dynamic in the spectrum of these five levels of conflict intensity. Communication becomes distorted and people focus on the other party to attack, rather than on the problem itself. Arguments become more emotional than rational.

Level 4: **Fight or Flight**. At this level, each party's goal is to remove the other party, or to leave if their goal is not achieved. Schism is clear and people do not focus on the whole congregation. Communication is full of blame, negative stereotype, and self-righteousness. At this level the congregation needs help from outside if they want to resolve this conflict.

Level 5: **Intractable**. This level of conflict is the most destructive. The conflict is out of the participants' control. Each party's goal becomes more aggressive to destroy the other party. People use all means to justify their goals and actions. Communication is full of outright condemnation and accusation toward the other party. Emotional volatility is extremely high. At this level separating the warring parties is required before any kind of peace-making process is initiated.

Bullard (2008: 14) has modulated Leas' framework into seven intensities of conflict. The first three intensities[9] represent healthy conflict whose focus of effort is coming to a consensus or attaining a resolution. The fourth intensity[10] is transitional between healthy conflict and unhealthy conflict. For this intensity, the goal of mediation is to avoid a negative outcome and to achieve a positive outcome and impact. The last three intensities[11] represent unhealthy conflicts that damage the congregation and require outside, third-party assistance to create a neutral ground.

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[9] The first intensity is about typical issues with many solutions. It is the win-win dynamic. The second intensity is about common disagreements over multiple issues. It is also the win-win dynamic. The third intensity is about competition within a group or between groups. It is the win-lose dynamic. The theme for addressing these healthy intensities is "Getting to Yes!" See Bullard, G. W. (2008*) Every congregation needs a little conflict*, St. Louis, Mo.: Chalice Press.

[10] This intensity is about congregational wide competition with voting. It is the win-lose dynamic. The theme for addressing this intensity is "Getting Past No!". See Bullard, G. W. (2008*) Every congregation needs a little conflict*, St. Louis, Mo.: Chalice Press.

[11] The fifth intensity is about congregational wide combat with organizational casualties. It is the lose-leave dynamic. The sixth intensity is about pursuit of people beyond the congregation focused on their integrity. It is the lose-lose dynamic. The last intensity is about intentional physical harm to people or congregational facilities. It is also the lose-lose dynamic. The theme for addressing these intensities of unhealthy conflict is "Getting to Neutral!" See Bullard, G. W. (2008*) Every congregation needs a little conflict*, St. Louis, Mo.: Chalice Press.

2.4.2 Understanding of Conflict in Multicultural Congregations

In their book about the relationship between political democracy and ethnic diversity in modern Europe, Gerrits and Wolffram (2005: 50) argue that democracy requires a strong measure of cultural homogeneity because when ethnic identities, religious confessions, or other cultural orientations vary widely, civilized politics quickly turn into civil war. It is assumed that if all of the members of a church belong to the same ethnic or cultural group, then it is easier for them to be unified in their pursuit of agreement or consensus for matters. However, in a culturally diverse congregation, it is naturally expected that among individuals or cultural groups there are conflicts not only on their internal matters that they have faced in the congregation, but also on some external social issues such as social policies and racism that their society has faced.

2.4.2.1 Multicultural Congregations

Often the terms, multicultural, multiracial, and multiethnic, are used inter-changeably. However, each term must be clearly defined and used distinctively. In order to define each term, a clear understanding of concepts about a cultural group, a racial group, and an ethnic group is needed. A racial group is composed of people who are believed to share a similar biological descent, usually identified in terms of skin colour or bodily form (Leoussi, 2001: 70). By contrast, an ethnic group shares cultural and traditional traits such as language, religion, moral code, ethical ideals, dress, ornamentation, recreation, diet, family patterns, political orientation and social roles (Kleg, 1993: 38). In other words, a racial group consists of individuals tied by biological homogeneity, and an ethnic group by cultural homogeneity. According to the definitions described above, ethnicity is the comprehensive term for a cultural group. Nevertheless,

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I would rather use 'a multicultural congregation' than 'a multiethnic congregation' in this research because of the viewpoint of many scholars asserting that an ethnic group is a group sharing a common biological ancestry.[12] Thus, in order to avoid any sort of confusion and to focus on cultural issues in this research, I prefer to use 'a multicultural congregation' than 'a multiracial congregation' or 'a multiethnic congregation'.

A multicultural congregation is made up of culturally different believers. As far as 'cultural difference' is concerned, it does not imply sub-cultural differences within the dominant cultural outlook or cultural differences between generations in the same ethnic group. It would rather be distinctive cultural differences among diverse ethnic groups from different parts of the world. In this regard, a multicultural church may have various ethnic or racial groups. As discussed earlier on page one, there are two different types of a multicultural society: 'melting pot' model and the 'salad bowl' model. In the strict sense, a melting pot of cultures does not display the cultural diversity any longer because all the unique features, styles, and behaviour of different cultural groups have disappeared and a new cultural trend has been produced. This social and cultural phenomenon often happens because the dominant indigenous group forces the cultural minority groups to give up their cultural beliefs and practices. A true multicultural congregation is a group of culturally diverse believers who are encouraged to maintain their cultural identities as well as to embrace and respect others' cultural identities. In this respect, GEC is a good example of a multicultural congregation in which dynamic cultural interactions are encouraged and observed.

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[12] See Ferrante, J. (2010) *Sociology: A global Perspective*, Belmont, CA: Thomson Wadsworth, p. 234. Birgerson, S. M. (2002) *After the breakup of a multi-ethnic empire: Russia, successor states and Eurasian security*, Westport, Conn.: Praeger, p. 49. Banks, J. A. (1994) *Multiethnic education: theory and practice*, Boston; London; Sydney; Tokyo: Allyn and Bacon. Andersen, M. L. and Taylor, H. F. (2010) *Sociology: The Essentials*, Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Cengage Learning, p. 237. McKee, J. O. (2000) *Ethnicity in contemporary America: a geographical appraisal*, Lanham, Md.: Rowman and Littlefield, p. xv.

2.4.2.2 Factors of Conflict in Multicultural Congregations

In relation to dealing with conflicts in a multicultural church, the solution means to de-escalate destructive conflicts and to utilize constructive conflicts through selecting appropriate strategies and tactics rationally and applying them (Bartos and Wehr, 2002: 1) to maximize unity among members and to minimize schism in it. Sanders (1997: 98) positively mentions about the possibility of unity in multicultural congregations as follows:

> It is no accident that the Spirit chose an international, multicultural gathering of believers in Jerusalem for the Pentecost outpouring, whose testimony was that in our languages we hear them speaking about God's deeds and power. Pentecost is God's remedy for disunity. Many languages, many colours, many cultures, but one testimony of one God.

However, in reality, many multicultural congregations suffer due to disunity. Lohfink and Maloney (1999: 290) state that the church's deepest wound is disunity. Cultural diversity itself in a multicultural congregation is not a cause of disunity. Ethnocentrism of the major ethnic group over other ethnic minorities is the primary factor of conflict in multicultural congregations (Black, 2000: 86; Elmer, 2006: 68). The ethnic majority who are normally indigenous people of the area have power to emphasize their tendency of perceptions, values and aspirations to ethnic minorities (Isenhart and Spangle, 2000: 21). A multicultural congregation is not simply a gathering of people from different cultures and ethnicities in a place and occupying the same place every Sunday. Every single ethnic group has deeply rooted values and beliefs about the church and worship so that each group has its own agenda to agree and disagree with the present structure of the congregation. It is observed at GEC that the dominant ethnic group is always defensive for their long-term built structure and other ethnic groups try to change it with their cultural orientations and experiences. Therefore, in order to avoid conflict caused by disunity in a multicultural congregation, the stereotype of the culturally dominant

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groups expressing the worldview of one culture is superior to the others must be dealt with.

The second common factor of conflict in multicultural congregations is cultural biases that all decisions have to be made according to one's own values and beliefs. The more dissimilar the cultures are in values, cognitions, and behaviour, the more likely the evidence of cultural bias (Hall, 2005: 37). For instance, one particular ethnic group is misjudged by other cultural groups that people from the group do not have a leadership capability. Cultural prejudice of other cultural groups causes them to underestimate the leadership skills and abilities of individuals from the group because of their cultural origin. Therefore, it is unfair for participating ministries due to the cultural bias. People from the cultural group might think that they are victimized. Eventually, the cultural bias breaks the trust relationship between the group and other cultural groups. The victims in the cultural conflict instinctively begin to use a defence mechanism to survive as the culturally marginalized. Cultural bias of the more powerful groups toward the less powerful groups is automatically related to the discrimination of people who are judged according to their races, cultures and ethnicities. Another form of cultural bias is that some cultural groups are less civilized than others. Cohen (2010: 14) states that history is full of examples of people and governments who believed their culture and civilization were not only unique, but also superior to others. Although there are varying degrees, believers in contemporary multicultural congregations are not exceptions to this phenomenon of cultural bias.

The third common factor is cultural generalization. Schein (2010: 143) states that every culture has shared assumptions about what it means to be human, what our basic instincts are, and what kinds of behaviour are considered inhuman. Each culture has its common norms of behaviour. However, it is not right to expect individuals from the

same cultural group to behave in the same way. Even though people are from the same cultural group, everyone's behaviour may differ due to their personal environment and sub-culture where they were brought up and enculturated. In this respect, it is dangerous to over-generalize or stereotype on the basis of descriptions of general characteristics of cultural values because those generalizations are valid only as statistical statements about large numbers of people (Harris et al., 2004: 28).

The fourth common factor is cultural ignorance (Moffitt and Bordone, 2005: 126; Jones, 2010: 50). Cultural ignorance means that people are not aware of the subtleties of other cultures. It refers to insufficient knowledge about others' culture. It is likely that believers of multicultural congregations do not receive intercultural or cross-cultural training to be equipped in cultural competence. Thus, cultural conflict is inadvertently caused by cultural misunderstanding or cultural insensitivity based on cultural ignorance.

The fifth common factor is cultural impatience. This is an emotional approach to different ways of behaviour of others. Impatience limits the acceptance of others (Elmer, 2006: 67) so that people's perception of others' behaviour is negative and they intentionally criticize others. These people make efforts to assimilate into and settle down in the multicultural congregation and keep complaining and demanding others to change. These people do not have the capacity to understand different styles of worship, prayers and rituals. This cultural impatience ruins efforts to reach agreement and create unity. Due to fears, doubts, anxiety and impatience, people generally find it easier to develop relationships with members of their own culture and ethnicity (Mathews, 2003: 45). This automatically brings division in a multicultural congregation.

The last common factor is a cross-cultural miscommunication (Black, 2000: 6). A miscommunication problem is, of course, found in culturally homogeneous

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congregations. However, miscommunication in multicultural congregations is more rooted in the different ways of perceiving and conceptualizing events in their native languages and translating them into another language which may have a different system of perceiving and conceptualizing the same events (Guido, 2007: 127). Therefore, the creation of misunderstandings in multicultural interactions among members is based on the different linguistic structures of conceptualizing events that are deeply rooted in their cultures (Hasselgard, 2002: 179). An individual's language ability is another cause of miscommunication in multicultural congregations. Elmer (2006: 67-68) states that in a cross-cultural situation, language limits people's ability to verbally communicate acceptance to others and to make no effort to learn another's language is by itself a form of rejection of people. People from other countries are not able to speak in the local language like the indigenous people so they cannot express the exact meaning of the situation, and sometimes the distortion of the meaning becomes a source of conflict.

2.4.3 Understanding of Conflict in Merged Congregations

2.4.3.1 Merged Congregations

Even though merging churches is a relatively new area of research, its concept and theological reflection is not well developed yet in congregational studies. Thus, there is a need to know what the economics says about mergers in business to have a better understanding of merging churches in congregational studies. Coyle (2000: 2) defines merger in comparison with acquisition from a business perspective as follows:

> In its broadest definition, a merger can refer to any takeover of one company by another, when the businesses of each company are brought together as one. A more narrow definition is the coming together of two companies of roughly equal size, pooling their resources into a single business. An acquisition, in contrast, is the

takeover of the ownership and management control of one company by another. Control is the key test of the distinction between a merger and acquisition.

There are several reasons that congregations are merged. Firstly, most small congregations are not able to maintain their properties and to be financially independent ('Jet', 1996: 55). One of the major reasons of merging congregations is to ease the financial burdens of small congregations (Klein and Klein, 2001: 128). Having more members through a merger simply means more financial income for the merged congregation. The growth in numbers after a merger and the resultant financial stability is the major source of hope in small congregations considering a merger (Farnsley et al., 1997: 93). If a small congregation sells its own property and joins a bigger congregation, the merged church can suddenly have financial stability.

Secondly, a merger takes place for the survival of small congregations in numbers (Jones, 1978: 164; McQueen, 2000: 48). When churches consider a merger, most of them do not function as local churches because they feel run down and there seems to be little hope for their future (Scharen and Vigen, 2010: 81). However, in most of the cases, a merger itself does not bring a bright future to the merged congregation because two extremely small congregations still become a small merged congregation. This kind of merger is normally to prolong the death of failing congregations. According to a case study in merging congregations, both congregations have 15 percent fewer members and 15 percent less financial support within the first two years of a merger (Morse, 2010: 124).

Thirdly, it is to fulfil various practical needs of small congregations such as the urgent needs of human resources in several ministry areas (Hamblin, 1968: 81). A merger may help the both congregations to improve some areas of their ministries that

have been evaluated as weak points. For instance, a merger may occur on a request of members of two small congregations for having a minister who is authorized to conduct all the official services and rituals such as baptisms, weddings and funeral services. Both the congregations cannot afford to pay a minister on their own, but the merger may permit them to fulfil their needs. Here is a good example of this kind of merger between two congregations (Emerson and Woo, 2008: 60):

> A Los Angeles Korean ethnic church merged with a multiracial church several years ago. The merger was precipitated by the lack of an English-speaking pastor for the Korean church's English ministry. At the same time, a nearby multiracial church of the same denomination was in need of a church building. Because the multiracial church's pastor was Korean American, he was a suitable candidate to lead the new merged congregation. In this case, both congregations were able to survive from the merge, but in different ways – one gained an English-speaking pastor, the other a building.

Last of all, some mergers are the results of long-term ecumenical movements among churches that have different denominational backgrounds. For instance, in the 1920s there was a campaign for rural ecumenism executed by the Inter-church World Movement (IWM) in order to merge rural churches into non-denominational Protestant community churches to reduce numbers of churches and make their ministry more effective to their communities (Finke and Stark, 2006: 209). IWM laid out specific guidelines for a minimum standard of efficiency for mergers as follows (Madison, 1986: 658):

> There should not be more than one church for one thousand populations. At a minimum, each church must have a resident pastor, adequate equipment for worship, religious education and community service; regular worship and preaching; purposeful pastoral visitation; adequate financial program; organized graded church school; enlistment and training of local leaders…adequate provision for recreation and social life; and definite, cordial cooperation with other churches of the community.

2.4.3.2   Factors of conflict in Merged Congregations

Merging congregations is never an easy task. There are elements of both birth and death in merging (Dudley and Ammerman, 2002: 8). There must be some issues after a merger takes place that two congregations did not face in the period of negotiation. First of all, merged congregations immediately face differences in leadership styles, worship styles, traditions, race, cultures, constitutions, doctrines, strategies of evangelism, using resources, financial expenditure, and so on. One of the keys to the merger's success is that each congregation has to acknowledge and value the differences (Hohnson, 1996: 56). However, discomfort or dissonance that people feel in the initial period of the merger may cause them to focus on differences, rather than commonality or similarity between the congregations.

Secondly, if a merged congregation does not handle these differences over unresolved issues effectively and without delay, it possibly develops into serious divisions in the congregation (Walrath, 1979: 43). The difference may cause disagreement, incongruity, and disconnection between two congregations. Halverstadt (1991: 63) states that when one or both congregations find that their behaviour is enmeshed around differences in the initial period of the merger, conflicts are held in a chronic stage of submerged latency so that power is manipulatively used to control the differences. Particularly, there is a possibility that an intragroup conflict may occur between some supporting the merger and others against it within the same congregation. In fact, when two churches, one a predominately black church and the other a predominately white church, were merged in Texas in 1996, about 100 members from the both churches went elsewhere as a result of the merger because of racial tensions in the area (Johnson, 1996: 55). This is an illustration of failing in handling the fundamental differences between the congregations in the initial period. There is another type of schism that occurs between two merged congregations when the difference is recognized over certain premises. Each congregation may have different

opinions on the new church's name or forming the new leadership team in relation to the proportion of numbers from each congregation. There may be different opinions on how to use the finance from the sale of a church building of a congregation.

Thirdly, when two different sizes of churches are merged, the larger group is apt to dominate the merged congregation. The small congregation may have dissatisfaction that might be later developed into a conflict. As the merger takes place, the bigger group's takeover like a business acquisition would be eschewed and integration in mutual respect would be preferred (Barnett, 2005: 113). As Coyle (2000: 2) described, if a bigger congregation takes over a far smaller congregation, this is an acquisition rather than a merger so that political tension or conflict occurs by the major congregation's behaviour using the power of numbers to control the smaller congregation. If a merger takes place by more than two congregations, there may be an active minority congregation opposing the new order of things, although leaders from each congregation considered the difference of opinions on the points of doctrine and church policy. Conflict may occur as this numerical imbalance between congregations turns into a political power imbalance in the merged congregation.

2.5 Conclusion

I have established the theoretical background to understand conflict as a congregational phenomenon from both a sociological and a theological understanding and perspective. Kearsley (2008: 8) mentions that pioneering applications of sociological theory to theologies of the Christian church have indeed appeared from

time to time in emphasizing the sociological reality in congregations.[13] If the socio-cultural aspect is ignored, analysis and interpretation of congregational phenomena will result in only abstract theological concepts transcending mundane social realities of congregational lives.

I have also formulated the system for classification of conflicts into the four types (I-W, I-B, S-W and S-B) through synthesizing the theological and sociological approaches to conflict. Each conflict type has its own distinctive characteristics containing important information about its nature, scale and intensity which will become criteria to connect between the independent conflict domains that are regarded as conflict phenomena and the conflict approaches that will be suggested as practical applications to the conflict domains.

Finally, I have researched aspects and factors of conflict in general congregations, multicultural congregations, and merged congregations to have a better understanding of conflict at GEC which is a merged congregation as well as a multicultural congregation. In particular, I have mentioned the intensity of conflicts in order to explain the needs of considering different approaches according to the phases, nature, and scale of conflicts to handle them in more productive and effective ways.

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[13] Kearsley mentions examples of writings about applications of sociological theories to theology as follows: James F. Cobble, *The church and the powers: A theology of church Structure* (Peabody, 1988), Gerald A. Arbuckle, *Refounding the Church: Dissent for Leadership* (London, 1993), Lewis S. Mudge, *Rethinking the Beloved Community: Ecclesiology, Hermeneutics, Social Theory* (Maryland, 2001). See also Duncan MacLaren, *Mission Implausible: Restoring Credibility to the Church* (Milton Keynes, 2004).

Chapter Three

Methodology

3.1 Introduction

Methodology is not only a branch of knowledge involved in providing theoretical concepts of the nature of the research, but also a practical guidelines in terms of selecting techniques to fulfil the research purpose. In order to design and execute this study systematically, I employ ethnography as research methodology to generate the new knowledge and select several tools as research methods to implement the whole research process in relation to data collection, data management, data analysis and interpretation. Furthermore, I establish a strategic plan to underscore the trustworthiness and credibility of the data as well as ethical guidelines to execute this research within the code of research ethics in order to respect the rights and dignity of people who participate in this research.

3.2 Ethnography

Ethnography is subsumed into anthropology in a broad sense. Specifically, ethnography is a branch of cultural anthropology that deals with the study of specific contemporary cultures (Ferraro, 2006: 11). Ethnography uses the concept of culture as a lens through which culture of a small-scale social group is understood and interpreted. Ethnography is regarded as the original form of the research tradition that today is categorized as qualitative research (Mariampolski, 2006: 7). There are five possibilities for qualitative researchers to choose from: narrative, phenomenology, case study,

ethnography and grounded theory (Creswell, 2003: 183). As far as the distinctive roles of each methodology are concerned, narrative and phenomenology study individuals in a social setting; case study and grounded theory explore processes, activities, and events; and ethnography examines the broad culture-sharing behaviour of individuals or groups (Creswell, 2003: 193). Ethnography generates theories of cultures that are situated in local time and space in order to explain how people think, believe, and behave (LeCompte and Schensul, 1999a: 8). In order to describe the culture of a group from the viewpoint of cultural insiders, ethnographic researchers should spend reasonable periods of time doing fieldwork within the cultural group because meaning is mostly created through participatory observation of the insiders' cultural interactions. Differing from researchers in a positivist research paradigm, ethnographers believe that the world is constructed as people interact with one another over time in specific social settings.

There are four major ethnographic types: classical, systematic, interpretive, and critical ethnography (Muecke, 1999: 188). Classical ethnography is the original structural-functionalist form that includes both a description of behaviour and a demonstration of why and under what circumstances the behaviour took place (Morse and Field, 1995: 154). Systematic ethnography uses a focus on a specific issue to define the structure of culture in order to know what organizes the study groups' way of life. Interpretive ethnography is a research paradigm, which is interchangeable with phenomenological or constructivist ethnography, that investigates a group to define shared constructs and meanings as situated; that is, they are located in or affected by the social, political, cultural, economic, ethnic, age, gender and other contextual characteristics (LeCompte and Schensul, 1999a: 49). Interpretive ethnographers believe that culture is created or constructed when individual social members share and negotiate basically existing interpretations of what they believe, how they behave, and what happens in their local situations. This research comes under this interpretive

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ethnography in terms of my epistemological stance as a constructivist, with the purpose of the study to generate local knowledge through interpreting behaviour and beliefs of people in a local group, and emphasizing the situated local context for a more integral investigation. Critical ethnography is based on 'critical theory' which is concerned with the exposure of oppression and inequality in society with a view to emancipating individuals and groups towards collective empowerment (Cohen et al., 2000: 153). Thus, some particular social issues in a community like race, gender, and class are investigated in critical ethnography because it is supposed that cultures, groups, and individuals being viewed are related to power and interests in contexts.

3.3 Situatedness[1] of the Researcher

It is crucial to clarify the position and role of the researcher in qualitative research. I am an insider-researcher who belongs to the congregation being researched. Furthermore, I hold a position as a pastor in the congregation. I am aware that this particular situatedness has its advantages and disadvantages. I would like to address the advantages that I have as an insider-researcher. Firstly, I already have a great deal of knowledge of the research field such as its history, organizational structure, and its social and cultural settings that outsider-researchers may need a great deal of time to understand (Smyth and Holian, 2008: 38). Secondly, the preliminary knowledge of the research context enables me to observe the full-bodied reality and to provide a comprehensive description of the diverse phenomena (Fulkerson, 2007: 6). Finally, the long-term involvement in the leadership position and relationship with many members at GEC enabled me to understand symbolic meanings of their behaviours and shared

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[1] Situatedness refers to the position and involvement of the researcher within a research field where data are collected. The situated nature of the researcher impacts the research progress such as data collection and data analysis and interpretation. See Vannini, P. (2008) Situatedness, in Given, L. M. (ed.), *The SAGE Encyclopedia of Qualitative Research Methods*, London: Sage, p.815.

cultural values in a comprehensive way (Hopewell, 1987: 5). On the other hand, there are several disadvantages. Firstly, I am already accustomed to the cultural values and behaviour of individuals that I need to investigate objectively (Hopewell, 1987: 88). It means I need to overcome stereotypes and prejudices about individuals' behaviour and reactions in conflict situations. Those stereotypes and prejudices may affect data collection and hinder me from identifying the underlying factors. Secondly, I was part of several conflict situations, so it was a challenge for me to analyse and interpret facts objectively. Finally, my position as a pastor inevitably affects some interviewees to hesitate or withdraw their intention to reveal some sensitive issues or unwanted information regarding confidential issues (Smyth and Holian, 2008: 44). I am fully aware of these advantages and disadvantages and I have made all my efforts to utilize the advantages and minimize the disadvantages. In particular, I have employed the concept of an insider-researcher suggested by Melvin Williams[2] (1983: 56): "An insider-researcher must be an 'observing participant' rather than a 'participant observer'". I have found two specific implications in his statement. One is that I need to be as objective as possible to look at the social, cultural, theological and political interactions of individuals at GEC as if for the first time. I have tried not to take anything for granted, but to look at everything to discover something new about it. The other implication is that I need to always be aware of the possibility that my authority and power as a pastor may cause informants to provide biased information, in particular, for in-depth interviews.

3.4 Methods

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[2] Melvin Williams acknowledges that the concept of "observing participant" was earlier used by Bennetta Jules-Rosette in her study of an African independent church that she herself joined. See Jules-Rosette, B. (1975) *African Apostles: Ritual and Conversion in the Church of John Maranke,* Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press.

3.4.1 Data Collection

3.4.1.1 Sampling

Ethnographic research aims to discover a theory from data in an inductive process. Ethnographic research is context-bound research so that most of the primary data are from the research field. This research was undertaken within a local congregation. The study population was made up of individuals who consented with the research purpose and the ethical guidelines. The participants were also informed of the potential benefits and possible risks. The total number of those who consented to participate in the research was 113 out of 122 members. Among those who did not consent, there were two elderly ladies who were housebound due to their long-term illness. Another two people were a couple who were about to leave GEC for business in another city. One middle-aged man had Down's syndrome so he could not completely understand the nature and purpose of the research. Finally, there were four individuals who were concerned about a breach of confidentiality and so declined to participate in the research.

I selected twelve individuals as a sample to interview in order to collect more profound data in the domain of political conflict. There are three specific criteria in selecting these interviewees in order to avoid informants' biases and to have a balanced understanding. Firstly, the selected interviewees must have had leadership experience as elders or deacons in the merged congregation for at least more than two years. Secondly, half of the interviewees remained at GEC and the other half of the interviewees left GEC because of the political conflicts. Finally, among the interviewees, half of them originated from GEC and the other half from LC. The second and final criteria were in place to ensure balance between those that remained and those that left, and between those from GEC and those from LC, in order to collect balanced data on the causes and development of the political conflicts.

3.4.1.2 Data Collection Methods

3.4.1.2.1 Participant Observation

Researchers in ethnography should enter the world of people studied and observe their life and culture through direct and first hand observation in order to understand the insiders' view. Participant observation is sometimes employed as an umbrella term to describe everything that ethnographers do in the field apart from interviewing (Wolcott, 1999: 44). It is important in participant observation to keep a balance between immersing into a new cultural world and maintaining distance from the cultural world, as Fetterman (1999: 37) carefully addressed as follows:

> Participant observation combines participation in the lives of the people under study with maintenance of a professional distance that allows adequate observation and recording of data.

It means that participant observation involves not only gaining access to and immersing oneself in new social worlds, but also producing written accounts and descriptions that bring versions of these worlds to others (Emerson et al., 2002: 352). In order to keep track of what ethnographers observe and to make sense of them, jotting things down in their field notes and keeping journals are useful because when the researchers' memory fails, they still have detailed notes of what they observed; otherwise their observations are meaningless. Writing something in the field notes is an immediate activity to record the event on the spot when and where it happened. On the other hand, keeping journals is a reflective activity to interpret and analyse the event. In particular, keeping journals are beneficial not only for realising the researcher's own cultural and social biases, but also for identifying patterns of behaviour in the research field.

3.4.1.2.2 In-depth Interviews

An in-depth interview is a face-to-face encounter between the researcher and informants directed towards understanding the informants' perspectives on their lives, experiences, or situations as expressed in their own words (Taylor and Bogdan, 1984: 77). There are four important characteristics of in-depth interviews. Firstly, it is open-ended. It means questions should be pre-planned in advance so that they help informants not to answer with simply Yes or No, but explain the subject in detail. Secondly, it is flexible. It is a semi-structured interview, which means that the researcher has to allow the interview to flow naturally by itself as well as direct it to keep the interview on the track. Thirdly, it is conversational. It is not simply an inquiry-reply type of interview, but an inter-communicational interview. However, the researcher's role is not primarily a speaker, but a listener. Finally, it is discovery-oriented. In-depth interviews are a tool of gaining information so that its purpose is to search the informants' viewpoints, feelings and perspectives. During the conversation the researcher should try to interpret what the informants are saying and to clarify information obtained in the interview.

Recording interviews is another significant point of in-depth interviews because the researcher's memory is not a sufficient source for reference and it is almost impossible to write down every word and sentence that the researcher hears. Afterwards, recordings must be transcribed partially or fully. Even if transcribing is time-consuming work, it is normally recommended that full transcriptions are more beneficial because simply when the research process is going on, the researcher may not know which part of the interview is more valuable than other parts. While the interview is going on, the researcher should record informants' emotions and behaviour, in his field notes, which cannot be recorded with recording devices. Recording the researcher's own views and feelings immediately after the interview is another important task.

3.4.1.2.3 Questionnaires

The questionnaire is a way of indirect communication between the researcher and respondents via questions articulated by the researcher who intends to collect data relevant to the research problems. I employ the questionnaire in this research only for collecting supplementary information. It means that the questionnaire is not a means of collecting comprehensive information, but certain kinds of additional information which was not collected through participant observation and in-depth interviews. The questionnaire is also a useful means to remedy the disadvantages of in-depth interviews. It enables the researcher to gather the needed information to a large number of respondents simultaneously, while in-depth interviews are used to collect data from one person at a time. Another use of questionnaires is that the data collected through them can be compared with the ones from participant observation and in-depth interviews to clarify unclear meanings or to improve the trustworthiness of the data. In this research, I choose a type of self-completion by respondents rather than the interviewer-administered type for two important reasons: anonymity and integrity. Respondents are likely to provide the most accurate information, if their identities are not recognized in the questionnaire. Their responses to questions are likely to be more integral, if they are allowed to answer spontaneously without the researcher's participation in any form.

3.4.1.2.4 Archival Documents

Another important primary data source is existing documents in the church such as annual reports, minutes of different meetings, newspaper cuttings, correspondence, leaflets, weekly news sheets, and monthly ministry calendars. These documents will particularly provide useful information on the historical context of GEC.

3.4.2 Data Management

I intend to explain my data management techniques in relation to labelling, logging and storing data. In ethnographic research, data have different forms like field notes, narrative texts, participant observations, interviews, pre-existing documents, audio or video files, and even varieties of artefacts. They are like fragmented bits of information so that managing data in field research is one of the key skills to steer the research process. I collected data and organized them by labelling individual data sets and classified them by categories in order to make them accessible and identifiable any time that I needed them. This continual data organization has disclosed a deficiency (more data should be collected), redundancy (more than sufficient data have been accumulated), and irrelevancy (data to be trimmed and discarded) in my data set (Chang, 2008:115). The table 3.1 illustrates some parts of the data log that shows the strategies of data collection as well as the content of the data and their categories.

| Nr. | Data collection strategies (Primary labeling) | | | Data contents (Secondary labeling) | | | Category |
	Date	Collector	Type	Time	People involved	Items	
1	02/10/07	Self	S / R	2004	Jo & Alex	Spiritual authority	C & T
167	23/10/08	Self	F / N	2006	Dan & Young	Breach of marriage promise	C
282	08/06/09	Self	P/O & A/R	2008	Matthew	African's world view is animism	C
297	15/09/09	Self	S / R	2009	Lee & Pat	Roles of men and women	T
305	28/12/09	Self	P / O	2009	Rose & Ellie	Rose despised me	IB
391	07/10/10	Self	I / I	2001	James	Fire was a blessing from God	P
452	02/03/11	Self	E / D	1998	Matt & Paul	Power struggle	P
603	16/10/12	Self	Q	2012		What do you care most in a conflict situation	

Table 3.1 Demonstration of data labelling and data categorization

This data log consists of three parts: primary labelling which is about the data collection strategies; secondary labelling which is about data contents; and the categories which are about the different domains of conflict at GEC. While the primary label helps to sort and organize diverse data sets initially, the secondary labelling of data contents and the categories will be useful for classifying and conceptualizing data for data analysis and interpretation. Each datum is numbered and hyperlinked to the text file in which the content of the data is fully described. If a datum number in the data log is clicked, then automatically its text file is opened on the screen. It helps me to retrieve any specific data from the data set. It reduces the time and effort to find the file as well as giving more frequent opportunity to access it. Each text data also is printed and kept in several document folders sorted in numerical order so that I can also access them off-line.

This data log table is based on 3-W (when, who, what) principle. The 'when' information in the primary label reveals the time of data collection and, in the secondary label, the original time when the content of the data took place. The 'who' component in the primary label shows information on who collected and recorded the data and, in the secondary label, who gets involved in the incident although the names are pseudonyms. The third component, 'what', in the primary label tells of data collection methods and, in the secondary label, the main topic of the data. These are codes of data collection methods in the primary label: S/R = Self-Reflection, F/N = Field Note, P/O = Participant Observation, A/R = Audio Recording, V/R = Video Recording, I/I = In-depth Interview, and Q = Questionnaire. Finally, the category reveals information on the aspect of conflict. Sometimes, its aspect is singular: C = Cultural conflict, IB = Interpersonal Behavioural conflict, P = Political conflict and T = Theological conflict. Sometimes, it is plural and mixed with other components of conflict: C and T = Cultural and Theological conflict. The text file of each datum begins with a header like this:

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| 02/10/07 | Self | S / R | 2004 | Jo and Alex | Spiritual authority | C and T |

It means the datum was collected by self (researcher) on 2nd Oct. 2007 through self-reflection on different concepts of the spiritual authority between Jo and Alex and it was a combination of cultural and theological conflicts caused in 2004.

3.4.3 Data Analysis and Interpretation

Data analysis involves working with raw data, organizing them, systematizing them and categorizing them to eventually generate new theories. Data collection and data analysis are a dialectical interaction in ethnographic research because data collection is not a distinct stage. Data analysis almost begins at the same time when the ethnographic research is undertaken. This interactive process is central to the 'grounded theorizing' promoted by Glaser and Strauss, in which theory is developed out of data analysis, and subsequent data collection is guided strategically by the emergent theory (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995: 205). Therefore, I began to analyse data, when I realized that a good deal of data were collected.

During the initial data analysis process, I tried to discover several major conflict domains through identifying some emerging patterns and themes of the conflict phenomena at GEC. I could not clearly see patterns of social and cultural phenomena in my research field when I read texts such as field notes, interview transcripts, observation notes and existing documents. I was overwhelmed by the amount of data and thought that everything was important. In order to figure out items, patterns and structures in the research field, I employed 'Constant Comparative Analysis' created and developed by Glaser and Strauss (1967), which is generally recognized as one of the most effective means of content analysis (Lincoln and Guba, 1985: 339). LeCompte and Schensul (1999b: 76-77) explained it briefly as follows:

The stream of behaviour or language is recorded and then separated into discrete concepts using constant comparison. The items are then chunked into categories. Subsequent steps link the categories into concepts or theoretical constructs that, in turn, permit selection or development of theories that the researcher can use to explain what was observed in the field.

Through the constant comparative analysis, the raw data were fragmented into items and these items were reassembled into similar concepts or theoretical constructs through comparing and contrasting them. Making explicit comparisons and contrasts among the items helped me discern similarities and differences to find patterns and themes (Atkinson, 2007: 167). Through this itemization and categorization process, I could identify four independent conflict domains at GEC: Interpersonal Behavioural (IB), Cultural (C), Micro-level of Political (P), and Theological conflict (T). A percentage of data are almost evenly distributed to each conflict domain. Figure 3.1 shows a percentage of data distribution among independent domains.
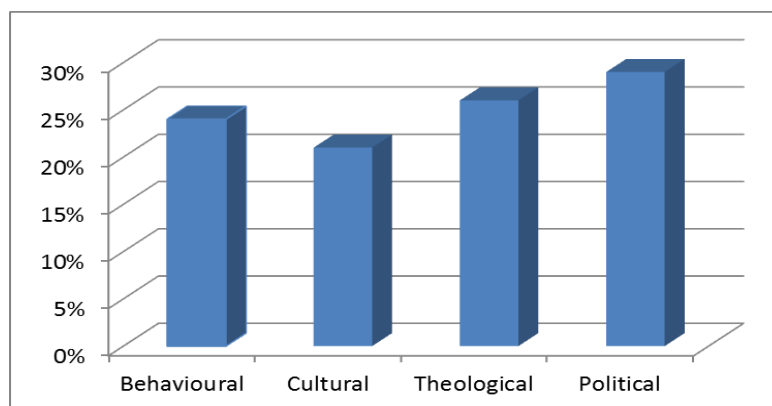
Figure 3.1 Data distribution among independent domains

A cognitive process of discovering abstract concepts and the relationship among them was needed to produce ethnographic stories in the research field (LeCompte and Schensul, 1996b: 96). This process is called theorizing and it begins with coding. It is generally understood in qualitative research that a code is a word or short phrase that summarizes the primary meaning of the excerpt out of various forms of data (Saldana,

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2013: 3,4). In this research, a code contains a conceptual and essential meaning of belief and behaviour of individuals in a conflict situation in relation to its cause and development. In other words, coding is a vital process in this research to identify basic elements that reveal the fundamental nature and characteristics of diverse conflict phenomena. These basic elements are the descriptive codes from which the higher concepts or more abstract themes will be derived. These descriptive codes are labelled to organize and classify data in a more systematic way (Miles and Huberman, 1984: 239). Table 3.2 is an example of itemization in relation to identifying descriptive codes from the excerpts of various forms of data.

Data Set Nr.	Form Of Data	Examples of excerpts	Descriptive Codes	Code Labels
147-1	F / N	Tony should be prohibited from attending my daughter's dedication service because he is still registered as a sex-offender.	Continually being judged by one's past	IB-124-3
336	P / O	It was a cultural shock to me that people made jokes about some particular habits or behaviour of the deceased and laugh together in the funeral service.	Discomfort in a culturally heterogeneous group	C-65
221	P / O	I felt embarrassed in front of my family members and friends who expected a liturgical baptismal service conducted by the minister, when the youth leaders who wore a short-sleeve top and short pants baptized my teenage daughter.	Different ways of conducting church rituals	T-18-3
597	I / I	One Sunday morning I went to church to play the piano as usual and I found that one man from LC was sitting on the stool. I was not informed by anyone in the church that I was going to be replaced by the man.	Eliminating a person from a ministry position	P-9

Table 3.2 An example of itemization in relation to identifying descriptive codes

Conceptualization is another important process for theorizing in terms of identifying variables and factors from the basic descriptive codes. Variables and factors in ethnographic research are equivalent to axial codes and selective codes in grounded theory. Variables are subcategories identified by comparing and contrasting the descriptive codes. Factors are the main categories identified by conceptualizing

variables. I call this conceptualization process taxonomic classification which is a systematic as well as a cognitive process perceiving, comparing, contrasting, aggregating, ordering, establishing linkages and relationships, and speculating (Schensul et al., 1999: 69) among descriptive codes, variables and factors. This conceptual work is a crucial process to turn the raw data into theories in order to produce ethnographic stories and their interpretive meanings in this research. I could discover the ingredients of my own ethnographic story through the conceptualization process. Table 3.3 is an example of identifying variables and factors through conceptualization process within the domain of micro-level of political conflict.

Code Labels	Items (Descriptive codes)	Variables (Subcategories)	Factors (Categories)
P-49	Being bound by customs	Resistance to change	'FEAR' is the factor triggering the initial political conflict between the merged congregations.
P-111	Sticking to traditional stereotypes		
P-39	Identifying artefacts with their group identity		
P-88-1	Unfamiliarity to different styles of worship and preaching		
P-102	Being sceptical about the new leadership structure		
P-26	Maintenance of vested rights	Apprehension of any possible loss	
P-47	Rejecting support from others		
P-113	Keeping the status quo in their ministries		1) Fear of change
P-132	Isolating themselves to reinforce their exiting relationship		2) Fear of loss
P-116	Negative opinions on the merger	Anticipation of negative outcomes of the merger	3) Fear of failure
P-118	The merger was executed by inexperienced people		4) Fear of uncertainty
P-120	Negative opinions on the opposing congregation		
P-119	A strong sense of complete failure		
P-121	Chaos and confusion caused by disorderly manner of using the facilities	Uncertainty about the future of the merged church	
P-124	Ambiguity in ministry direction		
P-88-4	Insecurity about the new leadership		
P-91	Frequent changes in the maintenance issues		

Table 3.3 An example of conceptualization process

Ethnographic interpretation begins with assembling and integrating all of the various components together. One of the important things in data interpretation is to

review research questions for which the research has been conducted. Even though some form of analysis takes place simultaneously with data collection in the field-based research (Hitchcock and Hughes, 2001: 296), it takes time to unfold the inquiry in order to make sense of data and to have a maximal understanding of the phenomena being studied (Lincoln and Guba, 1985: 224). If analysis reduces data into a story that ethnographers can tell, interpretation tells readers what that story means (LeCompte and Schensul, 1999b: 2). I intend to interpret data on the basis of the result of data analysis in order to explain aspects and types of conflicts in each domain. If an ethnographer extracts narratives through data analysis, data interpretation is to generate meanings and understanding embedded in the narratives. Through the data analysis process, I intend to identify factors directly involved in different aspects of conflicts. In the data interpretation, cultural and social meanings of those factors are explained in each independent domain. The results of interpretations will help to identify the nature or characteristics of conflicts in each independent domain and eventually, to link each independent domain to each type of conflict which are established in the theoretical background chapter. This is a vital work in this research to provide a foundation for suggesting practical applications to resolve or ease each type of conflict at GEC. In this regard, the primary role of data interpretation is twofold in this research. One is that data interpretation is to engage the narratives generated through analysis with the theoretical backgrounds of this research in chapter two. Data interpretation should not be a mere explanation of social or cultural phenomena observed in the research context. It should be involved in scrutinizing correlations between the stories generated through the research process and the theories that have been already established by other researchers and accepted by academics. The other role is that a substantial basis for suggesting applications will be created by data interpretation because of its function reflecting the reality of the phenomena in the problematic research context. I interpret

the narratives generated through analysis within the criteria provided by the theoretical background. In particular, I articulate to what extent the aspects of conflict in each domain are related to the four types of conflict established in the theoretical background. This will be useful for suggesting some practical applications toward each type of conflict in chapter nine. The conceptual understanding of analysis and interpretation enables me to draw the total picture of the research framework. Figure 3.1 depicts the procedure of data analysis and interpretation in this research.
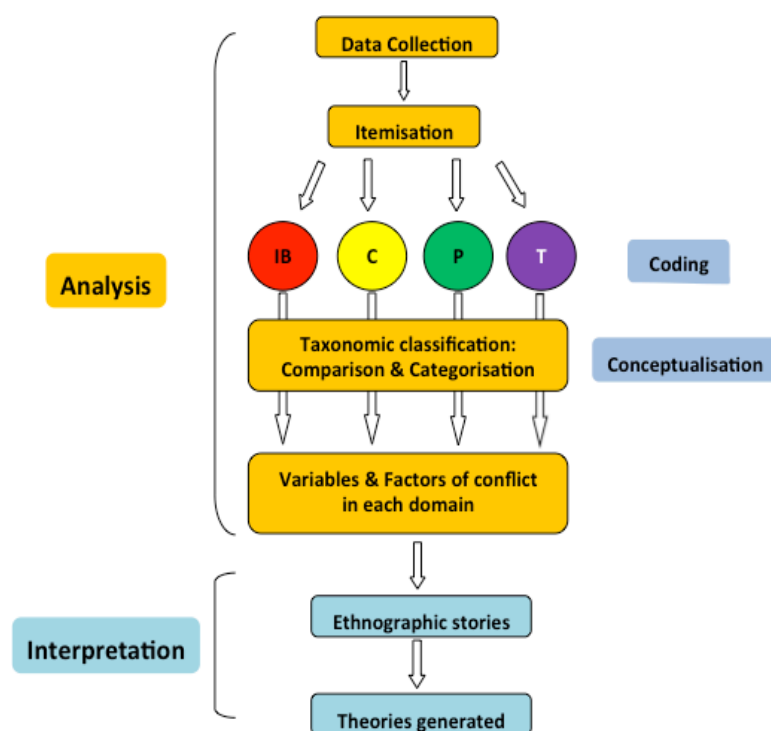
Figure 3.2 The procedure of data analysis and interpretation

3.5 Trustworthiness and Reliability of the Data

One of the key issues in qualitative research is the trustworthiness and reliability of the data. Lincoln and Guba (1985: 219) introduce some criteria for validating the trustworthiness of qualitative research: credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. The credibility means the theories that have been generated through

analysing and interpreting data in a qualitative research should be believable not only from the perspective of the participant in the research, but also from the perspective of other readers outside the research. Transferability implies the degree to which the theories of qualitative research can be applied to other similar contexts. Dependability refers to the characteristic that qualitative research is bound by the context, in terms of time and space, where the research is undertaken so that the researcher is responsible for describing the changes that occur in the setting. Confirmability refers to the degree to which the theories could be corroborated by others. It means the researcher has to constantly check the data throughout the study to examine the data collection and analysis procedures, and make judgments about the potential for bias or distortion.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) also mention that there are three broad threats to the credibility and trustworthiness of qualitative studies: reactivity, researcher biases, and respondent biases. Padgett (1998: 92) explained each one of them briefly as follows:

> Reactivity refers to the potentially distorting effects of the qualitative researcher's presence in the field. A second source is that investigators may deliberately choose informants who appear simpatico with their world view, may ask leading questions during interviews to get the answers they want, or may ignore data that do not support their conclusions. Finally, respondents may withhold information and even lie to protect their privacy or to avoid revealing some unpleasant truths. At the other extreme, they may try to be helpful and offer answers that they believe we want to hear. In either case, we are being led astray.

I employ the 'Triangulation' method to overcome those threats described above. Its basic concept is to establish a strategy not only to prevent the researcher's bias or inclination of distorting or manipulating data, but also to produce richer and potentially more credible data. According to Denzin (1989: 239-241), there are four different types[3] of triangulation and I employ 'Method Triangulation' which refers to using more than

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[3] Denzin developed the concept of triangulation and distinguished four types of triangulation: Data triangulation refers to the use of different data sources: time, space and persons. Investigator triangulation is to employ different observers or interviewers to detect or minimize biases. Theory triangulation is to approach data with multiple perspectives to interpret a single set of data. Finally, method triangulation is concerned with using multiple methods to study a single problem.

one method in relation to gathering data. In this research, I use multiple methods of collecting data, participant observations, in-depth interviews, questionnaires, and archival documents, to cross-check the wide range data so that the meanings of the narratives produced by analysis and interpretation will be trustworthy.

Most of all, I agree with what Saldaña (2014: 604) stated regarding credibility and trustworthiness of the data, and analysis and interpretation on them as follows:

> The bottom line is that credibility and trustworthiness are matters of researcher *honesty* and *integrity*. Anyone can write that he worked ethically, rigorously, and reflexively, but only the writer will ever know the truth.

One of the primary motives underlying this research was to assist the leaders at GEC with possible applications to handle diverse types of conflict effectively. Not only as the researcher, but also as a former leader at GEC, I truly want this research to contribute to making peace and creating unity among individuals and groups. In order to suggest relevant applications, data collected must honestly reflect the realities of the conflict situations, and analysis and interpretation of data must be reasonable and acceptable to the leaders. If there are things that the leaders cannot agree in data analysis and interpretation, it is not that I skewed data or was biased in data analysis and interpretation, but that I had a different perspective due to my own cultural, social and theological experience and backgrounds as a person from Korea. This is a limitation in the research as well as a strength, which may broaden the knowledge of people from different backgrounds.

3.6 Ethical Guidelines

Ethnographic research is more dependent on data collected in the research field than texts and publications that already exist in the public domain. It implies I cannot but collect data about people's behaviour and their interactions and share them with readers when the research outcome is disseminated. On the one hand, I have to seriously consider the ethical impact of my writing on people in my research. On the other hand, I do not want to be prohibited from gathering data. This is the dilemma that I have encountered from the beginning of this research. I need to protect people's privacy and respect their personal confidentiality. However, I also have the right of 'academic freedom' to generate my own practical theory through gathering rich and authentic data. It is like the tension between isolation without harming anybody and contribution with the risk of affecting someone (Altrichter et al., 2007: 153). Therefore, I have established ethical guidelines in order to resolve the dilemma.

3.6.1 Basic Principles

There are examples of basic ethical principles suggested and broadly used to avoid ethical issues in human subject research. Firstly, what Smith (1990: 149) suggested has been regarded as the golden rule in ethical matters of field research:

1) What are the likely consequences of this research? How well do they fit with my own values and priorities?
2) If I were a participant, would I want this research to be done? What changes might I want to make me feel comfortable?

Secondly, the Belmont Report identifies and explains three unifying ethical principles for all human subject research: respect for persons, beneficence, and justice (Nolen and Putten, n.d.: 401). Levine (1986: 99) interpreted these three foundational principles as follows:

1) 'Respect for Persons' implies the obligation to treat individuals as autonomous agents and the need to protect those with diminished autonomy.
2) 'Beneficence' implies the principle commonly interpreted as 'doing no harm' as well as maximising possible benefits and minimising possible harm.
3) 'Justice' implies the principle of fairness, including a fair sharing of burdens and benefits.

Finally, BERA (British Education Research Association) proposed the ethical standards. In accordance with its revision in 2004, there are clear principles underpinning guidelines as follows:

> The association considers that all (educational) research should be conducted within an ethic of respect for:
> 1) The person
> 2) Knowledge
> 3) Democratic values
> 4) The quality of educational research
> 5) Academic freedom

3.6.2 Ethical Guidelines established for this Research

Basic ethical principles mentioned above provide me a foundation on which I establish specific guidelines in detail. The whole research process, especially the methods of collecting and keeping data will be governed and criticized by these ethical guidelines. I have extracted six core ethical elements from the basic ethical principles established and applied in human subject research as follows:

1) Explanation or information

2) Consensus or permission

3) Negotiation

4) Rights of participants

5) Confidentiality and accountability

6) Pseudonymity or anonymity

1) Explanation or information

A. I inform the whole congregation of my research purpose, risks and anticipated benefits, and ways of collecting data.

B. Participants informed of my research purpose and risks are not only the adult members of GEC, but also those who participate in events and activities at GEC. It implies that children[4], mentally disabled people, and physically vulnerable people who used to come, but not anymore due to their health issues are included because they are still important parts of congregational life at GEC.

2) Consent or permission

A. In order to get written permission, I use a 'blanket consent form' with which I get general consent from every participant so that I am able to begin data collection and archiving.

B. I do not give any implicit pressure to the congregation to consent. In particular, to those who may feel uncomfortable to participate in this research in any shape or form.

C. I inform particular people whose stories are chosen to be documented and receive written permission from them. A type of special consent form is used in this case.

3) Negotiation

A. I respect democratic values in human subject research. I provide a copy of these ethical guidelines to the participants and every participant has a right to negotiate ethical guidelines.

B. Participants are allowed to negotiate all aspects of the research so that I may build better trust with participants. However, I also have a right to reject unnecessary

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[4] The term ethnography means writing about people and children are recognized as people who can be studied in their own right within the social sciences. James (in Atkinson, Coffey and Delamont, 2007: 246) asserts that ethnographic methods have permitted children to become seen as research participants.

intervention by any intrusive participants to control and dominate my research.

4) Rights of Participants

A. The participants have a right to ask any questions regarding the research process at any time.

B. If I intend to change any items in the guidelines or to introduce new ideas, I inform participants about them.

C. The participants have a right to withdraw at any time from the research. If a person would like to withdraw from the research, I will not collect data on the person any more from that time on. However, the data which have been collected on the person must be retained because those were collected under the person's consent and have already been part of the research process.

5) Confidentiality and accountability

A. Data will be treated confidentially and not be passed on to others without permission.

B. I will keep data safely. Any form of digitalized data will be kept safely in my personal computer that no one is allowed to use, and written or printed data will be kept in a cabinet.

C. Data that are not used will be disposed of completely.

6) Pseudonymity or anonymity

A. I use pseudonyms for every participant in the data to keep confidentiality so that the identities of subjects are unrecognizable.

B. I do not use any name of participant in the thesis so that every participant whose incident is used remains anonymous.

C. I change the names of churches, districts, and any groups or organizations so that the

actual research field is not identifiable.

3.7 Conclusion

In this chapter I have explained the methodology and methods that I employ to make this study a logical and systematic research. Every single procedure in this study will be carried out on the basis of the research methodology and methods. I have also established principles for trustworthiness of the data as well as for the whole research process to make this research and its results reliable and credible. In addition, I have formulated ethical guidelines to protect identity and privacy of the participants in the research.

Chapter Four

Data Analysis and Interpretation
in the Domain of Interpersonal Behavioural Conflict

4.1 Introduction

Human relationships are interactions with others within social contexts such as family, school, church, and the workplace. Conflict is often referred to as discord caused by various reasons in human relationships. In this regard, interpersonal conflict is social and unavoidable, and produces a negative impact on human relationships. However, when conflicts are constructively handled, they motivate the individuals involved to define the issues more clearly, to search harder for resolution strategies, and to work harder in implementing solutions (Zastrow and Kirst-Ashman, 2010: 510). Van Der Vliert (2013: 42) suggests that there are five strategies to choose from when an individual experiences discord or conflict: avoiding, accommodating, compromising, problem-solving and fighting. As a way of response, one can choose a particular strategy depending on the nature, characteristics, and the intensity of the conflict. Problem-solving is the most effective strategy in the church context in order to handle conflicts constructively because it has the potential for conflict situations to result in a stronger commitment to the relationship of the individuals and better communication and cooperation (Zastrow and Kist-Ashman, 2010: 510).

However, problem-solving efforts do not always produce constructive and satisfactory results for both parties involved in conflict. There are two patterned responses that individuals choose in the problem-solving approach to conflict: one is assertiveness and the other is cooperativeness (Picard, 1998: 17). The assertive attitude

seeks to serve one's own need, while the cooperative attitude seeks to satisfy the other party's needs. Conflict is a struggle over many issues, wherein the aims of the conflicting parties are not only to gain what they want, but also to neutralize, injure or eliminate their rivals (Coser, 1968: 232). Therefore, it is often observed that individuals' attitudes are more assertive than cooperative in conflict.

In this chapter, I am going to provide a clear account emerging from the research context through analysing factors of interpersonal behavioural conflicts within GEC to disclose what conflict issues there are and how individuals react toward them. Secondly, I am going to interpret the diverse phenomena of interpersonal behavioural conflicts at GEC on the basis of the findings in the analysis. I am planning to provide a thick description about contextual and experiential meanings of peoples' beliefs and behaviour observed in the interpersonal behavioural conflicts to gain a deeper understanding of the conflict phenomena within the research field.

4.2 Analysing Factors in the Domain of Interpersonal Behavioural Conflict

Through the data analysis process, six causal factors of interpersonal behavioural conflict at GEC have been identified. Some factors are similar to existing theories because the research field, even though it is a local congregation, shows no significant difference from other social settings in terms of dynamic interactions among its members. On the other hand, some factors are unique because of the particularities of the research field situated in a specific area and its members have particular and unique personalities, beliefs and norms.

4.2.1 Inadequate Leadership Skills

Leadership does not only require exercising power, authority and responsibility in relation to establishing the culture of the organization, empowering followers, articulating a vision, executing missions, and proposing strategic plans, but also practical abilities such as administration, organization and management in order to achieve organizational effectiveness. Social disorganization theory, developed by Shaw and McKay (1942) in criminology, informs that a socially disorganized community is likely to be vulnerable and less able to prevent crime because it is incapable of exercising strong social control. According to this theory, the structural nature and managerial functions of the community may affect individual behaviour.

4.2.1.1   Administrative Disorganization

There are two particular phenomena in relation to the disorganized administrative functions of the leadership at GEC. The first is ill-defined roles and responsibilities among people who are supposed to be pursuing the same goal within the same community. One particular interpersonal conflict between two lay workers at GEC was caused because of vague job descriptions (IB-73). Unclear definitions of the role and responsibility between the two workers caused them to clash. The second phenomenon was that the leadership team did not execute their responsibilities appropriately and, therefore, individuals did not receive timely and accurate information relevant to their roles. Various rotas did not function properly (IB-23). Only a few people were always involved in specific work and they became exhausted and discontented (IB-35). Some events become chaotic and disordered (IB-22). These phenomena caused by

disorganization induce individuals to express their frustration and criticism that turn into a source of interpersonal conflict.

4.2.1.2 Unclear Discipline Policy

Another phenomenon observed in a disorganized community is a violation of the rules (Shaw and McKay, 1942). An individual act of violating rules causes other members to feel displeasure or strong repugnance toward the person (IB-53). If the leadership team does not make a correct judgment on the issue and take an appropriate disciplinary action to stop the individual's deviant behaviour, some members who feel repugnance will try to discipline the person directly so that an interpersonal conflict inevitably occurs (IB-54). Even more serious, the discipline does not deal with the issue, but with the individual (IB-67), so that in the worst case the individual cannot stay in the community (IB-65). In a particular case, both parties were not equally disciplined, even though the conflict was caused by mutual faults between the parties (IB-09). Another example is that punishment is not equally applied to other similar offenders (IB-43). For instance, several people may make the same mistake, but only one person among them might be criticized because of the person's ethnic background (IB-55).

4.2.1.3 Poor Managerial Functions

Another function of the leadership is to create unity in dichotomy of working styles between task-oriented styles and process-oriented styles. The former emphasizes achieving results, and the latter emphasizes working with others. The former is a doer interested in professional performance and in excellent achievement, but the latter is a

talker interested in discussing plans and in fellowship while working. When these two distinctive styles of workers are responsible for a project together, a dispute and clash is likely to be observed (IB-46). The leadership team, which has poor managerial function at GEC, did not play a proper role for arbitration between the two workers, so that they could not be complementary, but were struggling with a frustrating situation (IB-17). Eventually, the project could not be completed, and was left undone.

4.2.2 Lack of Teamwork among the Congregations

GEC has suffered from lack of community spirit since the merger in 1998. The long-term micro-level of political conflict between the two congregations has impinged on the sense of mutuality and cohesiveness. The behaviour and relationships of individuals among congregations are naturally affected by the struggles between the congregations. Constant habitual mistakes caused by wilful behaviour are observed in their interpersonal interactions.

4.2.1. Inhospitableness

One particular phenomenon is inhospitable behaviour toward those who belong to the other congregation. Some do not greet certain people and ignore their presence in the same space (IB-68). They always sit together around a table and do not allow anyone to sit with them in the communal meal together (IB-18). When a small group within a community becomes strong in intimacy and solidarity, it threatens the unity of the community (IB-73). Individuals from the other congregation criticize this small group saying, "They estrange themselves from the main congregation" (IB-51).

Whatever a person in the small group plans to do, only those who are in the group support the person and the rest of the congregation ignores it and become apathetic (IB-56).

4.2.2.2 Scapegoating

Another case is to treat a person according to the person's past wrongdoings, even though he was suspended from the church for two years as a disciplinary punishment and afterwards there is clear evidence of repentance (IB-36). Some branded the person saying, "He is a troublemaker and I am going to ban him from any events that I organize in the church" (IB-14). This kind of behaviour is related to scapegoating. Some blame a person saying, "Our church does not grow numerically because of his bad reputation in this area" (IB-55-1). This kind of guilt-making causes the person to feel a sense of alienation from the community (IB-07). This phenomenon prevents the person from being re-integrated into the community after experiencing a genuine restoration in faith (IB-74).

4.2.2.3 Hindrance

By analysing the behaviour of individuals who are involved in the interpersonal behavioural conflict at GEC, hindering others is a phenomenon, revealing a lack of teamwork which is exactly opposite to the biblical attributes of community. One particular phenomenon is blanket opposition. An individual opposes another person without any proper reason except simply for hindering the person from achieving the goal that both pursue (IB-08). Sometimes, an individual's achievement is arrogated by

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the opponent before it is announced to the community (IB-41). In some cases, people tend to restrict others who are supposed to be opponents from accessing information and using resources (IB-15).

4.2.2.4 Factionalism

Poor teamwork at GEC has become the root reason that there has not been a chance to establish a proper networking system among individuals and other departments to share human and material resources (IB-75). Some individuals expressed their frustration saying, "It is awkward to observe that there is no the trust and integrity in relationships among members" (IB-48). This causes the community to be in danger of being dismantled by being fragmented into several groups (IB-40). In sociology, especially in urban studies, fragmentation refers to dividing, splintering or partitioning a society and the most common factor is an uneven, or asymmetrical access to the infrastructure and resources (Sorensen and Okata, 2011: 236). The main issue of fragmentation at GEC is a disconnection among sub-groups so that the community becomes precarious (IB-39). Interpersonal conflicts caused by fragmentation among sub-groups at GEC are a potential source of serious schism (IB-20).

4.2.2.5 Irresponsibility

Finally, a lack of teamwork causes irresponsibility when individuals anticipate that they are not able to keep their positions any longer or to produce results as they expect (IB-19). They attempt to save their faces by presenting all sorts of legitimate excuses that they can find, but the rest of the members in the community know that

those reasons are lies, deceptions, and manipulations (IB-70). Face-saving behaviour is a strategy to avoid embarrassment and humiliation, but also to maintain reputations and preserve positions during a loss or failure. A common face-saving behaviour at GEC is to blame others or the difficult environment in order to divert people's negative opinions (IB-63). Another face-saving behaviour is to devalue a team member's ability in order to ascribe the loss or failure to him (IB-59). In these cases, some intentionally damage images of others in order to maintain their self-image (IB-57).

4.2.3 Communication Problems

Communication is transmitting, interpreting or sharing ideas, knowledge and feelings by such means as speech, writing or signs (Adair, 2009: 5). Effective communication is the basic principle of good interpersonal relationships. On the contrary, poor communication causes misunderstanding among individuals and, as a result, mutual trust and respect among them plummet. There are three categories of communication problems causing interpersonal conflicts at GEC.

4.2.3.1 Communication Problems in Message Transmission

The real communication problem at GEC is not related to communication skills, but communication attitudes. There are several bad attitudes in message transmission, which cause interpersonal conflicts at GEC.

4.2.3.1.1 Malicious Jokes

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An individual cleverly tells a joke that has a double-entendre. A sentence is intentionally spoken to be interpreted in two ways. One interpretation gives an ostensible meaning, whereas the other interpretation conveys a hidden meaning which is quite offensive. An individual makes an innuendo to derogate another's integrity (IB-52). When the provocative meaning from the subtle sentence is interpreted in more than one way, the message receiver begins to realize the message sender's devious intention. For example, some said to a lady, "Your cooking skills are too good to cause your husband's long-term stomach problem" (IB-26). The lady was upset by the insinuation and suffered from the assumption that her husband's long-term stomach problem resulted from her bad cooking skills (IB-26-1).

4.2.3.1.2 One-upping

I define that one-upping is an attempt to have an advantage over another. In relation to interpersonal communication, one-upping is referred as a dominant attitude in order to make others submissive. There are two typical examples observed at GEC regarding one-upping. One is an exaggeration. Some exaggerate their achievements or abilities to be considered as being superior in the community (IB-32). The other is despising others in public. One man habitually corrects behaviour or the opinions of others in order to be recognized as more authoritative and smarter than others (IB-58). The man always tries to provide solutions to all matters discussed in informal conversations among church members (IB-12).

4.2.3.1.3 Breaking Confidentiality

A breach of confidentiality, from my viewpoint, is an abusive act which erodes some rapport and trust built between the two parties. One common mistake is to disclose private information about a church member under the pretext of sharing a prayer request in a prayer meeting without their consent (IB-50). When one gave a testimony in a church meeting, he divulged a confidential issue of a person whose situation had been ameliorated by his personal assistance (IB-02). He disclosed the person's confidential issue in order to receive praise for what he has done for the person: "He had spent all his money on drinks and was sitting in his cold and dark living room, so I charged his gas and electricity meters" (IB-02-1). Church leaders are inevitably responsible for dealing with church members' unacceptable behaviours or mistakes to bring order in the community. They discuss issues in a meeting and use email correspondence for further discussions when it is necessary. One leader did not log out his email account after using the communal computer in his living area and one of his family members inadvertently read an email in which a member's sexual immorality was mentioned (IB-176). Unfortunately, that confidential issue became known to the leader's family and a few other members who were close to the family (IB-176-1).

4.2.3.1.4 Dogmatic Speech

Dogmatic speech, from my viewpoint, is an intentional and a perlocutionary act to control a person or a group for a particular purpose. It is imprudent to deliver an undiscerning oracle or prophecy for the purpose of exercising spiritual authority and demonstrating spiritual gifts to a person who is not interested in those spiritual gifts (IB-64). When one does not accept a prophecy, a curse is pronounced upon the person: "You refuse the prophecy from God so He is going to punish you" (IB-31). Another form of abusive speech is purposefully targeting a specific person during the sermon

through criticizing the person's constant mistakes or a different viewpoint on a specific theological issue (IB-66). The person is not identified in the sermon, but most of the congregation is able to guess who the person is.

4.2.3.1.5 Stubborn Assertion

There are people in any organization who try to win the discussion by using any means. There are some people who are obsessed with a specific theological issue such as dispensationalism or pre-millennialism and they become argumentative to indoctrinate others with their views in conversational Bible studies (IB-71). This pugilistic behaviour causes others not only to be less interested in attending the Bible study, but also to feel aversion to them and to those doctrines (IB-76). This assertive behaviour is observed as argumentative behaviour by others because of the aggressive nature in their behaviour (IB-77). To make the matters worse, they are possessed with the illusion that they are doing the right thing to correct others' wrong views on the issue (IB-77-1). Other members are more disappointed with their self-centred interpretation of their attitudes are always right and their views are absolutely true: "They failed to understand and respect different views of others on the matter" (IB-72-2). They do not acknowledge their problems causing conflicts between them and others (IB-77-3). These theological issues will be discussed in more detail in chapter six.

4.2.3.2 Communication Problems in Message Interpretation

4.2.3.2.1 Silencer

A silencer implies no response to the message sender in this research (IB-44). This phenomenon happens at GEC due to prejudice against the message sender (IB-44-1). People are prejudiced on account of their social or cultural identities, personal backgrounds, and even outward appearance. Stereotype or preconceived notions in some information provided by others to the message sender affects healthy communication (IB-16). "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" (John 1:46) was paraphrased as "Can anything good come out of Malaysia?" by a white British member when a lady from Malaysia expressed her opinion on a matter in the church meeting (IB-96). Afterwards, the Malaysian lady did not participate in any business meetings (IB-96-1).

4.2.3.2.2 Cognitive Biases

People have their own mechanisms, evolved in their own social context, by which they judge others' behaviour. These different mechanisms may present different perceptions on the intentions of others' behaviour. These are called cognitive biases that are patterns of misjudgment in particular given situations. For example, correcting someone's behaviour is an expression of love in a society, but it could be interpreted as a way of discipline in another society. For example, a person from the latter society said, "I thought I made a serious mistake when my behaviour was corrected, and I felt that I was not loved by others in the community" (IB-04). This cognitive bias of the message receiver causes him to unconsciously misjudge the true intention of the message sender without any clear evidence (IB-13). In this case, the message receiver develops the assumption that the message sender has taken a dim view of him so that he eventually withdraws from the conversation (IB-13-1).

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4.2.3.2.3 Gunny-sacking

Gunny-sacking is a metaphor referring to silently saving up feelings and irritations until one cannot bear the pressure any longer and explodes when an argument occurs (Dunne and Alberson, 2003:14). An introvert or inhibited person has a tendency that he characteristically and congenitally tries to avoid any type of interpersonal conflict. This kind of message receiver does not discuss his inner struggle caused by irritation and resentment with the message sender, but chooses to be hurt thinking, "Everything will be fine if I suffer patiently" (IB-78). Initially, he thinks that it is just a small thing, but it becomes too heavy to bear. The true reason that he blows his top is not because of one incidence, but because of accumulated grievances over a period of time (IB-97).

4.2.3.2.4 Stonewalling

Stonewalling is similar to a silencer in terms of disengagement from interpersonal interactions. However, what is different between the two is that stonewalling is a tactic of the message receiver in unsatisfactory communication to frustrate the message sender in order to finally withdraw from the communication, while for a silencer, it is the refusal of the message receiver through completely closing himself or herself off from the communication. In other words, there is no response from the message receiver in a silencer, but there are different kinds of abnormal responses in stonewalling. The first response is constant interruption (IB-34). Changing the subject without finding a solution or an agreement causes the message sender to become frustrated (IB-34-1). Another form of interruption is jumping to conclusions while the message sender is still

speaking (IB-37). The message receiver does not give the message sender a chance to articulate his feelings and thoughts (IB-37-1). The message sender is annoyed, if the message receiver completely misinterprets his original intention to deliver (IB-37-2).

4.2.3.2.5 Impersonalized Responses

Typical of impersonalized behaviour is always responding with irrelevant messages which are tangential to what the message sender said (IB-103). Sometimes, the response is very quick and brief without any consideration (IB-132). One particular example of an impersonalized response is that the message receiver responds with an offensive hand gesture to the message sender (IB-150). Hand gestures and facial movements are ways of non-verbal communication which convey the person's emotions. The negative feeling conveyed and perceived implies that the message receiver is not interested in the conversation and wants to finish it as soon as possible (IB-101). Another type of impersonalized behaviour is that the message receiver leaves the place where the conversation is taking place without consent from the message sender (IB-92).

4.2.3.2.6 Incomprehensible Language

Another case is that the message receiver responds with incomprehensible words or so-called difficult-to-understand language in an official church meeting (IB-102). This is specifically named as communication in jargon-laden language that the message receiver responds in abstract and vague official language with professional jargon such as technical terminology or characteristic idioms in a specific area so that it is quite difficult for the ordinary message sender to understand the response (Jost and Major,

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2001:404). An incoherent response is another type of incomprehensible language. An individual rambles without stating the key point for a long time in a meeting (IB-85). Sometimes, an individual responds with inappropriate or incongruous messages which go against the original intention of the message sender (IB-89). An individual responds in self-contradiction in utterly disjointed phrases of what he said a while ago and what he is saying right now (IB-82).

4.2.3.3 Contextual Issues in Communication Problems at GEC

4.2.3.3.1 Lack of Cross-cultural Competence

As I stated, GEC is like the salad bowl model so that the cultural heterogeneity among the congregation is observed. One of the reasons that the cultural integration has not been successful at GEC is that more than half of the congregation are white British and their culture is the dominant culture. They do not provide much opportunity for other subordinate cultures to express themselves. The majority of the white British members take a position against cultural pluralism, believing that there will be no possibility of cultural integration without a strong dominant culture formed and consented by the majority at GEC (IB-86). Cultures are not static phenomena, but they change constantly and are indefinitely renewable (Samovar et al., 2012: 49). However, the majority white British show their discomfort with cultural change and it becomes a barrier hindering effective communication between them and the ethnic minorities (IB-86-1).

4.2.3.3.2 Concepts of Personal Space

In general, personal space has two dimensions: physical distance and psychological intimacy between individuals in their interactions (Howitt et al, 1989: 79). Therefore, from time to time, the intrusion of personal space triggers psychological reactions such as discomfort, even uneasiness or anger (IB-94, IB-107 and IB-108). There are also cultural and social dimensions of personal space because those psychological reactions are based on different concepts of personal space created in different cultural and social settings, and when those concepts are denied in a situation, emotions are expressed. Personal space is understood as both an indicator and integral part of the growth, maintenance and decline of interpersonal relationships (Nagar, 2006: 135). This indicates that negative psychological reactions are caused by the close proximity between the two individuals without spending enough time to acquaint with each other and to build up rapport and intimacy in their relationship. For example, physical contact such as hugging the opposite gender is natural as a way of greeting and expressing welcome in the Western evangelical Christian culture, but it is an unfamiliar to Koreans, especially to Korean women (IB-79). During the initial period of KMC, several Korean young female students reluctantly came to church services each Sunday because of the particular culture that people greeted with hugging and kissing cheeks, especially between the opposite genders: "I feel uncomfortable when I am hugged by male members in the church that I do not know well" (IB-79).

4.2.3.3.3 Incongruity between the Organizational Goals and Personal Values

People from different social and cultural backgrounds have different styles of setting goals, executing a process, and making decisions for a project. The incongruity between the community's main goal and diverse cultural values that individuals hold in the community causes interpersonal conflict among members at GEC (IB-80). GEC

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began as the BMM whose social contribution made a huge impact on the poor and there is a tendency among elderly people to recover their reputation and legacy through engaging in social works (IB-80-1). This has been the main value placed in the ministries of GEC for more than a century. On the other hand, the young leaders focused on personal salvation, designing contemporary worship styles and forming small groups because their primary goal is church growth (IB-80-2).

4.2.3.3.4 Differences in Working Styles

People prefer different ways of doing things and using different methods. There are some people with a task-centred style of leadership background, who focus on performance to achieve goals (IB-81). On the contrary, there are people who prefer the relationship-centred style of leadership in which the focus is on people's satisfaction within the team (IB-83). These individuals with different approaches clash when they have to make important decisions in the middle of a project (IB-84). People with the former approach place their priorities on finding solutions when they face difficulties in each stage, and sometimes their result-oriented style enforces team members to make some sacrifices to accomplish the project to an outstanding quality (IB-84-1). On the other hand, people with the latter approach prioritize caring for team members, so that sometimes some team members are frustrated with the lack of progress and quality of the project (IB-84-2).

4.2.3.3.5 Cultural Discomfort

There are two types of cultural discomfort hindering effective communication and causing interpersonal conflict at GEC. The first is the English-only atmosphere. When people who are from the same ethnic group talk among themselves in their own language, some British people feel discomfort assuming that they are talking and laughing about them (IB-87). This discomfort causes them to react inappropriately to the ethnic minorities and enforce a rule that they have to speak only English in the church (IB-87-1). This has caused the ethnic minorities to feel uncomfortable when they are in different types of meetings, such as prayer meetings or informal fellowship (IB-87-2).

Another type of cultural discomfort is mentioning taboos. Taboo words or signs are socially or culturally unacceptable behaviour in a culture. Each culture or society has its own unique taboos. Individuals from a particular culture or society are embarrassed or offended, when a topic which is regarded as a taboo in their culture is mentioned by someone from another culture. For instance, a lady from Malaysia was very upset during her presentation in a small group meeting when a Western person placed his feet on a chair because showing the soles of one's feet was considered as impolite behaviour in her culture (IB-90): "I felt I was utterly insulted by his action while I was speaking in the cell meeting." (IB-90-1). There is another example regarding cultural discomfort. A Korean minister immediately thought that he was spiritually contaminated in a prayer meeting, when a lay woman approached and prayed imposing her hand upon his head because it is culturally prohibited in Korea for lay people, especially women, to impose their hands upon an ordained minister's head and pray for him (IB-88).

4.2.4 Character Defects

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Everybody has negative qualities in their character. In social science, the concept of character is a thread that links behavioural traits to human conduct (Lamb, 1999). In the majority of cases, they are little foibles that are normally tolerated in interpersonal relationships. However, in some cases, they are revealed as serious character flaws. A character defect is described as a dominating negative attitude in a particular character-challenging situation. In this situation, one's destructive or defensive patterns of thinking and feeling manifest in actions and reactions which impair his or her interpersonal functions. There are eight negative character traits identified as causes of interpersonal conflict at GEC.

4.2.4.1 Enviousness

Enviousness is resentful awareness of another person's success or advantage (IB-92). The senior caretaker at GEC who was responsibility for managing the church building felt jealousy when people complimented the assistant caretaker and his professional skills (IB-92-1). The assistant caretaker was appointed to replace the senior caretaker in the near future, but the senior caretaker began to treat the assistant caretaker with hostility and did not allow him to get involved in anything (IB-92-1). The senior caretaker thought that he was losing what had brought him honour and respect so that he chose a destructive pattern of behaviour to take it back from the assistant caretaker (IB -92-2).

4.2.4.2 Defensiveness

Defensiveness is behaviour when making excuses toward correction or criticism

about his or her mistakes or errors (IB-93). A talented choir member whose house is the nearest from the church is always late to the practice and makes a different excuse each time (IB-93-1). Other members who always wait are annoyed because of her defensive attitude without apology: "I am fed up with her excuses. She has to apologize for her habitual tardiness and to improve her punctuality" (IB-93-1). Another example of defensive attitude is that a house group leader places blame on his small group members for the fragmented relationship among the members (IB-95). However, the house group members criticize his irresponsible leadership and ingrained defensive attitude saying, "I do not care about what people say about me. I only care what God says to me" (IB-72).

4.2.4.3 Aloofness

I define aloofness as behaviour remaining distant from others. An old British lady whose daughter runs a dance academy in the church building purposely begins to treat a Chinese woman coldly and acts indifferently to her when the Chinese woman stops sending her daughter to the dance academy (IB-03). Their relationship has been fine, but her character defect begins to take effect through the incident. She chooses aloofness which becomes the chief feature dominating her entire character so that she has taken a completely changed attitude to withdraw her affection from the Chinese woman and her daughter (IB-03-1). The Chinese woman misunderstands her aloofness as racism and discrimination against her ethnicity: "My daughter and I were discriminated in the church because of our ethnicity and I do not want to attend the church any more. (IB-03-2).

4.2.4.4 Eccentricity

Eccentricity, from my viewpoint, is awkward behaviour that is not regarded as normal and universal behaviour. On some occasions, eccentric behaviour is positively understood as a specific attitudinal or behavioural inclination pertaining to one's genius or creativity (Bernez, 2012: 126). However, eccentric behaviour observed at GEC is only the external expression of their abnormal characters. For example, when most church members went away for the summer church camp, one man who did not join the camp made a phone call to a church leader in the camp to report that the leader's house was on fire (IB-98). The leader immediately made a phone call to his neighbour to find out whether it was true or not (IB-98-1). The leader felt enormous anxiety for a while until he discovered that it was not true (IB-98-2). Another example is when an old man who used to be a preacher came to the front of the congregation and began to make comments on the sermon of the day after the service while people were still sitting (IB-99). His comments on the sermon became another sermon after the service was finished (IB-99-2) and it also irritated the preacher (IB-99-1). He continued his peculiar behaviour several times until the leaders urged him to stop doing it because his eccentricity had become unbearable not only to the preachers, but also to the congregation (IB-99-3).

4.2.4.5 Entitlement

An impractical sense of entitlement is a self-centred expectation that a person deserves everything and should be treated in a special way in church (IB-38). A man who recently joined GEC feels that he is entitled to be appointed as an elder because of his leadership experience in another church, and his professional and educational

background (IB-38-1). His request is rejected by the elders because of his disregard for the regulations in relation to appointing an elder at GEC (IB-38-2). He is seriously disappointed when his request is not accepted (IB-38-3). The man blames the elders saying, "They reject the will of God who desires me to be appointed as an elder at GEC" (IB-38-4). This unrealistic sense of entitlement is a sort of narcissistic character trait in him that can skew his perception of reality (Masterson, 1988: 96).

4.2.4.6 Fawning

Fawning is flattering and adopting an adulatory attitude or behaviour toward someone with authority over personnel appointments or with power to control finance in the community (IB-100). A man has been blamed for being a sycophant to one of the elders to be seen as the leader's right-hand man (IB-100-1). The reason that he ingratiates himself with the elder is to gain his favour in order to finally share his authority and power (IB-100-2). Others criticize his deliberate subservient behaviour: "He is just like a puppet" (IB-100-3). The elder is also criticized that he does not discern the hidden intention of the fawning because the elder just enjoys basking in the warmth of the person's insincere praise (IB-100-4).

4.2.4.7 Unreliability

Unreliability means changing one's mind or decision. A chairperson of a committee does not implement the decision made by the committee members (IB-109). Instead, he changes the decision after being consulted with others who are not members of the committee, but close to him in a personal relationship (IB-109-1). The committee

members deem him incapable of being responsible as the chairperson of the committee, when they realize that the original plan has been modified without their consent (IB-109-2). Eventually, the committee members entreat the elders to remove him from the position (IB-109-3). Their accusation is that he has a serious character flaw which not only jeopardizes healthy relationships between him and other committee members, but also makes the nature of the committee's ministry unpredictable and unstable (IB-109-3).

4.2.4.8 Being Scrupulous

Being morally scrupulous here means finding fault in someone's misbehaviour and trying to correct it (IB-05). People who are morally scrupulous are very careful and punctilious to do everything properly and correctly. As they apply strict and uptight standards for themselves and only do things that are morally right, they also expect others to behave in that manner. When they observe one's behaviour that does not satisfy their own moral standards, they point out the fault and correct it on the spot (IB-05-1). An example of interpersonal conflict caused by scrupulous behaviour is that an old woman from the Brethren church background constantly criticizes young teenage girls for their immodest fashion styles in church (IB-05-2).

4.2.5 Temperamental Dispositions

Temperamental dispositions are intrinsic, affective and cognitive characteristics that manifest in an individual soon after birth and tend to be relatively stable throughout childhood (Bukstein and Tarter, 2006: 324). Different from character traits,

temperamental dispositions are innate propensities. This means children inherit a certain temperamental disposition and coupled with experiences, it produces a relatively stable temperamental profile (Bridgers, 2005: 57). Some scholars believe that one's temperamental disposition is modifiable as his or her character is malleable. In this case, a temperamental disposition is understood as the product of gene-environment interactions (Bukstein and Tarter, 2006: 324). However, many other psychologists and social scientists believe that an individual has minimal ability to modify and modulate his or her temperamental disposition (Flanagan and Rorty, 1990: 5). If it is true that one's temperamental disposition is an ingrained and inborn feature, it cannot be evaluated as good or bad in the way that one's character is judged. However, if one has a salient temperamental disposition which functions in a negative way under a particular condition, it certainly affects his or her interpersonal relationships as well as prevents his or her personal ability in a professional context. Temperamental disposition can affect one's own emotion that is associated with a response to a situation and this response also plays a role in subsequent social interactions and social functioning (Rothbart, 2012: 1). In this regard, it is understood that one's distinctive patterns of feelings and behaviour are formed by the influence of his or her temperamental disposition. Here are the four negative temperamental dispositions that function as vulnerable variables causing interpersonal relationships to be at risk at GEC. There is a commonality among the four that they are initially causes of covert conflicts occurring internally within individuals such as feelings and thoughts, but afterwards they are developed as indirect causes of overt interpersonal conflicts between individuals.

4.2.5.1 Negative View of Self

People with negative self-views are likely to suffer from distress, depression or inferiority because they perceive themselves as worthless. They have distorted self-images that give them a negative sense of self-worth. These people tend to be anxious about their relationships because they see themselves as unlovable and unworthy (Kennedy-Moore and Watson, 1999: 128). They have a fear that others perceive them in the same way that they perceive themselves (IB-104). A lady who used to be homeless has a fear of being rejected by other church members because of her unfortunate past (IB-105). This fear, caused by her biased view of her self-image, influenced her to develop adverse behaviour in relationships (IB-105-1). She withdrew from relationships and isolated herself because her low self-esteem caused her to assume that she was not loved and accepted at GEC (IB-105-2). A middle-aged man who is divorced and thrown out of his house due to his alcohol problem behaved manipulatively in order to receive attention and affection from others (IB-106). He gave a persuasive testimony in a Sunday morning service, which was not based on what actually had happened in his life but was contrived and exaggerated (IB-106-1). One single man was deeply moved by the testimony and offered him a bedroom in his house (IB-106-2). However, shortly afterwards his chronic alcohol problem and manipulative nature were laid bare to the man and subsequently to the entire community of GEC (IB-106-3). When he presumed that he had failed to be accepted by others in the community, his negative self-view deteriorated further so that his hatred toward himself got even worse (IB-106-4). He chose self-loathing as a coping mechanism and he tried to harm himself as a punishment for failing to be accepted (IB-106-5). This is a vicious circle of negative self-view that causes the person to behave in negative ways and the negative behaviour in turn reinforces negative self-views (Guindon, 2010: 194).

4.2.5.2 Negative Perception of Reality

Although there are various ways of perceiving and interpreting reality according to people's perspectives and beliefs, in every society there is a consensus of reality that is a social pattern agreed and recognized by social members (Goertzel, 2006: 39). Thus, the consensus reality in the society determines their beliefs and interprets life's experiences through its filters (King, 2007: 265). On the contrary, there are some people in every society who regard their own perception and interpretation of reality more important than the actual reality. In other words, what they want to believe to be true is more important than what is actually true. This is called the illusion of reality and negative perception of reality. An old man who has attended the church for more than forty years and involved in various ministries at GEC has a negative perception of reality and tries to detect flaws in plans and activities of GEC (IB-110). When someone suggests something, he immediately responds to it and explains why the plan is not going to work out (IB-110-1). He only points out the negative aspects of the plan, while others focus on its positive aspects (IB-110-2). He constantly holds a perverse response toward any kind of suggestion for different ministries at GEC, saying "I have done everything in the past and what has returned is nothing but failure" (IB-110-3). His attitude toward new suggestions in ministry is that no one will be disappointed if nothing is planned (IB-110-4). A classic example of his negative perception of reality is that he has given a nickname for the area where the church is located as 'a pastor's graveyard' (IB-110-5). He thinks that spiritual resistance is too strong in the area so that church cannot be successful in whatever it does (IB-110-6). There are a few people who are influenced by him and their collective negative perceptions of reality disturb certain aspects of ministries at GEC (IB-111). There are three negative psychological responses observed from what they have said. Firstly, they are obsessed by defeatism: "It does not matter what you plan and pray for, it always falls flat" (IB-111-1). Secondly, they

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overgeneralize the present situation by presenting one particular failure of the past: "Now, the situation is very similar to the time when we failed. There will be no hope. We are sure that the situation will never get any better" (IB-111-2). Finally, they emphasize catastrophe in the future: "The worst scenario has not revealed yet. There will be more severe failure in the future at GEC" (IB-111-3). Their negative perceptions of reality became infectious, especially to new believers (IB-111-4).

4.2.5.3 Shyness

Being shy or reserved is regarded as positive behaviour in some cultures. In this case, shyness is close to introversion as a personality trait that makes an individual more thoughtful and introspective in making a speech or behaving. However, there are different degrees of shyness and some serious forms of shyness can make negative effects on interpersonal relationships as well as on emotion regulation. A shy woman from a Far East Asian country tried to mask her shyness by overcompensating with talking too much and laughing too loud (IB-112). One day in a small group discussion she mispronounced an English word and that made people around her to laugh (IB-112-1). When she found out the reason why they had laughed, she felt embarrassment and shame (IB-112-2). It was a normal reaction from people around her at the time, but she took it too seriously. She began to internalize those negative emotions and became more anxious about how others think of her (IB-112-3). Her anxiety was developed into a fear of people's negative reaction towards what she says or does (IB-112-4). Her emotional inhibitions were formed and developed by internalising negative emotions which turned into withdrawing from relationships (IB-112-5). She tried to avoid meeting with unfamiliar people (IB-112-6). Furthermore, she does not speak in English, not even a word, in front of British people because of fear of looking foolish or being criticized

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(IB-112-7). She becomes less sociable and displeased with talking to anyone at GEC. She is the last to come to church and the first to leave after the service in order to avoid any interactions with people (IB-112-8). She explains the reason of her relationship withdrawal in this way; "British people do not like me, so I hate them also" (IB-112-9).

4.2.5.4 Good Samaritan Syndrome

The term 'good Samaritan syndrome' is interpreted in different ways. In this writing it indicates an individual who cannot bear the suffering of an innocent person and cannot ignore any type of injustice. This person thinks that he is the only one who can make the world a better place. An individual who has the syndrome tries to save all difficult situations and to put everything morally right. This type of person is a 'do-gooder' who spends most of their time doing things for others selflessly sacrificing time and personal resources (Losey, 2012: 32). Despite the positive contributions to their community, the do-gooders cause some negative effects both in their personal life and interpersonal relationships.

The first negative effect is emotional exhaustion of the do-gooder (IB-133). Doing things for others is a way of avoiding feeling one's own pain because do-gooders work mostly on the surface, hiding their inner feelings by focusing on someone else's problems instead (Losey, 2012: 32). There are three particular reasons that a do-gooder at GEC is emotionally depleted. Firstly, he tries to please everybody (IB-113): "I feel anxious when things do not work as expected in the life of others and I blame myself" (IB-114); "I feel guilty when things go wrong, even though those are not actually important" (IB-114-1). He is emotionally hurt when he realizes that he is being used by people that he has willingly helped (IB-115): "I am really upset that a person whom I

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have helped spreads this untrue rumour about me" (IB-115-1). For instance, people borrow money from him and take it for granted that they do not pay back even when they are financially able (IB-115-2). Some of them justify their behaviour saying, "The money was a free gift rather than a loan" (IB-115-3).

The second negative effect is that a do-gooder's behaviour becomes a source of interpersonal conflict in particular situations. A do-gooder often intervenes in an existing conflict situation (IB-116). However, the conflict situation becomes more serious because he does not fully understand the real cause and process of development of the conflict between the two parties (IB-116-1). Another example is that the do-gooder pressurizes others to behave like him (IB-117). He emphasizes that the first priority in his life is to serve the local church, which is more important than looking after his own family (IB-118): "I give up holidays to make more financial contributions to the church" (IB-118-1); "I participate in almost all activities in the church" (IB-118-2). He raises the bar for what is expected of everybody in the church (IB-122). His selfless commitment to the church is not evaluated as a good example, but as a silent compulsion causing others to feel guilty by not meeting the standard that he establishes (IB-120). Several people criticize him saying, "What he does is objectively good, but subjectively bad for those who do not behave like him" (IB-121).

4.2.6 Moral Deviance

According to control theory, an absence of conformity to the rules and norms of the society in an individual's conduct is regarded as moral deviance (Clinard and Meier, 2014: 99). This kind of understanding of deviance is natural in a mono-cultural society. However, interpretations of a particular deviant behaviour may vary in a multicultural

society. GEC is a multicultural community on a small scale where diverse cultural norms and moral standards are mingled, but there are no clearly articulated moral standards established by consensus among members. In addition, GEC is also a religious organization. It means that GEC has its own religious values and norms based on the Scriptures and church traditions. There are three variables relating to interpersonal conflicts caused by moral deviance at GEC.

4.2.6.1 Aberrant Behaviour

I define an aberrant behaviour as unacceptable behaviour on the basis of fundamental ethical principles that are rationally formed and universally accepted. Aberrant behaviour in this research is an offensive act in terms of failing to respect the rights and dignity of other people as well as a source of interpersonal conflict. A form of aberrance is invading someone's privacy (IB-33). For example, a person surreptitiously shadowed a church member to find something at fault and to accuse him of wrongdoing (IB-33-1). He collects data and keeps them secretly until an opportune time comes to disseminate the private information in public (IB-33-2). Physical violence between church members is another form of aberrance (IB-27). An incident of physical violence happened when one member accidentally offended the other during an argument (IB-27-1).

The second is physical contact with the opposite gender for sensual pleasure behind the mask of greeting (IB-01). An old man who was notorious for staring at women wearing short skirts, tight leggings or low-cut tops, and even touching them in crowded public places had begun to attend GEC and was given a strong restriction by the leadership team on close proximity with women in the church (IB-24). Initially, he kept to this for several months, but when the leaders began to feel easy about his

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behaviour, he ignored this restriction and began to hug women and unnecessarily touched other parts of their bodies (IB-24-1). Some women felt sexual humiliation and complained about his behaviour to the leadership team (IB-24-2). He was suspended from attending services for three months. He came back to church after the suspension period, but his behaviour did not change, so that he was suspended again until further notification (IB-28).

The third example is that a young man was arrested in his house by the cyber police on the charge of downloading indecent images of children and stored them in his computer (IB-59). This incident was on the local news and GEC suffered a lot from it (IB-59-2). He was imprisoned for several months and truly repented during the period (IB-123). When he returned to GEC there were some members who objected to his rejoining GEC (IB-124): "If he returns, families who have young children will not attend GEC any more" (IB-124-1). He acknowledged what he had done was wrong, but he appealed that he became a new person in Christ (IB-123-1). Eventually, the leadership team found a point of compromise that he was restricted to sitting on a designated seat every Sunday and did not move out of a radius of two metres from the seat until every single child left the premises (IB-124-2). He was also banned from any church activities or programmes in which children participated, especially child dedication (IB-124-3). He was rejected from his own cell-group because one couple within the cell-group gave birth to a girl while he was in prison and the couple did not want him to return to the cell-group (IB-123-2).

The last is homosexual practice (IB-125). One single man, in his early forties, had a homosexual tendency for more than twenty years, but he had concealed it (IB-125-1). One day he confessed his love to another male leader who was married (IB-125-2). The leader initially regarded it as brotherly love in Christ (IB-126). However, as time went by, the leader realized that the person's homosexual tendency was getting

serious because he began to convert the tendency into actions (IB-126-1). The homosexual demanded the leader to spend more time with him (IB-125-3). He made phone calls several times a day for the sole purpose of hearing the leader's voice (IB-125-4). He sat by the leader in all the meetings and tried to hold the leader's hand at prayer time when everybody closed their eyes (IB125-5). He kissed the leader's cheek several times and lips once when the leader was in a defenceless state of being engrossed in doing something (IB-125-6). When both joined a short-term mission trip, they shared a room together (IB-125-7). One night the homosexual sexually harassed the leader (IB-125-8) and the leader felt anger and sexual humiliation (IB-126-2). After they came back from the mission trip, the leader reported it to the leadership team (IB-127). The leadership team agreed to take a severe disciplinary action against him and eventually he was expelled from GEC (IB-127-1). The leadership team's official stance on the expulsion is that it is not because of his homosexual tendency, but because of his sexual immorality and unrepentant attitude (IB-127-2).

4.2.6.2 Discrepancy between Moral Norms of Individuals

To be human is to face moral decisions (Wogaman, 2009: xiii). However, moral decisions are not simple in a multicultural setting. From time to time, it is observed that people as moral agents struggle with moral decisions due to moral pluralism and moral relativism at GEC. Individuals from different cultural and social backgrounds conform to their own moral norms and values that are appropriate in their own cultural and social contexts, but often conflict with one another at GEC. This diversity of moral standards causes moral uncertainty that individuals do not know how to make appropriate moral decisions in the complex multicultural setting. Sometimes, individuals face a situation of moral dilemma in which they cannot choose either one or the other. One heated

debate was during a seminar at GEC about education in the Christian home and the use of smacking with a cane to discipline children (IB-128). The opinion of parents from Western European countries was in stark contrast with the ones of the parents from Far East Asian countries (IB-128-1). In the conversational Bible study or in house groups, it is also observed that people have different opinions on various ethical issues which affect Christian life and faith. These are examples in which individuals' moral judgments are divided: on contraception (IB-135), abortion (IB-147), divorce (IB-161), adultery (IB-130), the death penalty (IB-149), euthanasia (IB-201), the roles of husband and wife (IB-129), premarital sex (IB-129), uses of military power (IB-148). Some people become perplexed by the fact that moral judgments are subjective in time and place (IB-06). For instance, people have contrasting opinions about premarital sex. A young woman in her early twenties cohabits with her boyfriend before marriage (IB-10). She was involved in the choir and the youth ministry. People criticize that her moral behaviour is inappropriate as a Christian: "She is not a good example to teenagers in the youth club" (IB-10-1); "She must understand that sexual intercourse between man and woman is allowed only in marriage" (IB-10-2). Some old choir members require the choir conductor of expelling her from the choir (IB-69). They justify their decision by citing 2 Corinthians 6:14: "Do not be yoked together (with the one sexually immoral)" (IB-69-1). She refutes their criticism strongly: "I am living in contemporary British society where individuals have the right to choose a way of life to be happy as long as it does not directly harm others and to be independent from the rules and regulations set by ancient people" (IB-42). This indicates that moral discrepancies among individuals at GEC are not only because of different moral norms of people from different cultural backgrounds, but also different moral norms in different generations (IB-45).

4.2.6.3 Ambivalence between Social Values and Christian Values

An individual may feel a moral ambivalence in the Christian life when he or she makes a choice which satisfies his or her social values while simultaneously denies his or her Christian values, and vice versa. The simplest example of moral ambivalence in the Christian life is to choose between going to work and attending a church service on Sunday (IB-131). A Christian cannot easily give up either the former or the latter. It is normally understood by people that pursuing their own desires and goals is to feel self-contentment or to achieve self-realization. However, some fundamentalists at GEC regard it as denying Christian values (IB-29). Christian values focus on the moral priorities of Christian experience, on Christian ways of evaluating moral experience, on a Christian lifestyle and Christian action (McDonald and Harvey et al., 1995: xviii). The definition above demonstrates that there are two important elements in values: one is priority and the other is lifestyle. Christian values and beliefs are derived from the life and teachings of Jesus. Some fundamentalist members at GEC assert that authentic Christian life is to follow exactly what Christ did and taught (IB-146). They do not understand other members who take holidays several times a year and spending money for themselves, but give little offering to the church (IB-146-1). They believe that that is lack of faith and an evidence of worldly life (IB-146-2). In a particular situation when GEC planned to build a church extension, one man stood up during the church meeting and appealed to other members to give up family holidays for the year and offer the holiday money for the building project (IB-159). It made the rest of members to feel guilty in ambivalence between loyalty to God and the importance of their family life (IB-159-1). One of them criticized him saying, "His assertion about making God and His church a first priority is right, but his application to fulfil that particular Christian value is wrong" (IB-159-2).
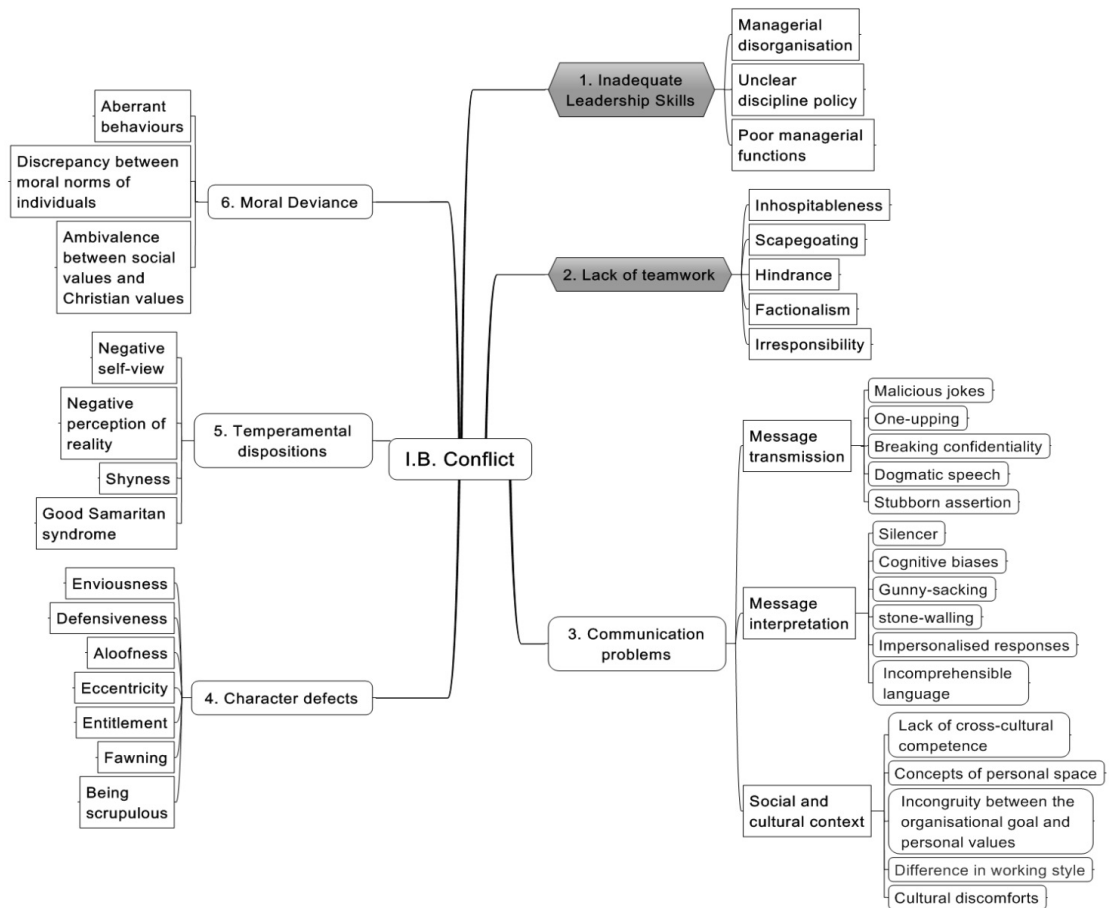
Figure 4.1 Factors and variables of the interpersonal behavioural conflicts

4.3 Interpreting Factors in the Domain of Interpersonal Behavioural Conflict

Factors in ethnographic research are regarded as the most distinctive patterns of people's beliefs and behaviour that cause interpersonal conflict. The six factors identified and described in the analysis can be categorized into three dimensions: intrapersonal, interpersonal, and contextual dimension. In this part, I am going to explain aspects of conflict in each dimension and reciprocal relationships among the dimensions.

4.3.1 Three Dimensions of Factors and Conflict Aspects in each Dimension

4.3.1.1 Intrapersonal Dimension

It is likely that intrapersonal factors are ignored when interpersonal behavioural conflicts within an organization are researched. Researchers literally understand the term 'interpersonal behavioural conflict' as conflict caused by behaviour between individuals so that they only focus on disagreement, incompatibility, violence, etc. However, it is a significant discovery that intrapersonal factors make up almost one third of the data in the domain of interpersonal behavioural conflict at GEC. It means that intrapersonal factors are one of the underlying causes in interpersonal conflict at GEC. There is another distinctive feature regarding interpersonal conflict at GEC. Intrapersonal conflict often occurs when the role that one expects to perform and the role that is demanded of him or her by the organization are incongruent because the person must perform a task that does not match his or her expertise, interests, goals, and values (Rahim, 2011: 205-208). It denotes that intrapersonal conflict occurs in other organizations by external factors such as high expectations or demands in terms of performing his or her task. However, intrapersonal conflicts at GEC occurred due to internal factors such as character defects and temperamental dispositions of individuals. In other words, intrapersonal conflicts at GEC are literally covert conflicts at first, although sometimes they are shifted into overt conflicts afterwards.

4.3.1.1.1 Conflict Aspects in Intrapersonal Dimension

4.3.1.1.1.1 One-sided Conflict

Intrapersonal conflict is often perceived as the absence of conflict because individuals rarely express their emotional struggles (Howell, 2005: 206), although it differs slightly depending on their culture and personal character. In this regard, intrapersonal conflict is an one-sided conflict because only one party is aware of the discord. An issue of conflict has come up by someone's speech or non-verbal behaviour,

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but it has not yet manifested in the form of interpersonal conflict. Normally, one-sided conflict occurs by someone's covert behaviour such as indirect disagreement or passive aggression (IB-135). When one experiences an internal discord by someone's covert behaviour, he or she is stimulated by the conflict issue and in trying to find a way in innate human tendencies to perform an action (Mason and Mendoza, 1993: 28). However, it is not easy for him or her to identify the determinant associated with the covert behaviour and to choose a right strategy to deal with the conflict effectively (IB-151). There are two different reactions observed at GEC in relation to handling one-sided conflict. One is the avoidance style (IB-160). A person knows that he has little control over the conflict issue so that he simply withdraws himself from the situation (IB-160-1). The other is to choose a similar sort of covert behaviour after analysing the tactic that the conflict partner used (IB-195).

4.3.1.1.1.2 Pseudo-Conflict

Perceiving a conflict issue is a cognitive process in which one may analyse and interpret the situation subjectively because of incomplete views on personal experiences such as the denial of interests, disagreements, feelings of rejection, and discomfort. This subjectivity in perceiving a conflict issue may cause one to feel pseudo-conflict that is not real, but illusory. It is described as a false conflict based on misperception, misunderstanding, or displacement of the discord (Duetsch, 1973: 14). Misjudgment of someone's real motive induces a psychological reaction (IB-155) that becomes a way to fabricate one's emotional entanglement (IB-155-1). When a psychological reaction is involved in the cognitive process of conflict perception, it is not easy for the person to determine an appropriate strategy to de-escalate the conflict situation (IB-155-2). In an extreme case, the person chooses a perverse coping mechanism such as self-harming as

a method to solve the problem (IB-106-5). Depending on how one chooses to handle a conflict issue, the conflict may be developed into a specific phase as a result. It means that the intensity of an intrapersonal conflict depends on how one reacts to a conflict issue rather than on the issue itself.

4.3.1.2 Interpersonal Dimension

Communication problems and moral deviance are typical factors in interpersonal conflicts. Conflicts occur at all levels of social interaction and cause resentment, frustration, or hostility between individuals in relationships. Conflict weakens a relationship and, in the worst case, terminates the relationship (IB-03-2). The principal reason that relationships are negatively affected by conflict at GEC is the relationship partners' unacceptable and immoral verbal and non-verbal behaviour (IB-26, IB-58, IB-66, IB-150, IB-33-1, IB-27, IB-25-1, IB-24-1and IB-125). The trust and rapport between individuals are broken by improper methods of communication, immoral decisions and behaviour (IB-76, IB-13-1, IB-24-2 and IB-126-2). In this regard, interpersonal conflicts are understood as behavioural conflicts caused by the interaction of the participants in a social context. Behavioural conflicts at GEC are mainly of two kinds: one is a relationship conflict and the other is a normative conflict.

4.3.1.2.1 Conflict Aspects in Interpersonal Dimension

4.3.1.2.1.1 Relationship Conflict

A local church is a relationship-based organization rather than a task based organization. In many social organizations, task conflict caused by disagreements

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between members about content, opinions and ideas of the tasks being performed (Jehn, 1995: 257) affects the relationships of the members. On the contrary, a relationship conflict is caused by poor communication and by affective components related to various negative feelings toward others (Jehn and Mannix, 2001: 240) affects the tasks at GEC. The reason that some members do not participate in events or programmes is not that they are indifferent to them, but the root of their apathetic attitude is their conflicting relationships with those who organize and execute those events (IB-56, IB-136, IB-152, IB-191). This particular phenomenon caused by a relationship conflict has raised several questions at GEC: "What is the role of Christian beliefs and values in broken relationships among church members?" (IB-137). "How do we apply the prayer of Jesus in John 17 for oneness and unity among His disciples and future believers?" (IB-138). "What is the difference between the church and other social organizations in terms of handling relationship conflicts, if we are only obsessed with our own innate human nature and psychological reaction when our emotions are challenged by others' misbehaviour?" (IB-139).

Relationship conflicts at GEC have two distinctive features. Firstly, it is the most dynamic among other conflict aspects in terms of easily evolving in various ways. Relationship conflicts easily escalated from feeling trivial emotional discomfort to becoming a vicious antagonist (IB-140). On the contrary, a destructive conflict may become a productive conflict when it is handled effectively so that the two competitors become collaborators (IB-153). Secondly, relationship conflicts are the most mutative in terms of changing their nature and intensity. Initially, relationship conflicts are easily identified when only two individuals are involved. However, when they spread intentionally or unintentionally, they become more complex because people may hear a distorted version of the true story (IB-141). As far as development of its scale is concerned, they move from the two individuals to the sub-groups that the conflict

parties belong to, and finally to the whole congregation (IB-141-1). In this respect, relationship conflicts have a ripple effect that people who have a close relationship with the conflict parties may join the conflict when required to add support (IB-141-2). They become more dangerous when associated with other intractable issues brought by those who join later (IB-145).

4.3.1.2.1.2 Normative Conflict

Moral deviance causes conflict between individuals. However, moral deviance also makes several positive contributions. One of them is that responding to deviance clarifies moral boundaries between right and wrong (Macionis, 2008: 223). It is more risky not to have a moral consensus by which concrete moral decisions and judgments are made and legitimized, than having a few moral deviants in society. I assert that normative conflict caused by colliding between mutually incompatible social realities is more dangerous than moral conflict caused by deviance. An indisputable deviant behaviour can be punished or corrected, but different perspectives on interpreting the deviance may deepen the normative conflict. I already addressed in the analysis that individuals at GEC have disputed over what is morally right or wrong in various ethical issues emerging in a contemporary Christian context. They have had sharp disagreements over those matters and people's opinions have been polarized.

As far as normative conflict is concerned at GEC, the biggest challenge is moral relativism and situational ethics. The common point between the two is to deny the existence of universal moral standards and obligations (Velleman, 2013: 1). Both of them emphasize the individuals' subjectivity in moral decisions and perceptions which are presumed to be limited to time, place and perspectives such as religious faith, cultural norms, and natural law. People learn how to centralize their moral decisions and

judgments on their values and beliefs fundamental to their own culture through enculturation (Kimmel, 2000: 456). These lessons provide the set of meanings through which they understand their moral practices and those of others, and to judge what is right or wrong and what is valuable or not (Pearce and Littlejohn, 1997: 51). Therefore, when their conviction on their moral decision or perception collides with an opposite opinion from a person, the immediate reaction is to criticize the person or force his set of values on the person (IB-102-1, IB-129-2, 130-1, IB-135-2, IB-147-2, IB-148-1 and IB-149-3). This moral collision occurred at GEC not only between individuals from different cultural backgrounds (IB-130-2, IB-135-3, IB-148-2 and IB-149-2) and denominational backgrounds (IB-147-3, IB-161, IB-201 and IB-129), but also between generations within the same cultural group (IB-05, IB-142 and IB-175). Even though they belonged to the same cultural group, individuals have different sub-cultures (IB-05-1), education and family backgrounds (IB-143 and IB-176), and social trends and interests (IB-182). This moral ambivalence causes people to feel the internal moral dilemma (IB-157 and IB-192) in terms of making morally correct decisions, as well as experiencing interpersonal moral conflict.

4.3.1.3 Contextual Dimension

When two individuals are in conflict, they are often unaware of the contextual factors and their individual characteristics (Ryan and Castro, 2004: 448) because they are likely to focus on analysing the explicit cause. Individuals are often not aware of that contextual factors in a social organization affect individuals' interactions and relationships. Macro-sociology such as structural functionalism and conflict theory suggest that macro-level determinants influence micro-level outcomes. Recent publications and research in diverse social matters such as migration (Agnew, 2009),

health (Shi and Singh, 2011; Andrews and Crooks, 2012), regional mortality difference (Kibele, 2013), public policy (Desai, 2012) and drug use behaviour (Nandi, 2009) prove that community and environmental factors directly and indirectly affect the life of social members. Interpersonal conflict is one of the social issues. Therefore, the role of contextual determinants in terms of conflict causes and processes should not be regarded as an insignificant element in interpersonal conflict in a local congregation. As a matter of fact, approximately one third of interpersonal conflicts at GEC are caused by contextual factors. The data prove that contextual factors are one of the underlying causes of interpersonal conflicts at GEC.

4.3.1.3.1 Conflict Aspects of Community and Environmental Dimension

4.3.1.3.1.1 Structural Conflict

I define structural conflict as a conflict between individuals caused by a variety of organizational factors such as decision-making, resource allocation, style of management and goal alignment. Organizational structure is the pattern of relationships among positions in the organization and among members of the organization (Falconer, 2004: 19). The purpose of the structure is the allocation of the task and role among members and the co-ordination of their activities so that they are directed towards achieving the same goals and objectives (Falconer, 2004: 19). In this respect, it cannot be stressed strongly enough how important leadership skills are in an organization. Data analysis informs that inadequate leadership skills at GEC cause disorganization in administration, confusion in disciplinary measures and poor management, and individuals' relationships and activities are affected.

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Characteristics of an organization, including its tradition and mores are another organizational factor that plays its role in terms of causing interpersonal conflict. There are several people in the leadership team at GEC, who do not like to schedule, plan or organize ministry programmes and services because of their Brethren church background (IB-144). They believe that there is no room for the Holy Spirit in a meticulously planned service (IB-144-1). They assert that planning programmes and activities in advance is man-centred ministry (IB-144-2). In their belief, God-centred ministry is to be led by the prompting of the Holy Spirit (IB-144-3). As these individuals have held in leadership positions for many years, the majority of the church members have adjusted to their style (IB-158). However, there are a number of people who feel frustration and despair because of the disorder (IB-22, IB-183 and IB-193), disorganization (IB-23, IB-35) and confusion (IB-73 and IB-162). Many projects are discussed over and over, but continually delayed or not done (IB-177, IB-189, IB-189-1 and IB-206).

4.3.1.3.1.2 Proxy Conflict

Micro-level political conflicts initiated by the merger has brought an endemic problem affecting almost all spheres of life of the congregation at GEC. Some data show that micro-level political conflicts emerge as a form of proxy conflict (IB-163, IB-178, IB-181, IB-202, IB-209). Ostensibly, conflicts between individuals, especially between ethnic minorities, are just like any other interpersonal conflicts caused by various other reasons. However, the reality is that some ethnic minorities as the third party wittingly or unwittingly fight on behalf of the two parties on an interpersonal conflict scale. The main reason of this phenomenon is the failure of integration between the ethnic minorities and the congregation as a whole (IB-210). When

multiculturalization began in 2004 at GEC, the political conflict between the two parties continued (IB-210-1). The two parties did not have any interest in how to be culturally prepared in order to create unity through integration with ethnic minorities (IB-210-2). They were more interested in welcoming them onto their sides and equipping them as their fighters to fight against the other party on behalf of themselves (IB-210-3). This particular phenomenon of proxy conflict creates a vicious spiral circle of conflict which began and was developed by political issues. Political issues cause interpersonal conflicts among individuals and those interpersonal conflicts reinforce the political conflict (IB-210-4).

4.3.2 Reciprocal Relationships among the Dimensions

4.3.2.1 Intersectionality

Intersectionality is a method to analyse and interpret how social and cultural categories are intertwined (Zastrow, 2014: 399) in a particular social phenomenon. The concept of intersectionality emerged in sociology to understand the complex causes and aspects in diverse social issues, especially in discrimination and exclusion in a society in which social members are biased by stereotypes (Kimberlé Crenshaw, 2014). I apply the concept and interpretation of intersectionality to conflict analysis and to explain how conflict factors in each dimension correlatively influence each other and how multiple facets of conflict are created and involved in escalating the intensity. From this point of view, I have identified two types of intersectionality in interpersonal behavioural conflicts at GEC: multi-factorial and multi-layered.

4.3.2.1.1 Multi-factorial Causation of Interpersonal Behavioural Conflict

Conflict research is likely to be a mono-factorial study to identify one dominating factor which is statistically the most significant cause of conflict. In this kind of research, the researcher identifies one factor at a time and tries to provide possible solutions or conflict management skills. However, conflict is often observed as a complex situation in which more than one dimension of the conflict is associated. The dimension of diversity in social phenomenon is understood as the intersectionality of multiple factors (Zastrow, 2014: 399). Human behaviour is not simply understood as a mathematical problem-solving process. Understanding human behaviour is often very complex and subtle, and occasionally very perplexing and frustrating (Vadackumchery and Kattakayam, 1995: 1) because there may be more than one motive in particular human behaviour. A conflict situation is more complex than a human being's behaviour. One of the reasons is that factors of interpersonal conflicts do not function independently in isolation from another factor, but interact and correlate to form a system of conflict. However, there is little difference between intersectionality in oppression and discrimination studies and intersectionality of interpersonal conflict phenomena at GEC. The former is understood that more than two factors are bound together and more or less evenly contribute to the social phenomenon at the same time, according to the theory and research undertaken under the concept (Zastrow, 2014: 399; Griffin, 2013: 127; Graham and Schiele, 2010: 237), while the latter is observed that there is one initial primary factor as a direct-action fuse and other subordinate factors interact with the main factor. However, those subordinate factors are powerful enough to change the direction and characteristic of the conflict.

Here is an example of intersectionality using multifactorial causation, in which there is the main factor and two other factors being interrelated with the main factor and interacting one another. The initial and main factor is a communication issue. One person broke the confidentiality of someone whose marriage was in a parlous state (IB-

164). There are in total six deacons at GEC. Once every two years, two deacons who have been involved in the diaconal roles for four years must resign and another two deacons are newly selected by votes. The one who broke the confidentiality knew that quite a few church members were in favour of that person, but not of him (IB-164-1). In order to reverse the situation and to be one-up on the person, he chose to break the confidentiality (IB-164-2). Up to this point, it seems that the conflict was just caused by communication issues, breaking confidentiality and one-upping committed by the message sender. However, there are two other factors. One is a character defect and the other is bad teamwork. As far as a character defect is concerned, he had become envious of the person's popularity (IB-184). He had been compared with the person by other church members in several ways (IB-190) and the person had maintained the lead (IB-190-1). This caused him to feel inferior and a sense of rivalry (IB-184-1). As far as the bad teamwork is concerned, he tried to hinder the person because the person belonged to the opposite congregation (IB-165). Since the merger, the two congregations had been competing to take the political initiative at GEC (P-1 and P-27). One of the ways to fulfil it was to have more people from their side in the leadership team (P-2, P-29 and P-30). Having more people from their side in the leadership team meant more votes in their favour in decision-making and they believed that in that way they could control the church (P-4). This particular phenomenon caused by the political relationship between the two congregations since the merger will be described in detail in chapter seven.

4.3.2.1.2 Multifaceted Interpersonal Behavioural Conflict

A change in perspective can completely reverse an interpretation (O'Shaughnessy, 2009: 71) because perspectives are the foundation and guidance systems for interpretation in social science (O'Shaughnessy, 2009: 26). It means that different perspectives bring out different interpretations on a fact and suggestions for solutions.
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The conflict described above regarding multifactorial causation can be analysed and interpreted as a mono-faceted conflict in each dimension. Eyewitnesses who presented themselves in the place where he broke the person's confidentiality thought that it was an interpersonal conflict caused by a communication issue (IB-164-3) in the interpersonal dimension. Other members who heard about the incident from eyewitnesses interpreted it in two different ways. Some thought that it was an interpersonal conflict caused by the person's enviousness in the intrapersonal dimension to take advantage of the situation to be selected as a deacon (IB-190-2). Others thought that it was a conflict which was an extension of the micro-level of political conflict in the contextual dimension (P-129). In this respect, the conflict was a multidimensional conflict. It is an example that one particular conflict can be multifaceted. Therefore, a holistic approach, which focuses on all aspects of conflict, is needed to analyse and interpret the conflict in the most comprehensive way. This is naturally related to suggesting solutions to the conflict. If a multidimensional and multifaceted conflict is misinterpreted as a simple conflict in a single dimension, the solution suggested for the conflict may be incomplete and superficial. An inappropriate approach to the conflict will not only leave it unresolved, but also escalate the conflict situation.

4.4 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have analysed the six factors to describe the nature and characteristics of interpersonal behavioural conflicts at GEC on the basis of different conflict causes and people's reactions to them because a thick description of a social phenomenon is not only to explain about an individual's behaviour, but also its social and cultural context. I have also interpreted diverse conflict phenomena in relation to their aspects in three dimensions and to reciprocal relationships among factors and dimensions. Interpersonal conflicts at GEC have different aspects according to its

dimension. Some conflicts are observed as complex and multi-layered because of multi-factorial causation and multi-dimensional facets in those conflicts.

The emerging ethnographic stories in this chapter suggest that interpersonal behavioural conflict at GEC are, on the whole, identifiable and tractable forms, even though there are few complex conflicts mingled with other conflict factors from other conflict domains, mainly from the domain of micro-level of political conflict. Generally, the intensities of conflicts in the domain of interpersonal behavioural conflict are low in terms of managing them from identifying causes to suggesting solutions. Relatively, interpersonal conflicts are healthy in terms of drawing constructive results out of them. On the personal level, people have begun to realize how each individual is different in perceiving, judging, making decisions and reacting in a moral situation due to their cultural, subcultural, and generational perspectives (IB-208). On the community level, both leaders and members have agreed that the church has to make a huge effort to create a common ground that connects people from diverse backgrounds and helps everybody feel comfortable with one another even when having different views on life (IB-208-1).

In this respect, interpersonal behavioural conflicts at GEC are I-W (Interpersonal and Within-frame) type on the basis of the four types of conflict established in chapter two. I-W type of conflict is the most common conflict in any kind of social organizations and the easiest conflict to handle in comparison with other types of conflict. I argue that conflict resolution is the most suitable strategy for I-W type of conflict. Conflict resolution is used as a problem-solving method and process for facilitating peace-making and eventually reconciliation between the conflicting parties to terminate retribution and to restore their relationship (Bretherton and Balvin, 2012: 310).

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Chapter Five

Data Analysis and Interpretation
in the Domain of Cultural Conflict

5.1 Introduction

A society is composed of people who are interacting on the basis of shared beliefs, customs, values and activities (Dash, 2004: 43). Therefore, there is a certain degree of uniformity in the society whose culture consists of the common patterns by which individuals' interactions are governed. In a monocultural society, homogeneity underpinned by the shared cultural norms, values and beliefs binds the social members together. On the contrary, in a multicultural setting, beliefs, values, and behaviour of individuals are often understood only in the context of people's cultural identities (Schein, 1999: 14). Thus, it is likely in a multicultural context to observe cultural dissonance that causes individuals to feel a sense of discord, confusion or conflict. The phenomenon of cultural dissonance implies that there is a problem caused by cultural heterogeneity among diverse cultures in the society.

In this chapter, I articulate the nature and intensity of interpersonal conflicts caused by heterogeneous beliefs and behaviour of individuals whose cultural backgrounds vary. I have identified ten factors through the conceptual process in the constant comparative analysis. In the analysis, each factor will be explained as to how its variables function as causes of cultural conflicts and how individuals behave in those conflict situations. In particular, I explain why individuals' cultural behaviour varies and how behaviour becomes a source of interpersonal conflicts at GEC. In the interpretation, I categorize the ten factors in the two groups according to their

characteristics and explain the interrelationships of factors. In particular, I describe how each factor plays its role in each group and how the diverse phenomena of cultural conflict occur through the constant interactions of those factors.

5.2 Analysing Factors in the Domain of Cultural Conflict

5.2.1 Exclusiveness

A person who is culturally exclusive assumes that what he or she does is right for everyone (Mayers, 1987: 245). It means that cultural conflicts caused by cultural exclusiveness occur when individuals do not understand cultural difference and diversity of others from different cultural backgrounds.

5.2.1.1 Unfamiliarity

The most common cause of exclusiveness is unfamiliarity that can be equated with heterogeneity. The culture to which people belong tells them subtly why they do things and what they do, rendering them unfamiliar with the lives and behaviour of cultural outsiders (LeBaron and Pillay, 2006: 93). For instance, white British members at GEC began to suffer from different styles of worship, prayer or preaching. African preachers shout and move around on the stage from the beginning to the end (C-3). Koreans pray loudly in prayer meetings. However, British Christians quietly pray one after the other. Both ethnic minorities and white British could not settle on the other's styles of prayer meeting (C-5).

Culture is everything pertaining to human life. Food is a vital element of one's culture. It is closely attached to the everyday life of people in a cultural group. When

some white British see unfamiliar ingredients or colours of food cooked by people from different cultural backgrounds, they express their opinions about what they think of those foods regardless of the tastes and historical backgrounds of those foods. On a very special occasion, when a Filipino woman dedicated her two children, she prepared a meal with her own traditional food. She made a great effort to feed all members. However, some elderly white British complained about the dedication meal: "I lost my appetite when I saw it. It was absolutely rubbish" (C-9). Sometimes, some ethnic minorities wear their traditional costumes on Sundays for special occasions or festivals according to their own cultural traditions. On one occasion, a British woman made an insulting remark on the Korean traditional costume saying, "Your traditional costume is like pyjamas" (C-40).

5.2.1.2 Ethnocentrism

Sometimes, the white British did not consider how ethnic minorities might feel when they spoke to ethnic minorities about some social issues such as asylum seekers. In a Bible study meeting, a British person stated, "Asylum seekers have ruined Britain" (C-42) and a man who was an asylum seeker was hurt. From that time on, he did not consider himself as a member of GEC and shortly after he left (C-42). His interpretation on that incident was that white British members at GEC were still obsessed by cultural superiority and political imperialism, so that the love of God was not practiced for social and cultural aliens (C-42-1). He stated, "One is not superior to the other because of his skin colour, economic status or social background." (C-42-2). On another occasion, a British Bible study leader stated, "The Africans' worldview is animism" (C-57). After the Bible study, some Africans expressed their concerns over Western-centrism of white British Christians (C-57-1). One of the Africans stated, "people who

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have animism for their worldview are everywhere in the world, even among Europeans" (C-57-2).

Another example of conflict caused by Western-centrism was that missionaries from Korean, America and Brazil in the Chad Valley Cluster (hereafter, CVC) were not welcomed and accepted at GEC. CVC was a non-denominational movement of churches in the area launched in 2003 to bring local churches and international Christians together for mission in local as well as the global sphere. One of the plans was to establish KMC to equip young people from Korea, Brazil and other European countries with English and missiology. It was expected that churches in the area would also benefit from new spiritual input by young Christians from those countries. One missionary family came along with the young Christians from each country to look after them. A Korean missionary family was allocated to GEC. Initially, some British refused to accept the Korean missionary family: "I do not think that we need missionaries from other countries" (C-74).

5.2.1.3 Discrimination

Discrimination is a distinctive phenomenon caused by individuals' exclusive beliefs and behaviour. Some white British people did not invite some people from other cultural backgrounds to their special events such as weddings or birthday parties, and vice versa (C-48). A youth pastor from America felt that he was discriminated when some British people constantly pointed out his American accent, his style of preaching, and his casual attire on Sundays (C-4). One particular example of discrimination caused by cultural exclusiveness is that ministry opportunities were not equally given to the ethnic minorities, even though they had ministry experiences in their former churches

before they came to the UK, and their talents and skills were acknowledged by many other members (C-75).

5.2.2 Ignorance

5.2.2.1 Cultural Bias

Biased viewpoints on matters or phenomena have caused conflicts at GEC. An elder kept criticizing users of SNS (social network systems): "Facebook and Twitter are basically evil and used as tools of the devil" (C-14). He also criticized that people who held postgraduate degrees in theology had destroyed the church and deceived Christians with false theology (C-19). When Tea Kwon Do mission team from Korea visited GEC, some people criticized that it was rooted in a traditional superstition of Korea so that allowing the team for a demonstration was to allow the devil's feet into GEC (C-23). Different from the biased viewpoint, Tae Kwon Do is one of the greatest means of Christian mission in many countries where missionaries are officially prohibited by the authorities or laws.

5.2.2.2 Cultural Assumptions

Some people assume that their cultural beliefs and behaviour are acceptable anywhere and anytime. They easily come to a conclusion that they are right and others are wrong. An asylum seeker from Uganda appealed that he had been chased by a secret agent from Uganda. He used to be a high-ranked police officer and embroiled in political strife in Uganda. He barely managed to escape from the country while others who were in the same situations were murdered. Having heard his emotional

explanation, the elders and a few others assumed he had self-delusion that he would be martyred for his faith (C-10): "He has a martyr complex as it is found in some other African immigrants who might suffer psychiatric disorders" (C-10-1). Without knowing a person truly, people assumed his personality and character on the basis of his cultural background and particular behaviour, and spread it to the rest of the congregation so that he suffers from the assumption (C-15). A woman preacher from Korea was not welcomed by the majority of the congregation after her first preaching. She wore a colourful traditional long dress with a colourful hat. Afterwards, people expressed their prejudice about her outward appearance saying, "She was like a Korean female shaman" (C-18). These types of conflict were caused by peoples' narrow-minded viewpoints and self-centred interpretation on others' cultures and their cultural behaviour.

5.2.2.3 Generalization

Cultural stereotyping that supposes everyone from the same cultural background must have the same cultural behaviour is dangerous because it denies the diversity or complexity of individuals' cultural behaviour. In particular, people from Far East Asian countries such as China, Japan, and Korea have a common standard of judgment on one's cultural or social behaviour like these: "a man is known by the company he keeps" or "Birds of a feather flock together". One's individual behaviour is judged as a commonly approved behaviour of everybody from the same cultural group. At GEC, some people think that one person represents people from the same cultural background (C-16 and C-11). If a person makes a serious mistake, then others from the same cultural background are regarded as the same (C-16). For instance, if a Filipino woman does not keep a promise or is late to a meeting, it is generalized by people that all other Filipinos are irresponsible or lazy the same as her (C-13). An elder has a viewpoint that

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people who are more educated are less spiritual (C-19). A Chinese couple left GEC after a dispute with a white British woman and the couple made a statement that British members at GEC did not like the Chinese (C-21). Generalization causes false criticism. During the men's prayer breakfast, it is always Western men who share confidential issues in their lives. Whereas, it is culturally unusual for Koreans or Chinese to share their personal lives with others. Eventually, only the Western men's lives are exposed through their honest sharing and they criticize the Eastern believers: "They do not want an intimate fellowship with us because they do not trust us" (C-38).

5.2.3 Individualism

Individualism emphasizes the personal interests and goals of individuals. Individualism has become one of the typical phenomena in Western European societies (Harskamp and Musschenga, 2001: 30) and it is supposed that Christian contexts are no exception. Hence, the need of Christian communitarianism draws strength from the increasing dissociation of church and civil society in the Western world (Fergusson, 1998: 1). Contemporary Western Christianity is losing the spirit of community and strong solidarity demonstrated by the early believers in the Book of Acts. On the contrary, self-centredness, selfishness, and apathy are observed in the life of local congregations.

5.2.3.1 Selfishness

Selfishness is regarded as a bad desire, in a traditional society where no one could live a moral and satisfying life apart from the community, to enjoy the benefits of the

community without fulfilling one's reciprocal obligations to it (Kohl, 1989: 11). The younger generation in their twenties and thirties at GEC are not willing to serve, but to be served (C-32). For example, when the congregation has a meal together once a month, it is rare to see younger people involved in serving others (C-32-1). The older generation in their sixties and even seventies get involved in various things to make it successful: cooking, setting tables and chairs, washing dishes, and cleaning the hall afterwards (C-32-2). Another type of selfishness is that some people bring their second-hand items used in their houses to church when they buy brand new items (C-27). Observing this particular phenomenon, some people criticize those who bring second-hand items: "They are making the church a recycling centre" (C-27-1); "God is angry with their unfaithful attitude, bringing used ones, as God was actually annoyed with those who brought disqualified animals for sacrifice in the Book of Malachi" (C-27-2).

5.2.3.2 Apathy

As GEC has grown in numbers and become multicultural, people's relationships have become less intimate and some members become indifferent to getting to know each other (C-25). In particular, this phenomenon is seen in some white British members who do not want to be associated with the ethnic minorities (C-25). Some of them do not memorize names of ethnic minorities, but mention a distinctive feature of the person or his country of origin or both of them in combination such as 'the bald–headed man from the Philippines' (C-25-1). The superficial excuse is that the names of some ethnic minorities are too difficult to remember, but the reason is that they do not like GEC to be multicultural (C-25-2). Members of GEC are encouraged to get involved in at least one ministry. However, there are some members who do not want to get involved in any type of ministries, even though there is an appeal for workers for

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different types of ministries during the church notice time almost every Sunday (C-26 and C-30). When different events are planned, only a few people are involved. People who are already involved in many things are normally involved in newly planned events. Sometimes, there is no volunteer for a specific event (C-26). Those who always work are burdened and they express their frustration: "The greatest enemy to contemporary Christianity is apathy which leads churches to a slow death, as its result is fatal" (C-78).

5.2.3.3 Controversial Choices

When individuals make their choices, there are several important things to consider: self-autonomy, the well-being of social members, social norms and order. A good choice implies that the choice is in a reasonable balance in terms of satisfying all those principles. On the contrary, a controversial choice means an individual's choice is interpreted as irrational disregarding the benefits of others and social security, and insisting on the person's autonomous right to choose whatever seems to be good. In this regard, a controversial choice is a typical variable under the factor of individualism. A controversial choice triggered an interpersonal conflict and caused a division among the members at GEC. For instance, a lady who committed adultery attended her son's baptismal service (C-31). Both she and her husband were active members at GEC before her adultery. She left her husband and lived with another man. People's opinions on this particular matter were sharply divided. On the one hand, some said, "It was entirely her personal decision as an autonomous being to join her son's baptism service, regardless of her sinful behaviour in the past" (C-31-1). On the other hand, others said, "Her controversial decision to attend the baptism service without true evidence of repentance threatens the spiritual well-being of others and biblical principles of the Christian family" (C-31-2).

5.2.4 Judgment

5.2.4.1 Presumptions

It is dangerous to draw a conclusion of a particular matter on the basis of a presumptive judgment. It is more dangerous that the inaccurate judgment is spread without a verification procedure to find evidence because those who are involved in the matter suffer from its consequence. A lady from a country in Africa is married to a Scottish man. Both of them had strong Christian family backgrounds. However, they could not overcome the cultural difference between them. Eventually, they separated after three years of marriage. People began to analyse the main reason of their separation. Some presumed that the African young lady approached and married the Scottish man only to achieve citizenship of the United Kingdom (C-17). This presumption is underpinned by the fact that the separation took place several months after she became naturalized in the United Kingdom (C-17-1). However, it was not true that she approached the Scottish man and used him for gaining British citizenship. When she heard this rumour, she could not stay at GEC.

5.2.4.2 Different Viewpoints

Judgment on a specific issue in Christian life differs because people have different viewpoints. Some believe that drinking alcohol or smoking is a sin (C-71). Some believe that Christians must abstain from singing any secular pop songs (C-70). One of the serious disputes at GEC is about a believer's sexual life. One particular issue is about premarital sex and cohabiting with partners without an official marriage ceremony (C-76). There are two young women in their twenties not only attending

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services, but also getting involved in the choir and the worship team. One person is from a South Asian country and the other is British. Both of them are seriously criticized by some of the church members that they are sexually immoral as Christians: "They must be completely prohibited from any ministries that they have been involved with" (C-76-1). On the contrary, some young people argue against their criticism: "A wedding ceremony is no more than a public declaration of a couple's marriage" (C-76-2). What they assert is that it is possible for a couple to be in a marriage relationship without having a proper wedding ceremony (C-76-3).

Another issue is about divorce and remarriage (C-77). An old man divorced his wife because she did not want him to get involved in any Christian ministries, although his desire was to serve patients and their families in the hospital as a voluntary chaplain. Many members at GEC believed that he could not get married to another woman until his former wife died, according to the biblical principle on divorce and remarriage (C-77-1). On the contrary, his argument was that he had truly repented about his mistake in his previous marriage and he was forgiven by God (C-77-2). On the wedding day, he prayed during the ceremony that he had sinned against God in his first marriage and asked God for a blessing upon his second marriage (C-77-3). Most church members did not attend the wedding service. A few people who attended the wedding due to their personal relationship with him still doubted God's blessing upon his remarriage: "Even though his sin is forgiven, he has to live with its consequence" (C-77-4).

5.2.4.3 False Accusations

False accusation is a phenomenon as a result of people's wrong judgments (C-34). Some people who regularly attended the prayer meeting accused the youth leaders that

they were not eligible to lead the youth group (C-36): "They are ungodly leaders and the youth club is spiritually dead" (C-36-1). The main reason was that none of the youth leaders attended Friday night prayer meeting for several months (C-36-2). In particular, one lady accused the youth leaders saying, "They are leading all the youth to hell" (C-36-3). A man from Angola accused an elder that he was not a spiritual man (C-66). The elder was frequently absent from Sunday morning service. He often arrived at church after worship began. It never happens that an elder is absent from services or is late to services all year long in the context of the man. In his former church in Angola, elders came earlier than other members and prepared services in prayer every Sunday morning. The African man judges the elder on the basis of experiences that he had in his own cultural context (C-66-1). In his mind, a spiritual man should come to church earlier and attend every Sunday service all year round (C-66-2). The elder refutes that cultural norms in a particular cultural setting may not be regarded as universal standards everywhere (C-66-3). Another example is that some elderly members accused some young adults of not being born again (C-67). On Valentine's Day, young adults did not come to the regular Bible study meeting, but organized a party and drank wine and beer. The elderly members urged the elders to discipline those young adults (C-35). Those young adults refuted that attending a Bible study could not be evidence of being born again either (C-67-1).

5.2.5 Integrity

Integrity includes one's wholeness, personal cost, moral soundness, making careful decisions, and telling people what one is doing (Roberts, Rice and Smith, 2004: 2). However, the concept of integrity can be outlined in three major points: a judgment of integrity is a judgment about character; integrity concerns actions which flow from

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choices; finally, integrity concerns choices which are informed by the person's values or ends (Montefiore and Vines, 1999: 22-23). Some conflicts at GEC are caused by a lack of integrity, such as irresponsibility, unfaithfulness, and careless judgment affected by their characters or temperaments.

5.2.5.1 Irresponsibility

A youth leader as well as a member of the trustees is habitually late for meetings whenever football matches are on the television (C-28). On a particular occasion, he was late again for a trustees' meeting in which a significant decision was to be made, because he was watching a cup-final match (C-28-1). Other trustee members were really upset because the meeting had been already postponed once by him for the same reason (C-28-2). Evasion is another item related to irresponsibility (C-29). A white British man and a young Korean lady got married at GEC and became an international couple. The Korean lady had been betrothed to a Korean Christian man before she came to join GEC. Her fiancé had been faithful to maintain his relationship with her. However, she began to have another relationship with the British man three months before she would permanently go back to Korea. Her behaviour was interpreted by all Korean members, including the Korean elder, that she did not love the British man but used him to be granted a fiancé visa to remain in the UK. However, two British elders strongly supported their relationship because of their long-term relationship with the British man. Her fiancé in Korea was disappointed with the fact that the elders of GEC supported her new relationship with the British man so that he eventually left his Christian faith. Having heard this news, the elders said, "It is totally his problem that his faith is not strong enough to overcome the situation" (C-29-1). Several months after the wedding, the couple's relationship began to go wrong because she realized that the reality of her

marriage life was not same as she had dreamed (C-29-2). She actually confessed that she did not love the British man (C-29-3). She just wanted to hold onto anything which could give her a chance to stay in the UK (C-29-4). Knowing their struggles, the elders said, "It was purely their decision so that they need to take responsibility for their marriage" (C-29-5). The Korean elder interpreted the two elders' attitude as an evasion of responsibility for their decisions in relation to supporting their relationship and marriage (C-29-6).

5.2.5.2 Carelessness

Careless judgment is another variable involved in interpersonal conflicts under the problem of integrity (C-12). A young single professional lady from India joined GEC. One Sunday she was upset because someone asked her if she was the wife of a man. The man was married, but separated from his wife. He was kind to her giving her a lift and sitting by her during services so that some misunderstood that they were an actual couple. In Western culture, this is a kind of common cultural mistake in a process of acquainting with others when exchanging information between new and existing members. However, according to what the Indian lady said, it is offensive in her culture that someone regards and treats a young single lady as a married woman. Breaking confidentiality is another variable (C-37). From time to time, people share their personal stories and confidential issues with others. However, those who listen to confidential stories take the matter lightly and spread them to others. Breaking confidentiality is one of the worst examples of flawed integrity of someone. It causes distrust and conflict among members.

5.2.5.3 Manipulation

Manipulative behaviour is to deceive someone in order to eventually control the person (C-54). There is a man who always welcomes the newcomers to GEC and he pretends that he is spiritually mature and socially experienced (C-54-1). When he builds up a good relationship with those who newly join GEC, he offers spiritual and practical help to them. In particular, those from other countries, whose English is not good enough to communicate with others and who do not understand British social systems, trust in him and follow his opinions in decision-making situations. Their trust in him clouds their judgment so that they cannot see the hidden agenda or motive in his manipulative behaviour. Later, they found that they have been used and controlled by him for his own political purpose at GEC (C-54-2). He has intended to indirectly influence the new believers' judgment and behaviour in order to get their support to win the intergroup political conflict at GEC (C-54-3). This particular phenomenon will be described in the analysis of the micro-level of political conflict in chapter seven.

5.2.6 Perspectives

Individuals in a multicultural community have differing criteria or standards to view social and cultural phenomena. Individuals were enculturated in their own cultural seedbeds where those criteria and standards were formed. They carry ingrained cultural values and norms wherever they go and use them to view and interpret social and cultural phenomena. When they contact cultures of others and experience cultural clashes in a multicultural community, it provides them with opportunities to modify what they believe and how they behave. This process is called acculturation. Under the term, there are four types: assimilation, integration, rejection and deculturation (Berry,

1980: 9-26). Assimilation is a process in which ethnic minorities relinquish their cultural identity and move into the culture of the majority. In this respect, assimilation has similarity with deculturation. Deculturation means that a cultural group or individuals in it experience the loss or abandonment of cultural identity and characteristics. Thus, in the process of assimilation or deculturation, a cultural clash or conflict are less experienced. Rejection means a cultural group or individuals in it withdraw themselves from the dominating culture. It is a kind of segregation in order to keep their cultural identity and characteristics. Rejection may cause distrust between cultural groups. However, cultural clash or conflict may not often take place because there is less cultural contact. Integration is defined as the process where the group or individuals in it retain their cultural identity and at the same time move to join the dominant cultural community (Bhugra, 2001: 114). Integration is perhaps the most appropriate type of acculturation. However, it often causes cultural conflicts between individuals or groups when individuals who have distinctive cultural values endlessly interact.

5.2.6.1 Retaining Cultural Values and Norms

Although the difference is not wrong in a culturally diverse community, people often cannot bear different norms, beliefs and behaviour of others. There are normally five stages of coping with cultural differences: denial, defence, minimization, acceptance, and adaptation and integration (Peace Corps (U.S.), 1999: 77-78). At the denial stage there is no acceptance of cultural difference. At this stage, people have a belief that others are wrong and they are right. At the defence stage people have no desire to have cultural interactions with others who have different cultures because difference is seen as inferior or they have hostility towards difference. At the

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minimization stage, people have an interest in difference, but not deeply. At the acceptance stage, people accept and tolerate difference. Finally, on the adaptation and integration stage, people embrace difference and take on the beliefs and behaviour of other cultures. Most of the cultural conflicts at GEC have occurred on the denial and defence stages that people retain their own cultural values and norms.

Therefore, people treat others in the same way that they used to do in their native cultural community (C-64). People cannot understand the motives and meanings of rituals or ceremonies of others. For example, tributes at the funeral service of a believer are meaningful narratives that family members or friends of the deceased tell about their personal relationships and happy memories with the deceased. Sometimes, people make jokes about some particular habits or behaviour of the deceased and laugh together. It causes uncomfortable feelings for those whose cultures do not allow anyone to laugh or make a joke of the deceased in the funeral service (C-65).

5.2.6.2 Cultural Stereotypes

Judgment or actions facilitated by cultural stereotypes are not neutral because a culture bases its actions upon beliefs and values which characterize the cultural mindset (Nachbar and Lausé, 1992: 241). Most Korean Christians think that they must attend every Sunday service whatever happens in their lives. It is evidence of their true piety along with offering tithes. A Korean boy had chicken pox so that he and his family were told in advance not to attend two Sunday services by elders (C-69). The family was shocked and could not grasp what the elders said to them (C-69-1). They felt that they were alienated from the church (C-69-2). In their cultural stereotypes, patients should be encouraged to come to church with their illness or sickness, including contagious

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diseases because it might be an opportunity that God would heal the disease during the service (C-69-3). Another example regarding the cultural stereotype is that in Korean hierarchical Christian culture, lay people are not allowed to pray for ordained ministers imposing hands on their heads. A Korean ordained minister who attended a prayer meeting thought that he was spiritually contaminated when a lay woman came forward to him and imposed her hand on his head to pray for him (C-68).

5.2.6.3 Socio-cultural Traditions

Socio-cultural traditions provide a lens to perceive how social members interact within the boundary of constructed and standardized social meanings and cultural understandings to underpin the values that the society pursues. The roles and responsibility of a husband and wife may differ in different socio-cultural traditions. Some ethnic minorities at GEC come from a male dominated masculine society. On the other hand, some members come from more matriarchal societies where women have power in decision-making. Original indigenous British members have a cultural background of an egalitarian society where men and women are treated equally. The Bible teaches that men should love their wives as Christ has loved the church (Ephesians 5:25) and women should submit themselves to their husbands (Ephesians 5:22). According to their socio-cultural traditions, people interpret these verses in different ways (C-73). For example, people from a more matriarchal cultural background assert that the sacrificial love of husbands should be prior to submission of their wives as Christ died first to demonstrate His love for the church (C-73-1).

People's opinions on using secular dance and music in the church for various events vary according to their socio-cultural traditions (C-20). A youth dance group at

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GEC performs on a regular basis during Sunday services using secular pop music and wearing tights. People's opinions are sharply divided on their performance. On the one hand, some members, who are from a background in which the core Christian messages have been contextualized into the culture and traditions of the indigenous people, support the youth dance group. These members assert, "The church must create a user-friendly environment which attracts non-believers" (C-20). Some of them come from Christian contexts where churches used existing traditional music tunes after changing their lyrics and secular dances for their worship service, which provided a platform for non-believers to enjoy the service (C-20-1). On the other hand, others argue that the church service should be offered to God in truth and in the Spirit (C-72). These members assert, "There should be no secular elements in the service at all" (C-72-1).

5.2.7 Preference

5.2.7.1 In-group Favouritism

From my observation, people in a multicultural setting are psychologically inclined to identify them as a member of a certain cultural group according to cultural familiarity (C-79). This psychological membership provides a cultural sense of kinship which develops in-group favouritism (C-79-1). This categorization between in-group and out-group develops prejudice on others and reinforces their cultural preference (C-79-2). A worship leader from the Philippines was well accepted by Africans and Far East Asians, but the majority of white people could not adapt to his style of worship (C-7). One group's evaluation on his style sharply contrasted with the one of the other group (C-6). Africans and Koreans suggested a variety in the style of prayer meetings (C-8). Some Africans and Koreans pray loudly in a voice at the same time. These people prefer to pray simultaneously from the beginning to the end. However, British

members prefer to pray one by one. While a person prays, the rest of people listen to what the person prays and respond to it. Africans and Koreans feel bored and frustrated in the prayer meeting (C-8-1). On the contrary, British members complain that they cannot concentrate on prayer when Africans and Koreans pray loudly (C-8-2). This kind of strong acceptance and rejection toward a style of prayer meeting and worship stems from in-group favouritism which is the most common variable of preference in the data set.

Unequal treatment is a distinctive item of in-group favouritism at GEC. At a Sunday morning service, two newborn babies were dedicated. One was a white boy and the other was a black girl. A Christian poet composed a poem only for the white boy and recited it during the dedication service (C-2). The black parents were disappointed: "We feel that we are unfairly treated" (C-2-1). Other Africans interpreted the incident as follows: "Not only the black girl's family, but also all the black members were discriminated against by the poet's unequal treatment" (C-2-2).

5.2.7.2 Prioritization

In everyday life, people make decisions and choices. Priority is concerned with their decisions or choices. The word priority comes from a Latin word prior that means first. It means that one's priority is what takes first place in his decisions or choices. One of the continuing disputes at GEC is about prioritizing between family affairs and church ministries (C-33). In the Western people's mind it is inseparable. It is a matter of being flexible in different situations. However, Asians, especially Koreans prioritize church ministries even though their culture is family oriented (C-80). Some Koreans do not understand that British Christians do not attend Sunday morning and evening

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services while they have visitors or when they have a family member's birthday party on a Sunday (C-80-1). It is culturally natural for Western people to spend time together with their family members without attending the service on Sunday (C-80-2). However, some Africans and Koreans criticized them for not having faith in God (C-80-3): "The failure in prioritization in believers' lives has caused Christianity to decline in the UK" (C-80-4).

5.2.8 Relationships

It is hard for a multicultural church to build up healthy relationships among members. Individuals have an inclination that they want to interact with culturally cohesive people. From my observation, it is likely that the limited relationship with culturally homogeneous people results in a collective distorted and a myopic understanding of culturally heterogeneous people (C-81). One common case of culturally biased recognition at GEC is that one's judgment on someone's moral behaviour is dependent on the degree of cultural intimacy (C-81-1). As a result, a person is condemned in a situation where he should be consoled and vice versa (C-22).

According to my data analysis, five distinctive patterns of people's behaviour have been identified regarding relationships: distortion, disturbance, discouragement, distrust and discrimination. These five variables are interrelated in terms of intensity or stages of development. Firstly, facts are distorted. When a matter arises between two individuals, people are inclined to skew the fact in order to support the one with whom they have a closer relationship (C-49). Secondly, the opponent is disturbed when the situation has shifted toward an unexpected direction by the distortion (C-39). Thirdly, the opponent is discouraged by knowing that the situation is out of his or her control (C-

43). At this stage, the opponent feels that he or she has been victimized regardless of the original incident. Fourthly, both parties do not trust each other any longer (C-1). Even though the two parties had a good relationship in the past, they no longer trust in what the other party says or does now. Finally, this distrust may be developed into acts of violence or discrimination as a passive act of violence, which may not be immediately provoked, but nurtured through unresolved emotional wounds such as anger or resentment (C-24).

5.2.9 Manners

The meaning of manners is well defined by Hobbes (as cited in Götz, 2000: X) as follows:

> They (manners) are the behaviours by which we express the respect we owe others because they are members of the human community as well as of our community or neighbourhood; and they embody those qualities of mankind that concern their living together in peace and unity.

Manners are distinguished into two kinds: universal and domestic manners. Universal manners, which could be called common manners, are those which arise from the original frame and constitution of human nature, and which consequently are the same in all nations and periods (Swedenberg Jr, 1944: 328). On the other hand, domestic manners are people's behaviour influenced by domestic cultures and bound by particular periods and areas. These domestic manners are also called particular manners which are different ways of executing universal manners in different cultures. For instance, when people meet, they greet each other. This is a universal manner. However, the ways of greeting differ in each culture. These domestic manners of people from different cultural backgrounds clash and cause conflict at GEC.

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5.2.9.1 Discrepancy of Cultural Concepts among Domestic Manners

5.2.9.1.1 Impoliteness

People expect others from different cultural backgrounds to behave in the same way that they do. When this expectation is denied, people feel uncomfortable by impolite behaviour which are normal in a culture, but are impolite in another culture. Children are not allowed to call adults' first names in Korea. When an elderly minister from Korea was called by a youth by his first name, he felt it was not only impolite, but also offensive behaviour (C-76). It happens because the concept of respecting others and the degree of measuring respect differ in different culture. People bow their heads toward elderly people in Korean culture, but they shake hands or hug each other in British culture. When people greet each other, they have the proper distance to avoid any physical contact in Korean culture, while physical contact is necessary for hugging and patting shoulders in British culture. In British culture, a visitor is expected to make an appointment in advance. Hence, it is an act of impoliteness, if someone visits without notice (C-46). They may feel that their private space is invaded (C-46-1). In an extreme case, a British man did not open his front door when a Malaysian man visited him without notice (C-47). In this particular incident, both of them were offended by the impolite behaviour of the other party in their cultural concepts of manners (C-47-1).

5.2.9.1.2 Seniority

In some countries in Asia and Africa, the social and cultural system is hierarchical. In a hierarchical culture, age is quite important to estimate one's position among others in a social or cultural group because roles and responsibilities in the group normally come from their position. On the other hand, most Western countries have an egalitarian

social and cultural system. In an egalitarian society, no one is higher or lower according to one's age. Everyone seems to be treated equally and opportunities are given equally regardless of gender, age, and background. This difference brings a cultural clash and conflict at GEC. After the morning service on a Sunday, two ladies argued seriously in front of many people in the small hall (C-41). One was a British lady in her late twenties and the other was a middle-aged lady from a Caribbean country. This old lady thought that the young British lady had excluded some musically talented ethnic minorities from the worship team (C-41-1). During the argument, the older lady from a culture where seniority is important could not bear the young lady's impoliteness (C-41-2). She commanded the young British lady to obey what she said: "Do you know I am much older than you? You need to accept what I suggested to you just before" (C-41-3). However, the young British lady refused it: "You have to understand the culture of the society where you are living now. Age is not an important element to earn respect from others in this country" (C-41-4). Those who come from cultural backgrounds where seniority is important tend to advise younger people on diverse issues such as fashion style in a church service (C-82), marital life (C-94), and relationships (C-44). They are convinced in their cultural mindset that they help younger people with their experiences (C-99). On the contrary, younger people feel that they are interfered with by them (C-99-1). A young person honestly expressed his negative viewpoint on seniority-based culture: "It is a form of cultural abuse that some old people force someone younger to follow their cultural norms and practices" (C-97).

5.2.9.1.3 Authority

In some Oriental countries such as China, Japan, Korea and Vietnam, heavily influenced by Confucianism, all power and authority are presumed to fall into a proper hierarchy, in which superiors and subordinates are clearly defined (Pye, 1985: 56). In
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these cultures, the higher the authority is in a hierarchical order, the stronger the power is. If someone despises the authority of his boss, it might be regarded as rebellion. On the contrary, the authority has been minimized in Western societies. People are more recognized and respected by their functions and achievements, rather than by their personalities, ages, and manners. For example, the word 'pastor' is interpreted in different ways between these two concepts on authority (C-51). For those who are from hierarchical cultural systems, a pastor is regarded and respected as a highly spiritual and authoritative person who is commissioned by God to the community (C-51-1). On the other hand, for those who have Western evangelical cultural backgrounds, a pastor is an ordinary person who plays a role like others in a local church (C-51-2). Thus, a pastor from a hierarchical cultural system cannot be tolerant when their authority is denied by those whose underlying culture is based on Christian egalitarianism (C-51-3). A few members from Western cultural backgrounds find it difficult or even unbearable when someone from a hierarchical cultural background tries to be authoritative over them (C-51-4). During a Sunday morning service, a British lady interrupted a Korean pastor while he was preaching because she disagreed with a particular point (C-53). The Korean pastor felt that his authority was denied and he was no longer able to stand and preach at GEC (C-53-1): "I felt that I lost my face publicly through this incident" (C-53-2). Losing face in his culture means not only being humiliated by someone, but also becoming inadequate and incompetent in terms of executing his work (C-53-3).

5.2.10 Superiority

5.2.10.1 Cultural Supremacy

Some British people at GEC think that they are superior to others from other racial and cultural backgrounds (C-45). Cultural supremacy of the dominant majority

over less powerful ethnic minorities is a cause of cultural conflicts at GEC (C-52). Elmer (1993: 115) asserts that the one who moves into a local cross-cultural setting has to understand its culture which must be the basis of strategies in terms of dealing with conflicts so that it is a matter whether the person coming into the local cross-cultural setting accepts and adjusts to it or not, rather than the local cross-cultural setting has to accept and adjust to the person's own cultural values. However, I argue that Elmer emphasizes only accepting the dominant cultural values and beliefs in the local multicultural setting, rather than discovering each cultural group's unique explanation of their behaviour and meaning to deal with conflicts effectively (Pedersen, 2006: 650). I agree with Thompson et al. (in Deutsch, et al., 2006: 651):

> The premise of multiculturalism is that we can each belong to many different cultures at the same time, making it possible for a culturally different provider and consumer to find common ground in resolving conflict among those cultural perspectives they share.

Some ethnic minorities argue against those who have cultural supremacy that it is true that there are good and evil elements in every culture, but one culture is neither superior nor inferior to other cultures (C-87).

5.2.10.2 Arrogance

Some people have 'I-am-not-like-him' or 'I-am-better-than-him' attitude (C-113). This kind of arrogance comes from one's personal professional qualifications (C-56), racial or cultural backgrounds (C-63), or social-economic strata (C-61). This personal arrogance is also observed among long-term Christians who have 'I-know-all-things' attitude (C-62). There is another attitude of arrogance, which is 'I-am-always-right' (C-55). It is one of the distinctive phenomena that those who think that they are superior try to control others by imposing their life style or experiences (C-58). They believe that

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they improve life, but in many cases it causes trouble or conflict rather than being of genuine help (C-59).

Sometimes, people's arrogance is expressed in the form of stubbornness. Stubbornness observed in the behaviour of some old members of GEC is a passive type of superiority (C-115). These members are proud of GEC's spiritual legacy and traditions of a splendid past as the Medical Mission and successful ministry as a local evangelical church (C-50). These people have a tendency to resist any form of change because they adhere to their own evaluation of their ministry. These stubborn people do not allow ethnic minorities to get involved in ministries that they have been involved in for a long period (C-77). These members do not accept any practical advice from ethnic minorities, even though they have expertise and experience in the ministry area (C-77-1).
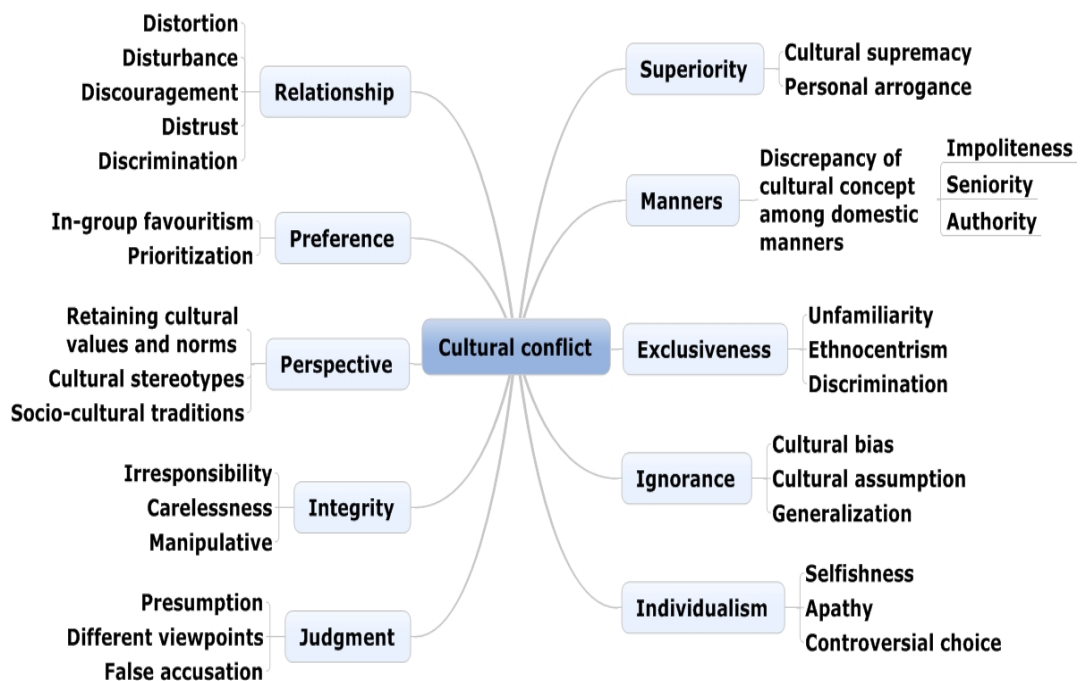
Figure 5.1 Factors and variables in the domain of cultural conflict

5.3 Interpreting Factors in the Domain of Cultural Conflict

The nature and characteristics of the ten factors are revealed through the analysis. These ten factors are compared and contrasted to each other in order to sort them into different categories. This process enables me to identify two essential themes, cultural identity and cultural values, that pervade the entire data in the domain of cultural conflict. Eventually, a theory is emerged from these two themes: 'The underlying cause of cultural conflicts at GEC is discrepancies in cultural identity and cultural values among members.'

Both cultural identity and cultural values are formed by enculturation from kinship networks, social networks, institutional relationships, as well as external experiences such as critical life events (Pammer and Killian, 2003: 87). One's cultural identity constantly interacts with cultural values. One's cultural identity influences and shapes cultural values and vice versa. Although difficult, there is a clear point to distinguish between cultural identity and cultural values. One's identity is about ontological existence seeing and defining oneself in cultural perspective to know the similarities and differences in the cultural cohort group and in other cultural groups. It means one's cultural identity is defined in connection with cultures of individuals and groups. On the other hand, one's cultural values are epistemological standards perceiving, judging, and interpreting social and cultural phenomena as well as others' beliefs and behaviour. Among the ten factors, manners, integrity, relationship, individualism and superiority are closely associated with the concept of one's ontological existence. Another five factors, perspective, judgment, preference, ignorance and exclusiveness are closely related to the concept of one's epistemological viewpoint. The relationships between the two themes and their factors will be articulated in this interpretation section. Figure 5.1 shows factors categorized into the two themes according to their nature and characteristics.

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	Cultural identity	Cultural values
	Individualism	Exclusiveness
	Integrity	Ignorance
Factors	Relationship	Judgment
	Manners	Perspective
	Superiority	Preference

Table 5.1 Categorizing ten factors into two main themes of cultural conflicts at GEC

5.3.1 Cultural Identity

An identity is the set of meanings that define who one is when one is an occupant of a particular role in society, a member of a particular group, or claims particular characteristics that identify him or her as a unique person (Burke and Stets, 2009:1). One's cultural identity is defined and understood by a sense of self and how to relate to others. One has an identity which has been formed by social, cultural, and educational contexts as well as by choices in terms of his profession, religious life, and so on. One constantly senses self and the sense of self which forms one's identity. This is the primary identity in oneself. When one expresses a sense of self in interaction with others, diverse cultural and social phenomena are observed. Others observe, judge, and interpret one's beliefs and behaviour and re-establish one's identity. This is a secondary identity evaluated by others. One's primary and secondary identities may or may not be identical.

The five factors categorized in the group of cultural identity are observed at GEC when individuals from various cultural backgrounds express their primary cultural identities. Briefly, integrity is one's faithfulness and trustworthiness of self. Manners are one's courteous attitude toward others. The relationship is the degrees of one's

intimacy and interactions with others. Individualism in this characterization is a selfish phenomenon that is a disfigured form of self-love. Superiority is a phenomenon of an extreme case of self-worth when self is arrogant. Firstly, the co-relationship between the five factors and the concept of cultural identity will be explained. Each factor will be described in the light of cultural identity. Secondly, I will explain how the five factors are interrelated and interacting in sequence, in order to formulate a process of development of cultural conflicts which may occur when one expresses a primary cultural identity in a multicultural setting. Finally, I will articulate the most fundamental aspect of cultural conflicts caused by cultural identity at GEC.

5.3.1.1 Co-relationship of the Five Factors with the Concept of Cultural Identity

5.3.1.1.1 Cultural Identity and Integrity

Integrity consists of an important aspect of a person's identity (Lightfoot et al., 2004: 116). Integrity from the perspective of cultural identity implies that one commits himself to certain values or rules of behaviour. One's integrity is defined by identity-conferring commitments that reflect one's sense of who we are (Williams, 1981: 49). In other words, integrity is faithfulness to the core identity of self. In this respect, the concept of cultural integrity helps one to be a whole person when one lives in the community with culturally homogeneous people. One has been informed of social norms and regulations on expected behaviour through many diverse methods of socialization such as education, traditions and mass media. One naturally knows that one is expected to be faithful to the society as well as to oneself through committing oneself to values and norms. However, when experiencing acculturation or cross-cultural events, one's concept of cultural integrity may or may not work. If it works, it is

because of the universality of the concept of human integrity. There are certain universal elements that are transcendent of all different cultural perspectives in human behaviour. One good example is that in every culture people basically respect others and their human dignity. If it does not work, on the contrary, it is because that each society has its own distinctive norms and rules that one has to follow to fulfil the concept of cultural integrity in society. In a multicultural environment, it is natural to see conflicts caused by different concepts of cultural integrity. One behaves to fulfil one's own concept of cultural integrity. However, others may feel uncomfortable, or even annoyed. For instance, the concept of pastoral care may differ in different cultural backgrounds. A Korean pastor wants to know everything that is going on in a church member's life and give advice on every single item that matters (C-121). This is a cultural concept of faithfulness of a pastor who plays his role with integrity (C-121-1). However, most British members at GEC do not want their pastors to know everything in their lives and vice versa (C-121-2). A concept of cultural integrity in Western people's minds regarding pastoral care is keeping confidentiality even though very little information is given to the pastor, rather than trying to help all aspects of one's problems (C-121-3).

5.3.1.1.2 Cultural Identity and Relationships

Relationships and identity mutually constitute each other. Our sense of self is relational, formed and shaped by our interactions with other people (Edwards, 2006: 2). Degrees of intimacy in human relationships depend on the results of identity negotiation between one's primary identity which is a sense of self and secondary identity that is how others identify oneself. There is an interaction between one's primary identity and secondary identity. Sometimes, these two are similar or the same so that they can reinforce one another. Sometimes, they are in conflict. Pinkett et al. (2011: 33-34)

provide an excellent illustration on the conflict between one's personal identity and social identity:

> If one believes he is intelligent and those around him believe he is intelligent, then his identity of being intelligent is reinforced. But what if he believes he is intelligent, but others tell him that there is no possible way that he is intelligent because people who look like him are not intelligent? This conflict poses a challenge to his identity.

The negotiation of identity is the reconciliation between how one defines oneself and how others define oneself. If the two identities are negotiated well, it may help one's relationship with others to be more intimate. On the contrary, if one realizes that a primary identity is far different from a secondary identity, it may cause distrust of others.

5.3.1.1.3 Cultural Identity and Manners

Manners are normally understood as a code of behaviour or conduct in moral perspective. As far as one's cultural identity is concerned, one's manners are a direct manifestation of cultural characteristics or identity. It does not mean that one's manners are always related to cultural identity as cultural determinism asserts. Cultural determinism is the term for the notion that different cultures cause or determine certain behaviour of their members, and that these cultural rules bind or constrain people, allowing them no alternative but to act in a certain way (Schiffman, 1996: 8). One of the phenomena of cultural determinism is to generalize the cultural behaviour of people who come from the same cultural background (C-13). In other words, one's manners may be misunderstood as representing all people from the same cultural background (C-16). If one is lazy, it is misunderstood that all people from the same cultural background are lazy (C-21). This cultural generalization is dangerous because it causes people to

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focus on the similarities and differences of cultural behaviour and manners of others and it tends to polarize the community.

5.3.1.1.4 Cultural Identity and Individualism

Individualism is a way of expressing one's identity. Friedman (1993: 231) explains individualism in connection with one's identity as follows:

> Individualism considers individuals human beings as social atoms, abstracted from their social contexts, and disregards the role of social relationships and human community in constituting the very identity and nature of individual human beings.

Individualism refers to a worldview in which cultural behaviour is guided largely by personal goals, ambitions, and pleasures, which may or may not coincide with the interests of others (Newman and Newman, 2012: 45). Viewed from this angle, I argue against Burch (2009: 5) who says that pure individualism as an honest belief is neither moral nor immoral because its only guideline for behaviour is what is best for the self. Individualism and egoism are not the same. However, both have a common ground where one's self-love is overstressed. Individualism is a tendency that one thinks and acts independently for oneself, rather than conform to the cultural or social patterns, beliefs, and norms of the community. When conflicts occur between individuals, one normally does not give up a goal for the sake of goals of others because independence and personal achievement are the most important elements in individualism.

5.3.1.1.5 Cultural Identity and Superiority

Cultural superiority is a phenomenon observed when the cultural identity of a group is over-stressed by rulers or leaders in order to promote social and political unity

of the group. In particular, cultural superiority was used by imperial colonialists to justify their rule over many Asian and African countries. Cultural superiority is linked to esoteric beliefs of a culture group considering themselves superior to their rival groups or to cultures of their rival groups. Therefore, individuals from a group that has a biased cultural identity by cultural superiority may not have cross-cultural or intercultural competence, so that it is expected that they cause conflicts. Cultural superiority is also related to cultural exclusivism. Individuals who regard themselves culturally superior to others think that they are a unique and privileged cultural group and consciously or unconsciously behave exclusively and arrogantly. Individuals who have cultural superiority stress their cultural distinctiveness to prove that they are from more civilized cultural backgrounds. In the worst case, one who regards himself culturally superior coerces others into negotiating their inferior cultural beliefs and behaviour to follow a higher standard of cultural beliefs and behaviour (C-119).

5.3.1.2 A Development Process of Cultural Conflicts in Relation to Cultural Identity

According to the explanations as to how those five factors are related to one's cultural identity, integrity among the five factors is the most essential part of one's cultural identity. In particular, one's cultural identity and integrity are intimately connected with social roles which are given as well as chosen (Montefiore and Vines, 1999: 165). When one executes social roles that come from identity, integrity is observed. At GEC, conflict occurred among members when they judged someone's faithfulness and trustworthiness while he or she was executing his or her roles (C-102). It is not about different methods that he or she employs to execute the roles, but about his or her attitude toward the roles (C-102-1).

One's identity and integrity are expected to be accompanied with appropriate manners in many different relationships. It causes conflicts at GEC when one's integrity is judged by manners and relationships with others. One's integrity may be judged by conduct or courtesy. However, there cannot be an objective yardstick to measure integrity. The criteria to judge one's integrity may differ in different cultures so that a person's standard to judge another person's integrity is subjective in a multicultural community. Nevertheless, it is commonly accepted that there are mainly two criteria in a community in relation to judging one's integrity (Huberts et al, 2008: 74): the formal codes of conduct or ethical codes produced by the community and the informal moral values and norms by which members of the community are expected to abide. These criteria are likely to change over time and differ from situation to situation, depending upon the type of community. However, the former is officially agreed and accepted by members of the community and afterwards, they are required to comply with them so that it is easy to judge one's integrity. On the contrary, the latter is apt to cause conflict in a multicultural community because of the informal nature of the values and norms.

Two typical phenomena observed at GEC when individuals from different cultural backgrounds do not play their social roles with appropriate manners in their relationships are individualism and superiority. Cultural individualism triggers conflicts when individuals want to maintain their cultural autonomy. Individualism does not help individuals in a multicultural community to overcome the heterogeneous nature of others' cultural identities. Individualism would rather cause individuals to have their relationship with only culturally homogeneous people. On the contrary, cultural superiority causes conflict when individuals try to rule over others with the concept that one's culture is superior to that of others. Individuals who have cultural superiority have a tendency coercing others into changing their cultural patterns in relation to cultural behaviour and beliefs. Individualism and superiority have something in common. Both

of them focus on self so that individuals who have either one or the other do not consider negotiating their cultural identities. Individualism tends to lead one to focus on one's goal and purpose. Superiority causes one to focus on self-admiration. However, individualism and superiority cause conflict in different ways. Individualism becomes a cause of conflicts at GEC when individuals do not respect others' cultural identities or their goals. Superiority becomes a cause of conflicts at GEC when individuals are forced to compromise their cultural identities to fit into the cultural identity of the superior.

5.3.1.3 The Most Fundamental Aspect of Cultural Conflicts in Relation to Cultural Identity

In the final analysis, the main reason of cultural conflicts caused by the factors of cultural identity at GEC is a strained relationship between the demand of changing one's cultural identity and the resistance to the demand. It happens when one realizes a discrepancy between one's primary identity and secondary identity, and one is forced to accept the identity demanded by others and to give up primary identity in a multicultural setting. Dimitrov (2003: 96) states appropriately the strained relationship between identity persistence and identity evolvement:

> Identity that remains unchanged becomes dogmatic. It does not evolve or transform.
> Identity that undergoes constant changes is transitory. It has no roots and therefore is
> vulnerable to false presentations, manipulations and delusions.

Identity persistence and identity evolvement are two extreme claims. Those two fundamental stances may cause ceaseless conflicts in multicultural congregations like GEC. Figure 5.2 depicts the interrelationships and interactions in sequence among the five factors and the fundamental aspect of cultural conflicts at GEC in relation to cultural identity.

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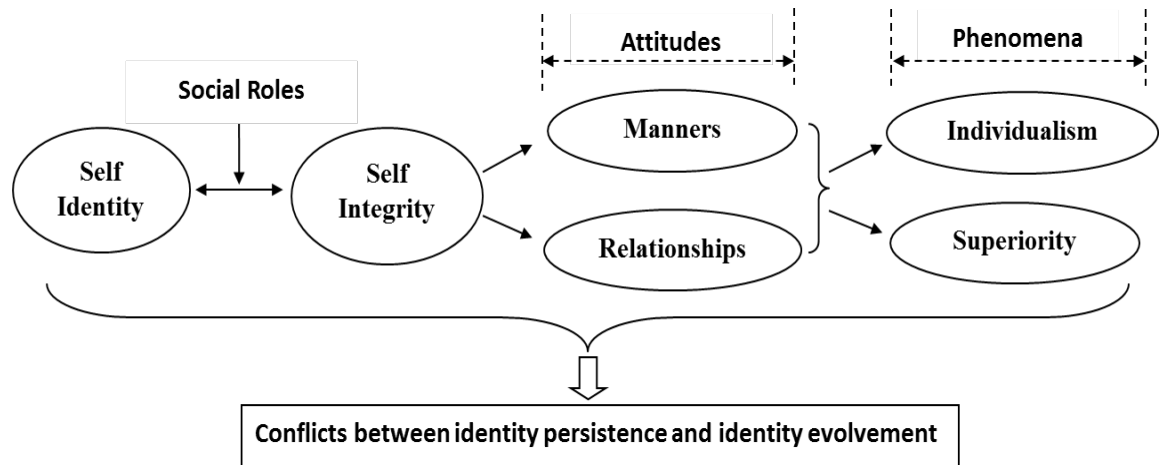
Figure 5.2 Relationships among five factors and an aspect of cultural conflicts in relation to cultural identity at GEC

5.3.2 Cultural Values

Likewise with cultural identity, one's cultural values are the product of subjective (individual) and common (group) cultures. Cultural values affect one's behaviour and decisions. Cultural values also function as a lens through which individuals filter knowledge, experience, and action (Pammer and Killian, 2003: 87). One's cultural values are criteria of perceiving and interpreting others' social and cultural beliefs and behaviour. Cultural values are the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of a human group from another (Hofstede, 1980: 25). Thus, cultural behaviour and practices of members of a group reveal their collective values which become determinative factors of interpersonal cultural clashes. In order for better understanding of the five factors in the group of cultural values, the co-relationship of the factors with the concept of cultural values will be explained. I will also demonstrate a process of conflict development caused by factors of cultural values through explaining their interrelation and interaction in sequence. Finally, I will articulate the most fundamental aspect of cultural conflicts caused by cultural values at GEC.

5.3.2.1 Co-relationship between the Five Factors and the Concept of Cultural Values

5.3.2.1.1 Cultural Values and Perspectives

One's cultural values are closely interwoven with cultural perspectives. Cultural values influence one's perception of others' cultural behaviour and one's perception may challenge cultural values to change. Cultural perspectives are an explicit means to perceive cultural phenomena in order to take up information or facts from them. Cultural values are implicit and latent standards to interpret those facts or information in order to take up cultural meanings from them. Cultural values are not primarily cultural behaviour, but the background that provides reasons for one's cultural behaviour. What people think and how they react to social and cultural phenomena are based in part on how they perceive the world, which is strongly influenced by cultural values (Samovar et al., 2012: 172). Therefore, behind one's response to a cultural phenomenon is a perception, and behind perception is a perspective, and behind a perspective are values. In this respect, cultural perspectives have a vital role to play between cultural values that provide standards of judgment and cultural perceptions that provide information on cultural phenomena. Some conflicts at GEC were caused by people's imbalanced cultural perspectives that transmit biased information to cultural values and that respond to cultural phenomena with localized and domestic cultural standards formed in their particular cultural settings.

5.3.2.1.2 Cultural Values and Judgments

One of the roles that one's cultural values plays is to establish standards of judgment by which people's individual behaviour and collective behaviour of a group are judged. It is understood that values determine people's subjective definition of

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rationality (Sasaki, 1998: 20). It means one's cultural behaviour that seems to be rational according to cultural values may be not acceptable to others. On the other hand, others' cultural judgments on one's cultural behaviour may be not acceptable to the person, although it seems to be rational according to their cultural values. This subjectivity of people's cultural judgments at GEC caused conflicts. These kinds of conflicts are catalyzed by criticisms, accusations, prejudices and presuppositions that are barriers preventing members who have different cultural backgrounds from embracing and promoting the cultural diversity at GEC.

5.3.2.1.3 Cultural Values and Preferences

One's cultural values are narrowly defined as one's preferences that denote desirable states of affairs, actions, and choices. (Brunk, et al., 1991: 155). One's choice is from preference. The choice is to select one rather than the other. Preference guides a person to choose one better or more valuable than the other because preference provides the personal information to what brings more benefits. Hence, one's preference is from a value system. A value system provides one with a cognitive lens to adjust ways of perceiving and interpreting the world. Furthermore, a value system guides one to make decisions for behaviour and choices. Collective cultural values of a group influence one's personal values and his personal values determine how he lives and behaves as well as what he chooses. Therefore, it is precise that one's preference in terms of behaviour or choice differs from the ones of others. Some people expect that decisions for various issues should be made for their preferred purposes or directions (C-107). There is another interesting phenomenon at GEC that people, who are supposed to have the same preference because of their same cultural backgrounds or who have the same viewpoints on the micro-level of political issues, make a different decision or choice (P-

89). In this case, one denies preferences expected by others so that it causes a conflict within the culturally or politically homogeneous group.

5.3.2.1.4 Cultural Values and Ignorance

In a multicultural community, intercultural interactions happen constantly among members from different cultural backgrounds. Therefore, members of the community are required to have a cross-cultural ability to understand how theirs and others' cultural values and beliefs influence each other's behaviour. This is called intercultural competence referred to as cultural awareness and skills enabling individual members to interact effectively and meaningfully with others whose cultural backgrounds are different (Pope and Reynolds, 1997:267). Byram et al. (2001: 5) state the basic intercultural attitudes required in a multicultural community as follows:

> Intercultural attitudes: curiosity and openness, readiness to suspend disbelief about other cultures and belief about one's own. This means a willingness to relativize one's own values, beliefs and behaviours, not to assume that they are the only possible and naturally correct ones, and to be able to see how they might look from the perspective of an outsider who has a different set of values, beliefs and behaviours. This can be called the ability to decentre.

Cultural ignorance implies that people do not have this intercultural competence, even basic skills of understanding cultural differences between them and others. Cultural ignorance at GEC is observed in various forms such as cultural generalizations and assumptions.

5.3.2.1.5 Cultural Values and Exclusiveness

Cultural exclusiveness is to deny others' cultural values and isolate one from others who are from different cultural backgrounds. Cultural exclusiveness is in part related to cultural or ethnic superiority such as ethnocentrism or Westerncentrism. One
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who considers his culture and cultural values superior rejects adapting to others' cultural values. Cultural exclusiveness is also linked to cultural discrimination in two different types. Firstly, one who discriminates others' cultural values due to his culturally exclusive attitude deprives them of chances to express their cultural values. Secondly, one refuses cultural values to be revised or adjusted due to stubbornness underpinned by superiority. Behind this cultural exclusiveness there is cultural arrogance that one culture is more enlightened, advanced, civilized, or intelligent than another (Howell and Paris, 2011: 33). At GEC, some conflicts are caused by patronizing attitudes of some members who have culturally exclusive behaviour saying, "if we teach people from less civilized circumstances as to how we live, then they can become as advanced as we are" (C-78).

5.3.2.2 A Development Process of Cultural Conflicts in Relation to Cultural Values

Interrelationships among the five factors in the group of cultural values help to formulate a process of development of cultural conflicts at GEC. Among the five factors, perspective is the closest to and the most essential part of one's cultural values. In particular, one's cultural values and cultural perspectives are closely linked to standards of judgment on cultural phenomena. One's cultural values influence perspectives by providing standards of perception. One's perspective, on the other hand, approves or challenges one's cultural values through testing the existing standards when one experiences new cultural phenomena. At GEC, these kinds of inter-directional processes are needed to avoid cultural conflicts as well as to become a culturally mature community. The former is a natural process that everyone can do. However, the latter is

difficult because only a few are willing to be challenged to adjust their cultural values through constantly analysing standards of judgment.

Diverse perspectives of people from different cultural backgrounds affect cultural judgment and preference of others at GEC. Ekstrom (2000: 106) explains that a preference is a desire formed by a process of critical and evaluative judgment, with respect to one's conception of the good. She means that preference is the result of one's evaluative judgment on many social and cultural issues. However, cultural judgment and preference are not in the interactions of cause and effect at GEC but are two individual cultural attitudes. Both of them in common are involved in evaluating how cultural phenomena or patterns are good or bad, favourable or unfavourable, positive or negative. However, the focus of each one is different. Cultural judgment is involved in rating of how much cultural behaviour of others is good or bad. Preference, on the other hand, is involved in evaluating how much the result of one's own choices and decisions are good or bad. One of the skills required for cultural competence is evaluative judgment to perceive and interpret cultural behaviour of self as well as cultural behaviour of others as objectively as possible.

Cultural ignorance and exclusive behaviour are two typical phenomena observed at GEC, when one's cultural judgment and preference supported by one's value system do not function effectively. Cultural ignorance and exclusiveness are so-called cultural blindness. Both are involved in self-centred cultural behaviour. However, each one has a distinct characteristic. Cultural ignorance means that people are not aware of the subtleties of others' cultures. On the other hand, cultural exclusiveness means people refuse to understand the core cultural values of others. In a multicultural community, values of people from other cultural backgrounds must be shared, and those shared values will become the principles, the core or the basic values that bring unity to the community (Gross, 1998: 163).

5.3.2.3 The Most Fundamental Aspect of Cultural Conflicts in Relation to Cultural Identity

No cultural system is perfect, so that an adjustment of cultural values is required in a multicultural community in order to accommodate all members from diverse cultural backgrounds. At GEC, this adjustment of cultural values is challenged when members confront other's cultural values and norms. Everyone at GEC is challenged by interpersonal interactions with other members from other cultural backgrounds to adjust their previous cultural values in order to have a more inclusive attitude toward other cultural values. There are two different responses to this challenge at GEC. One response is cultural absolutism that the cultural values of the majority or the superior are the only correct values. Cultural values of the minorities are regarded as culturally inferior, so that they are not recognized and allowed to be expressed. Sometimes, the cultural values of the minorities are forced to adopt the cultural values of the majority. The other response is cultural relativism that different cultural values of the minorities must be acceptable and respected equally. It may jeopardize order and unity of the multicultural community if behaviour, based on mistaken premises out of cultural values of cultural minority groups, is accepted and allowed to be practiced, especially in a local church context. Figure 5.3 depicts the interrelationships among five factors and the most fundamental aspect of cultural conflicts in terms of one's cultural values at GEC.
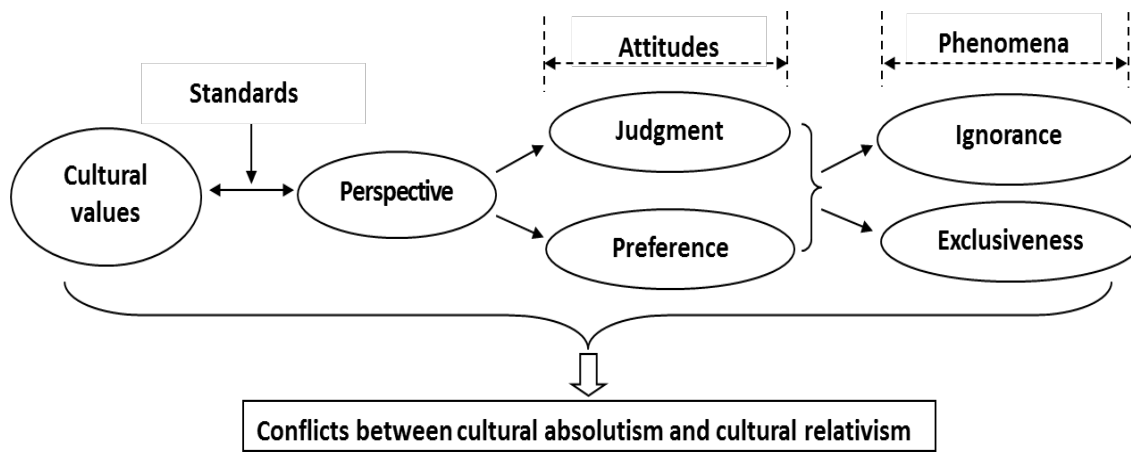
Figure 5.3 A development progress of cultural conflicts and the most fundamental aspect of cultural conflicts in relation to cultural values at GEC

5.4 Conclusion

I have described the nature and aspects of cultural conflicts in the domain through data analysis. Cultural conflicts at GEC are caused by cultural interactions among individuals from different cultural backgrounds, especially because of their different cultural identities and values. Cultural identity and values are the two fundamental criteria being used for discerning cultural similarities and differences among individuals. The bigger the gap is between similarities and difference in cultural identity and values among individuals, the more serious the conflict.

One's cultural identity and values provide the existential basis. Cultural identity gives one a sense of belonging by which one feels ontological security. Cultural values give one a sense of legitimacy by which one has the epistemological justification for perception and behaviour. Thus, a discrepancy in cultural identity and values between individuals may cause a serious discord in their relationship. In particular, in a local congregational setting, where people are not well equipped with the cross-cultural understanding and skills, but unrestrainedly express their cultural identities and values without considering its negative effects on others, it is likely to observe cultural conflicts which have a potential to grow into the status of cultural anomie (Katsiaficas

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et al., 1987: 330). Cultural exclusiveness and superiority are the useful indicators to measure the intensity of cultural conflicts at GEC. These two particular factors inform how the discrepancy in cultural identity and values, especially between the dominant cultural group and ethnic minorities, functions as a catalyst to trigger and escalate conflicts.

In this regard, the cultural conflicts at GEC is quite disruptive and its intensity is above medium level at the borderline between healthy and unhealthy conflict. Cultural conflicts at GEC are categorized into the I-B (Interpersonal and Between-frame) type according to the four types of conflict established in chapter two. The I-B type of conflict is difficult to deal with in terms of resolving it through cooperation between the parties to reach a mutual satisfaction. I argue that conflict settlement is the most appropriate strategy to deal with the I-B type conflicts and can be applicable to the cultural conflicts at GEC. Conflict settlement is a useful approach for peace-making in conflict situations by negotiation or mediation to draw mutual understanding and agreement between the two parties who have a fundamental discrepancy in perceiving, judging and interpreting social phenomena. I will propose some practical applications for cultural conflicts on the basis of the concept and technics of conflict settlement in chapter nine.

Chapter Six

Data Analysis and Interpretation
in the Domain of Theological Conflict

6.1 Introduction

There was conflict caused by different methods of doing theology among theologians in early church history in relation to the compatibility or incompatibility between philosophy and faith. This clash occurred as a result of the serious concern of theologians as to how the Gospel of Jesus would be presented and explained in the most effective way to people in diverse contexts. Early Christian apologists used the discipline of philosophy which had pagan roots in the early speculative systems of the Greek philosophers (House and Jowers, 2011: 49). Justin, a well-known Palestinian apologist, is an example. He embraced philosophy and used philosophical terminology to explain Jesus most effectively to pagan Gentiles for whom different arguments were needed (Kelly, 2009: 14). On the other hand, there is evidence that some early theologians expressed their deep concern about the adoption of philosophy in doing theology. Tertullian of Carthage did not have a positive attitude toward Greek philosophy as the method of theology (Beck, 2007: 76) as the following quotation from his *De praescriptione haereticorum* clearly indicated:

> It is this philosophy which is the subject matter of this world's wisdom, that rash interpreter of the divine nature and order…. What is there in common between Athens and Jerusalem? What between the Academy and the Church?... Away with all projects for a 'stoic, a 'Platonic' or a 'dialectic' Christianity! (Betternson, 1943: 9-10).

Tertullian tried to disentangle the faith from every kind of philosophical influence to guard it against perversions and distortions (Kerr, 1996: 39) because he thought that Athens' philosophy corrupted Jerusalem's faith.

After Christianity became the official state religion of the Roman Empire, theological development changed its direction from apologetics to systematic theology. This transition provided a platform for theological debates over several doctrinal issues. The controversy between Arius and Athanasius over understanding the nature of the Godhead, especially Christ's divinity and his relationship to God the Father was a notable example. During the late 4th century, Augustine disputed with Pelagius over the matter of understanding human nature, particularly Original Sin. Apparently, the division between the Western and Eastern churches was caused by church power struggles, language and cultural barriers (Hushbeck, 2005: 102). However, one of the major issues in the division was different doctrinal positions in terms of understanding of the Holy Spirit between the two churches (Morris, 2011: 134). In the sixteenth century, Christendom was shaken and eventually divided by Protestant theologians who challenged the orthodox Catholic theology with what they believed as key tenets of Christian faith through the Reformation. Finally, causes and issues of theological conflicts in contemporary society take on a new aspect. They are caused not only by the difference in their core doctrinal beliefs, but also by diverse theological perspectives on gender, race, social class, ethics, contextualization, etc. Those factors of theological conflicts briefly described above in the historical perspective are reflected in various forms in theological conflicts in contemporary local congregations, including GEC.

In this chapter, I analyse factors of theological conflicts at GEC in order to understand the causes and aspects of theological conflicts, people's reactions and behaviour, and their scale and intensity to understand their characteristics as a whole. Secondly, I interpret the factors to transform the data into a thick description of emerging ethnographic discovery in the domain of theological conflict at GEC.

6.2 Analysing Factors in the Domain of Theological Conflict

A large quantity of data in the domain of theological conflict have been categorized through constant comparative analysis to identify clear patterns. In total, seven factors, which reveal conspicuous characteristics of theological conflict at GEC, are derived through the data analysis process. These factors will provide descriptive accounts of conflict phenomena in the domain.

6.2.1 Doctrinal Positions

Christian doctrines are statements of beliefs derived from the Scriptures on general or timeless truths about God and reality (Erickson and Hustad, 2001: 16). Although many Christians believe that the Scriptures are universal and timeless truths, theology can be local and temporary answers to questions that people ask about God, His creation and works, and spiritual and physical realities. As doctrine is understood as a study of theology, it is bound by human experiences, thoughts of the times and different perspectives on the Scriptures. This is why doctrinal distinctiveness is observed among individuals and denominations. The data show that some theological conflicts at GEC have been caused by different doctrinal positions that individuals or small groups hold.

6.2.1.1 Denominational Background

A denomination focuses on the interpretation and production of a specific religious belief system so that affiliated congregations draw upon their denominations to create or to shape their statements of belief (Washington et al., 2014: 190). Believers are

inclined to accept their denomination's statements of belief without difficulty and grow within the belief system. Therefore, it is likely to be inflexible and intolerant when they face differences on a particular doctrinal issue. This phenomenon was quite severe at GEC because there is a wide range of believers from across the denominational spectrum (T-1). There is a sharp conflict on the relationship between the sovereignty of God and the will of man in relation to salvation (T-102). Members who have a Baptist or Methodist background, influenced by Arminianism, assert that the unlimited grace of God in the atonement is for every individual who receives Jesus as Saviour (T-102-1). On the other hand, members who have a Presbyterian, Reformed Church or Congregational Church background, influenced by Calvinist theology, argue that the grace of God in the atonement is limited to the elect (T-102-2). The most heated debate between the two groups was how the salvation of believers is understood from their doctrinal positions (T-104). Calvinists assert, "We cannot lose salvation because we are predestined to be saved and the irresistible grace of God will lead us to heaven" (T-104-1). On the other hand, Arminians assert, "Our salvation is not eternally secure and we may lose salvation unless we are faithful to complete it to the end of life" (T-104-2).

Although there are many things in common between the two belief systems, members at GEC considered that doctrinal difference in the matter of salvation as crucial (T-96). It means that they are not prepared to acknowledge theological pluralism in a local church, but are taken captive by their own doctrinal loyalty. There are two reasons for this phenomenon at GEC. Firstly, some of them take pride in their denominational background (T-96-1). It is observed that some respect the founder of their denomination more than Jesus (T-96-2). They regard doctrinal articles of their denominations more important than the Scriptures (T-96-3). Secondly, there is no written statement of faith at GEC to pass judgment on doctrinally controversial issues that are quite ambiguous (T-103).

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6.2.1.2 Validity of the Law in the Old Testament in Contemporary Christian Life

Some Judeo-Christians in the early church continued Jewish observance of the Sabbath, the Jewish calendar, circumcision, and so on (Freeman and Myers, 2000: 709). They believed that Jewish religious practices in the Old Testament had to be continued after receiving Jesus because the only difference between early Judeo-Christians and other Jews was their acceptance of Jesus as the Messiah (McGrath, 2006: 174). This caused serious conflict between Judeo-Christians and Gentile-Christians. There are a few members at GEC who believe that Old Testament Laws are still in force (T-5). They take a profound interest in dispensationalism and Christian Zionism (T-7) which emphasize clear distinctions between God's promises and plans for the nation of Israel and for the Christian church in the New Testament. These are some of their assertions: "We need to celebrate Passover because it is symbolically more important than Christmas" (T-5-1); "Offering tithe is one of the core obligations of a believer and an evidence of love for God" (T-17); "People who are in the category of uncleanness in the Law must be excluded from the church gatherings" (T-95); "We have not to eat unclean food in the Law" (T-102). Firstly, these assertions cause confusion among believers because it is hard to distinguish between universal and timeless truths in the Old Testament and obsolete precepts which are applicable only in the ancient society of Israel before Christ (T-104). Secondly, those assertions have not only provoked heated doctrinal dialogues among members, but also excited much controversy regarding continuity and discontinuity between the Old Testament and the New Testament (T-104-1). The predominant question is "To what extent does the new covenant affect the validity of the old covenant?" (T-104-2). A few members who have a fundamental evangelical viewpoint on this doctrinal issue assert that Jesus has completely rescinded

the old covenant and superseded both the Mosaic Law and God's promises to the nation of Israel in the Old Testament by the new covenant (T-105). They believe that the Christian church and faith are derived from the new covenant through the death and resurrection of Jesus, and have no connection with the old covenant and Jewish traditions or festivals (T-105-1). There is no correlation between ethnicity and salvation and no distinction between Jews and Gentiles in the matter of salvation in the new covenant (T-105-2). On the other hand, those who believe the validity of the old covenant in contemporary Christian life assert that the Mosaic Law and prophetic messages to the nation of Israel are neither confined to only ancient Israel, nor completely replaced by the new covenant, but are still consistent and applicable to all believers in Christianity (T-106).

6.2.1.3   Hermeneutic Methods

There are different hermeneutic methods to interpret the Scriptures because of doctrinal variations (Ramm, 1970: 3). Different hermeneutic methods produce divergent interpretations in exegesis of a particular passage. The primary problem in this matter is that each hermeneutic method is claimed to be infallible in terms of exegesis to find out the true meaning (Yarchin, 2004: xi). In this regard, conflicts are observed at GEC when people claim that only their interpretation is correct in the realization that they cannot converge on the same truth because of different hermeneutical principles and angles (T-3). Some members who are interested in biblical typology and symbolism assert that the Old Testament is full of foreshadows of Jesus (T-32). They believe that the Pentateuch prefigured the atonement of Jesus through the law of sacrifices and offerings (T-92). They also believe that some characters in the Old Testament are seen as types of Jesus. For example, Joseph is a type of Jesus in similarity that both of them were sold for

twenty and thirty pieces of silver (T-92-1). Jonah spent three days and nights in the whale's belly as Jesus was in the tomb for three days (T-92-2). They are assured that the Prophets predicted the virgin birth of Jesus (Isaiah 7:14) and His ministries (Isaiah 35:5, 60:3 and Zechariah 9:9) and all of them have been fulfilled in the New Testament (T-99). On the other hand, there are some other members who try to investigate only the historical contexts of those passages in order to ascertain the original meanings as to why God spoke the words to the people in the particular time and place (T-100). These members believe that the primary purpose of biblical exegesis for prophecies is to understand the original God's messages to Israel through the prophets within their historical contexts (T-100-1). Some suggest that Matthew reinterpreted Isaiah 7:14 as the fulfilment of God's prophecy on the virgin birth of Jesus, even though it originally refers to conceiving and giving birth to a child in Isaiah's time (T-100-2). From their perspective, prophecies, as an end in themselves, are important as God's messages for the people of the time, regardless of their connections to fulfilment in the New Testament (T-100-3).

Another case of conflict caused by different hermeneutic methods is a clash between biblical literalism and allegorical interpretation or 'sensus plenior' which means 'fuller sense of' the passage (T-84). Biblical literalism emphasizes keeping what is thought of as the primary meaning of the text or narratives, rather than seeking for figurative or metaphorical meanings. For example, they believe that one day in Genesis chapter one is literally same as one day at the present time (T-84-1). On the other hand, people seeking more profound or hidden meanings employ allegorical interpretation or 'sensus plenior' developed by Thomas Aquinas who distinguished between the literal meaning of the words of the text and the spiritual meaning of the things described in the Scriptures (Richardson and Bowden, 1983: 538) in order to avoid propositional truths and find out specially intended meanings by God (T-4). These people believe that

everyone has the freedom to receive meanings from the Scriptures without being bound by generally accepted rules of biblical hermeneutics (T-4-1). Furthermore, they assert that it is often necessary to break the conventions of approved biblical interpretations to generate more relevant meanings to the readers' own situations (T-4-2). There are three criticisms raised by the biblical literalists against the allegorists. Firstly, the spiritual or allegorical meanings are not always harmonized with the literal meanings of the passages (T-84-1). Secondly, there are no standardized and formulated criteria to assess the spiritual or allegorical meanings as God-intended messages (T-84-2). Finally, a spiritual and allegorical meaning drawn out of a particular passage is at times in conflict with other literal meanings of the rest of the Scriptures (T-84-3).

6.2.1.4 Fundamentalism and Liberalism in Theology

Those hermeneutic issues at GEC have given rise to another debate on the authorship of the Bible. Some people at GEC believe that the entire Scriptures are not only God's inspiration, but also inerrant (T-97): "I do believe that everything in the Scriptures is absolutely true transcending all the religious texts, philosophies, cultures and science" (T-97-1). Furthermore, they assert, "God dictated all the Scriptures to human authors sentence by sentence" (T-97-2). These fundamentalists clash with those who have liberal presuppositions on the Scriptures. People who have a liberal stance at GEC view the Scriptures sceptically in relation to their authorship and historical and textual reliability (T-98). These are some of the issues that the liberalists at GEC have raised in the conversational Bible studies. First of all, liberalists contend that there is reasonable evidence for doubting the authorship of some books in the Bible (T-101). For example, according to the conservative Christians perspective, it is believed that Moses wrote the Pentateuch. However, there is a serious question how Moses was able

to write the account of his death in the last chapter of the book of Deuteronomy (T-101-1). They also assert that the entire book of Isaiah is a combination of three different collections (T-101-2): The first Isaiah (chapters 1–39) written by the prophet Isaiah in the 8th century B.C.E., the second Isaiah (chapters 40–55) written by an anonymous author in the 6th century B.C.E. during the Babylon Exile, and the third Isaiah (chapters 56–66) written by another anonymous prophet in anthology style after the return from exile (Lemche, 2008: 96). These are proofs that they present to support their assertion: different historical situations in each section, the disappearance of Isaiah from the second section, and sudden changes of style and theology at the beginning of second and third section (T-101-3).

As far as historical and textual reliability of the Scriptures is concerned, the liberalists doubt the reliability of the Scriptures because of variations among manuscripts (T-98). A notable example regarding this assertion is interpolation in the Bible. In their belief, comparison among manuscripts and different versions of the Bible informs that the scribes' own materials were inserted into the text during the process of transcriptions so that the original meanings were altered (T-29). One heated debate regarding interpolation was about the last twelve verses of the Gospel of Mark (T-29-1). The liberalists brought this case to provide a basis of their assertion that God inspired and superintended the human authors of the Scriptures in writing, but did not dictate them word for word (T-29-2). They also assert that there is evidence of errancy in the Bible by intentional or unintentional additions or omissions by scribes in the process of transcriptions (T-29-3). The most problematic comments from a liberalist are that events in the early part of the Old Testament, such as the Creation, the Fall, the Flood, and Exodus and the Conquest of Canaan are myths or fictions (T-99).

6.2.1.5 False Doctrine

False doctrine in nature is different from the four variables described above in terms of doctrinal boundaries. Different doctrinal positions could bring theological dynamism and diversity which provide a ground where congregations could learn how to embrace others in theological pluralism in a local church. However, false doctrine is an illusory pseudo-doctrine which is unhealthy and destructive to Christian faith and to the church. Conflict caused by a false doctrine at GEC was between the leadership team and a couple from a country in Far East Asia. This couple was reported by some church members that their doctrines were not sound (T-24). Eventually, elders rigorously investigated their theological stance on several core elements in Christian beliefs that cannot be compromised (T-24-1). If one word sums up the couple's false doctrine, it was antinomianism. Antinomianism is a compound of two Greek words, '*anti* and *nomos*', which means 'against law' (Smith, 2009: 20). Through the investigation, elders found out that this couple was doctrinally trained by a well-recognized antinomian heresy in their country. The core doctrine of this heresy according to the elders' analysis on the basis of the couple's assertion was that believers are not bound by moral principles in the Bible, but simply guided by inner desires for conduct (T-64). Secondly, the couple asserted that believers do not need to repent any longer after salvation (T-64-1). The couple had a dichotomous view of man like Gnosticism wherein sinful flesh causes sin, but the soul always remains clean and pure since believers are saved (T-65). In their belief, believers are no longer sinners, but are permanently saints, regardless of their immoral life (T-65-1). This couple tended to exaggerate the fact that believers are under God's grace, not under the Law, in order to justify immoral conduct (T-24-1). They also overemphasized that the judgement of God will not depend on believers' moral conduct, as salvation is not a reward for their good performance (T-64-1). This distorted doctrine became influential to a young woman who was being condemned for

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sexual immorality regarding her premarital sex and cohabitation before marriage (T-70). This false doctrine did not cause much damage to the congregation, but it caused enough trouble to elders to deal with it appropriately before it became a spiritual epidemic (T-91). Eventually, after six months conflict period between the leadership team and the couple, the elders took disciplinary action to expel the couple from GEC because they had ignored all recommendations of the leadership team to change their doctrinal stance (T-91-1).

6.2.2 Traditions

Doctrine is a set of systematic teachings based on the Scriptures. Church traditions are a set of customs on practices of faith handed down from generation to generation. There are two kinds of traditions in Christianity: one is sacred and divine tradition written in the Scriptures and the other is human tradition established and developed by man. Congar (1964: 17) called the former 'Tradition' which is the faithful transmission of the unchanging truths of God and the latter 'traditions' which are reviewed and changed when adjustments are necessary. In the latter case, church traditions have two levels of meaning: on the personal level, they denote all the accumulated experiences and practices over the generations as ways of celebrating the faith of people in a particular faith community; on the community level, they denote systems for demonstration of the identity of the faith community. Therefore, people latch onto the traditions of their faith communities because they feel comfortable with the traditions. Sometimes, it is observed that what has been transmitted in tradition becomes normative and substitutes for what has to be believed in the Scriptures. This is a reason that conflicts occur when significant deviations are experienced between people who are from different traditions in Christianity.

6.2.2.1 Liturgical and Non-liturgical Traditions

Liturgical actions are those which the church recognizes as part of its public worship so that the distinction between what is liturgical and what is non-liturgical depends on what the church claims as its official form of worship (Chupungco and Liturgico, 1997: 8). Due to the diverse cultural and denominational background, members at GEC are divided in terms of their preferences regarding service style. Members from High Church traditions, whose emphases are on sacraments, rituals, episcopal system, and liturgy, want their services to be more liturgical and customary through common prescribed formats and a pre-set order of services (T-15). On the other hand, members from Low Church traditions, whose emphases are on the liberalization of hierarchical structure and informality and simplicity in rituals, prefer to have an unscripted and improvised style of service (T-16). These non-liturgical people believe that the most important preparation for the service is preliminary prayer and the whole congregation must open and wait until the Holy Spirit moves and inspires individuals to speak and share in the service (T-16-1). This distinctive difference causes conflict in leading worship services and conducting the sacraments.

As far as worship is concerned, liturgical people feel comfortable and secure by the disambiguation and elaboration of the service which is theologically well constructed and widely recognized (T-20). The standardized order of service provides a clear indication of what is to come next and how to respond (T-20-1), so that these people hate surprise or sudden intervention in the form of spontaneous prayer or sharing testimony during the service (T-21). Some liturgical members cannot tolerate a person speaking in tongues or singing a song during the service without consent in advance (T-21-1). They feel the service in such circumstances is chaotic (T-21-2). These members

made a request to elders for using a lectionary in terms of choosing sermon texts for each week and the liturgical calendar in order to plan church services to make them more relevant to church festivals and feasts (T-23). On the contrary, non-liturgical people do not regard structured order and reciting liturgical formulae as a pure form of service (T-45). These members prefer free-form worship led by the Holy Spirit (T-49). They criticize liturgical worship saying, "There is no room for the Holy Spirit to intervene during worship" (T-51). They also criticize about using a lectionary and liturgical calendar: "The lectionary does not meet the needs of our church and reflect our situation" (T-53). They assert, "Preachers must be inspired by the Holy Spirit in terms of choosing a sermon text for the Sunday" (T-54). They think that making plans in advance for preaching and church ministry stifles the Holy Spirit (T-54-1).

As far as the sacraments are concerned, liturgical members prefer paedobaptism rather than child dedication (T-8). These members want to read established formulae for baptism and the Holy Communion (T-12). In their belief, the Holy Communion should be held every Sunday rather than once a month (T-22). Some liturgical members at GEC assert, "The Holy Communion is as worthy as preaching the Word of God in the service" (T-31). On the contrary, non-liturgical members strongly refute it: "It is not theologically acceptable to baptize a child who is not mature enough in age and faith to profess his or her faith before God and the members" (T-46). These members do not like a prelatical and stringent atmosphere during the baptismal service or the Holy Communion (T-81). Some of them strongly oppose a minister wearing vestments or clerical dress during services (T-81-1).

6.2.2.2   Church Polity

There is a noticeable difference in governmental principles in each church tradition. GEC is a non-denominational evangelical church affiliated with the Evangelical Alliance in the U.K. Its church polity is a Congregationalist form governed by a plurality of elders. It can be described as a democratic Congregationalist form of church polity as the elders are elected by the congregation. According to the result of a survey in 2010, the majority of people at GEC doctrinally believe that a local church should be non-prelatical and ecclesiastically autonomous (T-10). These members have two basic principles in relation to church polity and ecclesiology (T-11). Firstly, they believe that a local church is a truly voluntary association and its supreme governor should not be a man or woman, but God (T-11-1). Secondly, they believe that church governance should be based on the local congregation rather than a hierarchical structure of church leadership (T-11-2). One clergy person should not have complete control and power over the entire congregation (T-11-3). Ecclesiastical power should be divided and evenly separated among the congregation rather than centralized in an ordained clergy person (T-11-4). In their theological stance, they assert that a local church should be self-supporting and self-governing (T-10-1). Few extremists among these Congregationalists think that denominations are at variance with the Scriptures (T-25). There are three reasons that the majority of members at GEC have this kind of doctrinal stance on church polity (T-43). Firstly, many of these members used to be believers in the Church of the Brethren (T-43-1). Secondly, GEC began as a medical charity which is a parachurch organization (T-43-2). Finally, some early leaders at GEC were Quakers since it began as BMM and their influence on GEC had been continued through being appointed as external trustees and subsidising finance for several important projects until 1998 when the two churches were merged (T-43-3).

On the other hand, there are a few members who have a contradictory stance on Congregationalist polity due to their background in episcopal traditions whose church

governance system is hierarchical and constitutional. It is hard for them to accommodate the differences between their understanding and experience of church polity and the Congregationalist polity at GEC (T-50). Firstly, these members feel exhausted by a particular phenomenon at GEC that everything, including a trivial matter is decided by vote (T-50-1). They criticize it in this way: "In principle Congregationalists believe that the church is a theocratic society where God is the supreme governor, but in reality GEC is like a democratic society where the congregation rules and decides" (T-50-2). Secondly, these members carefully indicate that it is quite dangerous for a local church if there is no higher authority to oversee it (T-66). In particular, when a serious conflict occurs or few members do not agree with the majority's decision by vote, there is no ecclesiastical structure to require mediation or to appeal for an investigation (T-66-1).

6.2.2.3 Authority of the Clergy

The conflict about church polity has naturally led to another debate about the authority and roles of the clergy. GEC has a history of ousting pastors since it turned into a local church from the Medical Mission (T-9). This is one of the criticisms raised by members who have episcopal backgrounds that GEC is an extreme case of a Congregationalist form of governance because the congregation has too much power in terms of selecting and ousting pastors by vote (T-9-1). Church by-laws were established when BMC was transformed into a local congregation (T-86) and a clause of the by-laws mentioned that sacraments would be administered not only by ordained pastors, but also by the laity (T-86-1) because they assumed that the authority of an ordained pastor is granted and reinforced by administering sacraments (T-87). There was an incident when one West African couple left GEC after baptism of their teenage daughter

(T-18). It was quite disappointing for them when they realized that their teenage daughter was baptized by two youth leaders, not by the pastor (T-18-1). It has been a long-term tradition at GEC that youths are baptized by their leaders (T-19), but it was hard for the couple to accept the tradition due to their episcopal doctrinal standpoint (T-18-2). The worst point in the baptismal service was that the two youth leaders did not wear official gowns for baptism, but wore a short-sleeve top and short pants (T-18-3). They felt embarrassed in front of their family members and friends who expected a liturgical baptismal service conducted by the ordained pastor (T-18-4). They regarded this baptism as invalid, so that their daughter was baptized again in an Anglican church in the area (T-26).

This doctrinal inclination at GEC has weakened the authority of pastors and as a result, pastors have failed to discipline those who commit immoral acts or doctrinal drift (T-41). They might think that this could forestall the centralization of power and dominance by pastors (T87-1), but in fact it could not allow pastors to exercise their biblical and ecclesiastical authority over individual congregations (T-44). One particular example of conflict revealing the weakened authority of pastor is that one church member interrupted a pastor while preaching (T-47). The person did not agree with a point in the sermon, and stood up and said, "I cannot agree with you" and left the sanctuary (T-47-1). This particular incident caused a lot of trouble to the pastor and eventually he had to leave GEC (T-69). He, as a minister consecrated in an official denomination, believed that being a minister is a sacred vocation in which he received the unbroken apostolic authority and responsibility to look after the flock (T-73).

6.2.3 Ethics

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Ethics is a system of moral value concerning what is right or wrong, good or bad, acceptable or unacceptable in conduct of an individual or a group (Duska et al., 34). Everyone has a set of moral principles by which his or her conduct is governed and judged. There are variations in moral reasoning because individuals hold different moral foundations. Individuals from different cultural groups have different basic ethical principles, although there are some common ethical principles universally accepted (Buchanan, 204: 149). Political orientations that individuals hold are another reason of variations in moral opinions on social issues (Rosenson, 2005: 71). For instance, moral approaches to various social issues such as same sex marriage between political conservatives and liberals are different. The same is true of Christian ethics. Ethical beliefs of theologically conservative Christians may not be same as the ones of theologically liberal Christians. Conservative Christians believe that God and His words are the basis of the ethical beliefs (Evans, 1998: 63). They believe that the aim of the theological enterprise in this contemporary society is to restate timeless biblical truths in a form that is understandable to the people who are living today (Erickson and Hustad, 2001: 16). It means theologically conservative Christians use a deontological approach to making ethical decisions. The best moral choice for these people is to conform to the institutionalized ethical beliefs based on the Scriptures. On the other hand, theologically liberal Christians are more interested in state of affairs in making ethical decisions like consequentialists for whom the right choice is the thing which increases the good in a morally complex and problematic situation. This contradiction in different approaches to Christian ethics between theological conservatives and liberals has caused conflicts at GEC on several ethical issues.

6.2.3.1 Situation Ethics

Situation ethics is a pragmatic approach to issues in a situational way leaving aside all grandiose and ultimate theories of good and evil (Fletcher, 1996: 2). One of the indicators to identify between conservatives and liberals is their openness to a new experience. Theological liberals at GEC are open to new ethical principles and are willing to see new ethical interpretations on complex moral issues for better results (T-151). These people seek for emancipation from constrained frameworks of traditional Christian ethics (T-151-1). They point out an inclination of ethical conservatives of ignoring the situations of moral agents to make a particular moral decision which is regarded as morally bad from their viewpoint (T-151-2).

There are many assertions from ethical liberals at GEC on several topics debated during Bible studies, house group meetings and interpersonal conversations. Firstly, abortion should be permitted when a woman is pregnant in an incident of rape (T-73). Secondly, euthanasia should be optional to assist a patient to die with human dignity, if it is confirmed by medical professionals that there is no possibility for the patient to be restored from a coma or a terminal stage of cancer (T-74). Thirdly, suicide should be justified in some particular situations in which people have unbearable pressures of life (T-78). Finally, telling lies is not always bad. A member who used to smuggle Bibles to Communist countries in Eastern Europe inevitably told lies to border guards (T-82). Some people from Far East Asia said that it is culturally normal that doctors and family members do not exactly inform patients of all the facts when they are diagnosed with a serious illness in order to prevent psychological trauma and to give hope (T-82-1). Ethical conservatives at GEC do not accept these assertions and regard them as a vicious intrusion into their ethical beliefs based on the Scriptures (T-107). These conservatives refute situation ethics as having two dangerous elements. Firstly, it has a danger of false generalization that a moral fallacy in moral judgment on a particular incident becomes a normative standard (T-107-1). Secondly, this case-by-case ethics

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may become a common approach to Christian ethics so that moral relativism overrides the absolute biblical moral norms (T-107-2).

6.2.3.2 Sexual Immorality

A Bible study on the woman who was caught on the spot of adultery in John 8:1-11 triggered another ethical conflict regarding sexual immorality in believers' lives (T-58). Ethical conservatives at GEC fear losing their ethical ground by adopting new ethical beliefs which may ruin the traditional Christian ethical order based on the dualistic conception of good and evil from the Scriptures (T-58-1). In their understanding of the moral system, the absence of scriptural moral norms in an individual's moral life is a serious failure (T-58-2). They are passionately committed to biblical and traditional Christian moral rules so that there is no flexibility in terms of judging and dealing with sexual immorality at GEC (T-58-3). These are examples of their inexorable moral sanctions: one homosexual was permanently expelled from the church (T-59); one young woman who committed premarital sex through cohabitation before marriage was seriously condemned and was removed from all church involvement (T-62). Nobody among ethical conservatives attended a wedding service for a church member who had been divorced and remarried to another divorced woman (T-89). An old man who touched women's bodies while hugging was suspended until he showed clear evidence of true repentance (T-108). Ethical liberals at GEC criticize that they are not only ethically conservatives, but also stubborn legalists who are obsessed by the Old Testament concept of holiness that people who were regarded unclean were expelled from their communities until they became legitimate according to the Law to come back to their communities (T-109). Ethical conservatives responded

by arguing that ethical liberals are antinomians who bring moral disorder by denying the moral rules and principles in Christianity (T-109-1).

6.2.3.3 Customary Moral Orientation

Some moral conflicts at GEC are caused by clashes between individual moral choices and collective moral responses or habits which have been formed within GEC by the historical accumulation of collective moral decision-making (T-133). From time to time, individual moral choices are criticized by the majority of church members who are accustomed to GEC's customary moral orientation of moral principles and practices established by repetition (T-133-1). Customary morality at GEC is under the influences of the moral cultures of the Church of the Brethren and Quakers (T-110). Some people believe that denying the collective moral tendencies of GEC may become a serious menace to morality and stability at GEC (T-133-2). Descriptions below are some peripheral issues clashing with customary morality at GEC: young people have tattoos (T-125); a young man wears earrings and has his tongue pierced (T-169); young women wear immodest clothes in the church (T-148); a woman wears a leather coat and shoes made from the skins of animals (T-147). There are some more complex moral dilemmas such as cosmetic surgery for overcoming social phobia (T-136) and smacking children for the purpose of discipline (T-112). These cases are more complex because they are not only personal preferences, but also cultural mores in some parts of the globe (T-113). Individuals who are criticized argue that their personal choices are neither moral deviance nor morally unjustifiable behaviour in Christian ethics (T-114). What these individuals assert is that the moral principles of majority in a community should not supersede individuals' rights, happiness and interests (T-114-1).

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6.2.3.4 Government Policies and Social Issues

Citizens in a country have different ethical perspectives on government policies and various projects carried by public institutions. Christians also have divergent moral perceptions and convictions on social issues in a postmodern and morally pluralistic society. There has been growing dissatisfaction with the modern belief based on the rationality of the universe that does not allow diversity in perception and interpretation and this movement has resulted in the emergence of the postmodern pattern of reasoning in every area of intellectual endeavour, including theology and ethics (Erickson and Hustad, 2001: 31). GEC is not an exception to this social phenomenon. Some members influenced by this intellectual movement believe that the core of contemporary Christian ethics should be anchored not on conventional thoughts or truths, but on human dignity, natural environment, and human security and freedom (T-142). This movement has changed people's mindset toward understanding moral conduct: "If a decision is legal within the social system, that is moral" (T-142-1); "Everything which is beneficial to humans is moral" (T-142-2). However, there are people who have a different moral reasoning process, asserting that what is legal is not always moral (T-143): "The core of Christian ethics is to follow biblical guidelines and principles on moral issues" (T-143-1). These distinctive perspectives have aroused disputes on various government policies and social issues such as same sex marriage (T-111), the overseas dispatch of armed forces (T-122), cloning in animals and plants (T-123), reinstating capital punishment (T-126), and sperm donation (T-127).

6.2.4 Experiences

In general, human experience is considered as a source of doing theology (Tracy, 1985: 76 and Lancaster, 2010: 314). Human experience provides a foundational

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resource for theology and theology provides a framework within which human experience is interpreted (McGrath, 2006: 148). This correlation helps Christians understand God and the Scriptures in a better way. However, it is hard to keep a balanced reciprocity between the two, but easy to observe conflicts when the importance of mutual contributions collapses. Although experience is regarded as an integral element in the exercise of theology (Lane, 1981: 1), it may become a dangerous factor causing conflicts in several aspects as follows.

6.2.4.1 Subjectivity and Particularity of Experience

Theology is responsible for giving an account of human experience. Tillich (1951: 40) understood human experience as the medium through which the sources of theology speak to us. However, some people put a question mark against human experience as a theological source because of its ambiguity. There are some experiences that cannot be interpreted within a theological framework because of their subjectivity and particularity. It is observed at GEC that the majority of people refuse to employ human experiences as reasonable sources of theology, when uncommon and subjective experiences are interpreted as special messages from God or as divine revelations (T-13). A woman preacher from Korea testified that she had been taken by an angel to see hell (T-28). Her picturesque descriptions of hell based on her vision were not received well at GEC because neither the descriptions were written in the Scriptures, nor could the descriptions make sense to the Western believers' theological framework (T-28-1). There are no clear standards to judge whether it was a God-given experience, but the first natural reaction of people is to become sceptical: "Perhaps, the vision was just her imagination or spiritual delusion" (T-28-2). The woman preacher relates people's chilly reactions to harmful consequences of enlightenment rationalism in Western society (T-

28-3). A few members from Asia and Africa agreed with the woman preacher's comments and asserted, "Western believers at GEC imprison God-given spiritual experiences in their man-made theological frameworks" (T-28-4).

The subjectivity and particularity of human experience continue to stimulate dispute in some other areas at GEC. One of the most heated controversies is about the continuation or cessation of the gifts of the Holy Spirit (T-35). Those who support continuation assert, "The gifts of the Holy Spirit are continually valid as long as the Holy Spirit is working in believers' lives" (T-36). They provide evidence for their belief from their personal experiences or experiences of others such as physical healing (T-36-1), casting demons out by prayer (T-36-2), and hearing the voice of God directly (T-36-3) or indirectly through interpretations of prophecies (T-36-4). In response to the assertion of the continuationists, the cessationists argue, "The Holy Spirit does not communicate with people through uncommon and subjective ways, but through the objectively written Scriptures" (T-37). These cessationists believe that the gifts of the Holy Spirit ceased after the first century because the primary aim of the gifts was to support the establishment of the church (T-37-1). The continuationists argue that the Holy Spirit who was able to work and speak there and then is still able to speak here and now (T-35-1).

6.2.4.2 Authority and Superiority of Experience

Another type of theological conflict regarding human experience at GEC concerns which is superior and more authoritative between the Scriptures and spiritual experience (T-38). There are few members who replace the Holy Spirit with the Scripture in the Trinity of Father, Son and the Scriptures (T-39). In order to assert that the Scriptures are

the primary and only orthodox source of theology, these people belittle the Holy Spirit and His functions in believers' lives and ascribe changes in their lives only to the power of the Gospel (T-39-1). On the contrary, some others argue that human spiritual experience is the best key to understanding God and His truth (T-40). In their beliefs, human experience is the reality of divine revelation and evidence of communication with God at present so that it must have authority over the written Scriptures that are all about past events (T-40-1). People who regard human experience superior to the Scriptures are criticized as the fundamental functions of the Scriptures are ignored in their theology because they simply believe that theology is a product of systematising human experiences (T-38-1). Another criticism against them is that they ascribe transformation in believers' lives only to the powerful works of the Holy Spirit (T-38-2).

6.2.5 Contextualization

Jesus, the Word of God, became flesh and lived among humankind to help them understand the truth in their social and cultural setting at that time in Palestine. Although we have this perfect example of contextualization, there are strained relations between text and context not only in biblical hermeneutics, but also in mission practices. One emphasizes the universality of the text and asserts, "The text is all we have and need" (T-14). Conversely, the other emphasizes the significance of context and asserts, "There is no text without context" (T-14-1). This gap is also observed at GEC and it has caused conflicts, mainly in the four subjects below.

6.2.5.1 Concept of Mission

BMM had employed a social gospel approach as its mission strategy to reach out to the poor and GEC followed the tradition until the two congregations were merged in 1998 (T-30). The doctors tried to enhance the acceptability of the Gospel through meeting the needs of the poor (T-30-1). The doctors also helped the poor experience the love of God in their own social setting through sharing the Gospel along with their medical treatment (T-30-2). This holistic approach helped the poor not only to realize that the meaning of the Gospel is relevant in their social setting, but also maximize their understanding of God and His Kingdom (T-30-3). The poor found that their lives, circumstances and troubles in their social setting were well reflected in the Gospel (T-30-4). This concept and approach of mission had been continued even though BMM was transformed into a local evangelical congregation in the 1960s. However, the merger between the two congregations brought a change, more precisely a conflict in terms of understanding concepts of mission and the methods of executing mission (T-56). The leaders of LC had framed the concept of mission contrary to the one of GEC. In their beliefs, mission is only to proclaim the Gospel directly to people in season or out of season (T-56-1). These are three main assertions from the leaders of LC against contextualization in church mission. Firstly, the Gospel is designed to be universally applicable so that everyone, regardless of his or her social and cultural setting, can understand it and be saved (T-56-2). Secondly, the Gospel cannot be reduced to political emancipation from oppression or social liberation from poverty (T-56-3) and all other attempts apart from proclaiming the Gospel disempower the Gospel (T-56-4). Finally, culture is not a medium transferring the Gospel to people, but is also to be challenged along with people to be transformed by the power of the Gospel which transcends all social and cultural circumstances (T-56-5). These viewpoints have been challenged by people from GEC asserting that the universal message of the Gospel must be delivered

and applied in diverse ways to the multidimensional contexts in which it is received for maximum effect (T-67).

6.6.5.2 Syncretism

During a Sunday morning service, a group of teenage girls performed a worship dance (T-71). It was observed that some movements in Hindu ritual dance were grafted onto a contemporary format of Christian worship dance (T-71-1). The youth leader, who is also a professional dance teacher, simply adapted the movements from the cultural aspect (T-72). Afterwards, the movements were identified by a church member from India as a part of '*Agama Nartanam*' performed in the Hindu temple for ritual purposes (T-75). This incident triggered a controversial debate on the difference between syncretism and contextualization in a multicultural context (T-77). The majority of members at GEC could not accept any kind of religious performance or practice within the church (T-77-1). In their analysis, one of the reasons that Christianity in UK is on the decline is because of an eclectic acceptance of religious elements behind cultural performances and practices in the name of cultural exchange or for the purpose of reducing tension among ethnic groups in a multicultural context (T-77-2). They assert that it is not easy to detect religious belief systems actively functioning in cultures because we are accustomed to them by their proximity in our daily lives in a multicultural context, but actually they may result in the end of Christianity (T-77-3). Conversely, one couple who spent thirteen years in Brazil as missionaries argued against the views of the vast majority at GEC: "A particular way of religious performance or practice does not affect the original belief of Christians" (T-85). Adopting a heterogeneous cultural practice is not syncretism because there is no way that our Christian belief is blended with the religious belief of the cultural practice,

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but is a way of contextualization to help the people of the culture to better understand the Gospel (T-85-1).

This debate came to the fore again as a TaeKwanDo mission team visited GEC later the same year (T-88). People were divided pro and contra in having the team at GEC (T-88-1). The main opinion of the dissenters is that TaeKwanDo is rooted in an ancient religious practice in Korea. The holy Gospel message cannot be contained in a pagan practice (T-88-2). People who viewed TaeKwanDo from that perspective expressed their concern: "Christians might lose the essence of Christianity in order to embrace the non-essential things in the pagan world" (T-88-3). The proponents of inviting the team argued that Jesus and His Gospel were not counter-cultural, but embraced aspects of cultures and challenged the same culture to be transformed (T-88-4). They evaluate TaeKwonDo in a different way so that it has become an important medium to make contact points with indigenous people in various mission fields for delivering the Gospel message (T-88-5). They continue to stress that Christians need to overcome the fear that the basic tenets of the Christianity may be changed by grafting on other cultural practices, even though there may be some religious meaning in them (T-90): "As long as a cultural addition into Christian practices does not result in creating a totally new religious belief, it should be permissible" (T-90-1).

6.2.5.3 Secularization

To what extent are worldly methods allowed in Christian ministry? The vast majority of members at GEC have the dichotomous paradigm of thinking that godly things are always good and worldly things are always bad (T-48). For example, GEC refused to receive a lottery fund for the church building extension project: "I believe

that the lottery is unbiblical, therefore, its fund is ungodly" (T-33). They believe that the offertory by church members is the unique godly method for maintaining church finance (T-33-1). A conflict cropped up in a deacon's meeting about the usage of income from a fund-raising event (T-57). The opinion that the fund-raising money could be used for a building project was dismissed by the majority who asserted that the church building extension could not be completed by non-believers' financial contributions in any form (T-57-1).

This exclusive attitude toward using external resources to complete a task or to achieve a goal is also observed in planning and executing several evangelistic events to invite unbelievers such as for a cabaret show (T-61) or barn dance (T-63). Two fundamental different views on social events in the church building seriously clashed. So-called Christian exclusionists at GEC asserted that under the pretence of creating unbeliever-friendly atmosphere, dancing to secular music in the sanctuary is a type of secularization which has been one of the main causes of the church losing authority in Western society (T-76). They stress, "It is a time for us to be more exclusivists in order to protect true Christian faith from secular influence" (T-76-1). They continue to say, "As far as evangelism is concerned, all other methods, apart from those approved by the Scriptures or inherited from the church tradition, are false and invalid" (T-76-2). Conversely, there are a few members who are adherents of a pluralistic stance supporting the idea of employing diverse ministry methods without distinguishing between godly and worldly methods (T-76-3). These pluralists argue that an inclusive stance of wisely adopting useful tools and methods from the world under the condition that they do not threaten the identity of Christianity is necessary, especially in a contemporary multicultural ministry setting (T-76-4). These inclusivists stress, "We need to bear in mind that unbelievers begin to understand the Gospel in their pre-formed culture and pre-informed knowledge" (T-79). From this inclusive perspective, the

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exclusive stance in refusing to use external resources is an act preventing unbelievers from being contacted in their cultural context and becoming interested in the Gospel (T-79-1). They clarified the difference between secularization and contextualization in their inclusive perspective as follows: secularization is about Christianity being assimilated with the world in terms of losing its religious values and institutions, but contextualization is about assisting unbelievers to understand the religious values and institutions of Christianity in their social location or cultural context (T-79-2).

6.2.6 Gender

6.2.6.1 Women in Leadership Roles

Generally, women are more religious than men, hold their beliefs more firmly, practice their faith more consistently, and work more vigorously for the congregation (Trzebiatowska and Bruce, 2012: 6). In contrast, not many churches allow women in leadership positions. GEC allows women to be selected and appointed as deacons, but not as elders (T-2). Basically, GEC stands within a complementarianism tradition on this matter (T-2-1), a point of compromise between male chauvinism asserting that men are essentially superior to women and egalitarianism emphasising that men and women have identical authority and responsibility. Members who support complementarianism assert, "Men and women are different, yet complementary in function under men's leadership, even though both are created equally in worth and dignity" (T-2-2). They present 1 Timothy 2:12 as scriptural evidence for their assertion, in which the Apostle Paul did not permit women to teach or to assume authority over men (T-2-3). Some members, mostly women, who are not satisfied with the imbalanced power relation between men and women at GEC respond by arguing that complementarianism is not much different from gender traditionalists or hierarchicalists considering women

functionally subordinate and ontologically inferior to men (T-27). These members assert that it is contradictory to the biblical teaching on equality in roles and authority between men and women according to the Apostle Paul: "There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:28, [NIV]) (T-27-1).

This debate shifted into a biblical hermeneutical issue regarding the validity in interpretations and applications of specific Scripture passages related to women in the New Testament. The opponents of complementarians believe that some commands regarding women remaining in silence (1 Cor. 14:34) or covering heads in churches (1 Cor. 11:6) were temporary principles to maintain order in the church within Greco-Roman society and influenced by the Jewish patriarchal culture (T-34). They assert that those commands do not imply primary authority of men and their leadership role above women, but simply cultural principles applicable to the original recipients and not valid in the twenty-first century as we do not practice 'greeting one another with a holy kiss (2 Cor. 13:12)' or 'washing one another's feet (John 13:14)' (T-34-1). On the contrary, complementarians argue that the sufficiency and transcendence of the Scriptures demonstrate that the word of God is always true and applicable to all human situations regardless of culture, time, and location (T-52).

6.2.6.2 Feminist Approach to Ministry

A single woman at GEC who was sexually abused by her stepfather when she was a teenager is fascinated by the feminist approach to theology (T-55). She believes that Christian theology has been distorted by the world-view of masculinity (T-55-1). She asserts that there are two typical examples of Christian theology biased by an

androcentric world-view: "God is described with masculine metaphors" (T-55-2) and "God is called Father" (T-55-3). A conflict between her and other members, especially elders, occurred because she called God Mother in her public prayer (T-80). After the prayer meeting, elders summoned her to the vestry and investigated the reason why she had called God Mother (T-80-1). Her answer was that masculine metaphors and language describing God shape the image of a male God in her mind (T-80-2) and caused her to feel difficult in building her relationship with God because of the inner trauma remaining as a negative legacy of her abusive stepfather (T-80-3). She justified herself to the elders by giving an account that she had experienced healing of inner trauma and being relieved from uncomfortable feeling caused by the authoritative descriptions of God's masculinity, when she had realized that she could call God Mother through the help of a feminist pastor (T-80-4). The elders responded by arguing that even though God has no gender because He is spirit, believers must call God Father as Jesus called Him so (T-80-5). The elders also advised that her particular experience of healing of, and liberation from, inner trauma through calling God Mother must not be generalized in the congregation (T-80-6). They were concerned that it may endanger the traditional concept of God (T-80-7). It was recommended by the elders that she would practice it in her private devotional time (T-80-8). However, several months later she organized a Bible study and fellowship group called FEAST for women in the area, in which several women from GEC joined (T-93). At the centre of her teaching in the group is that the true good news liberating women is not that women have a male Saviour, but their God is female (T-93-1). The elders became intolerant of her feminist influence on several women at GEC (T-95). Eventually, this conflict was ostensibly resolved by negotiation between the elders and her so that she would no longer allow any women from GEC to join the group, but the strained relation continued for several

months until she moved to another church where her feminist theological standpoint was accepted without any trouble (T-95-1).

6.2.7 External Policies

The previous six factors are related to theological conflicts caused by internal issues at GEC. This final factor, however, is related to different theological stances regarding GEC's external policies on cooperation with other churches of different denominations, the relationship with people of other religions and participation in social action in the area.

6.2.7.1 Local Ecumenical Partnerships

Leaders of CVC from each church meet on a regular basis for prayer and fellowship, and a worship service for everybody in the Cluster is held every two months in different churches. The leadership team of GEC was interested in joining this ecumenical movement in the area, but the majority of members were not (T-6). This difference of interest was reflected in the small number of people from GEC attending various events of CVC (T-6-1). The leadership team explained the importance of being united with local churches, even though theology and culture may vary (T-60). However, people's indifference to this ecumenical movement continued (T-60-1). It was even worse that very few people from GEC attended the launching service of KMC that was a co-operating project of CVC even though its venue was at GEC (T-68).

This ecumenical partnership issue was dealt with in a quarterly church meeting and various reasons why people did not want GEC to be part of the Cluster were

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expressed as follows (T-103). Firstly, some members simply did not like being exposed in a new Christian environment due to their personal character and difference in worship style or culture (T-103-1). CVC held special services in different churches in turn when special feasts came according to the liturgical calendar, such as Ash Wednesday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, Easter, and Christmas. Each church's characteristics of denominational tradition, doctrinal stance and ritual practices were revealed in the services and a few members of GEC did not adjust to different styles of ritual and worship (T-103-2). Secondly, there were a few people who had moved from those churches to GEC (T-103-3). A person said, "A bad memory of the past is automatically triggered when I entre my former church building" (T-103-4). Some people did not want to meet their former church members for various reasons (T-103-5). However, the underlying reason was their negative theological stereotype that it is unnecessary for an independent church to have ecumenical partnerships with churches of other denominations (T-103-6). Some at GEC have a sense of superiority that only independent evangelical non-conformists are genuine believers and that people in other institutionalized churches are no more than religious people (T-115). Many of the members thought that being united with churches in the Cluster implied doctrinal and ethical compromise (T-116): "It is impossible that we can have unity with others who have different doctrinal and ethical stances" (T-116-1). In fact, there was a serious controversy regarding divorce and remarriage of a pastor in the Cluster (T-121). The church and other churches in the same denomination allowed the pastor to remarry, but GEC strongly opposed it (T-121-1). This caused an irreversible division and, eventually, GEC withdrew its membership from the Cluster (T-121-2).

6.2.7.2 Interfaith Relationships

GEC is located in a multicultural area where immigrants from different religious backgrounds, especially Hindus and Muslims live and practice their faith in diverse ways. As independent and evangelical Christians, members at GEC tend to prohibit themselves from participating in an inter-religious conversation or activity (T-144) because some fundamentalists regard it as liberalism (T-152). Some members shared that they felt intimidated by the extreme religious attire of Muslims covering the whole body including the face and their religious performances in the street (T-144-1). This negative attitude toward interfaith relationships with local people has become a source of conflict at several points. For example, one particular member, whose relationship with her Muslim neighbour is not good, opposes the plan of a church outreach team spending church finance to support several poor Muslim families (T-144-2). In her assertion a false stereotype is observed that her neighbours are representatives of the Islamic faith, and they are extremists or terrorists (T-144-3). This view is the result of an identification between her bad experiences with her Muslim neighbour and her neighbour's Islamic faith (T-152-1). The outreach team leader argued in response that Christians should love their neighbours and build up good relationships with them regardless of their culture, behaviour and religion through practicing generosity and hospitality (T-144-4).

Another example is about the interfaith marriage of a young man (T-153). He was born and raised in a Christian family and also baptized when he was a teenager. He met a Hindu girlfriend at his university and made a decision to get married after years of the relationship. This caused disputes among members of GEC around two topics: the first is that whether or not it is biblical for a Christian to marry outside of the faith (T-153). The opponents say, "It is not biblical according to what the Apostle Paul said about Christians not marrying unbelievers" (1 Cor. 7) (T-153-1). The proponents refute, "As long as they love each other it should not be a matter of controversy" (T-153-2). They

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say that true happiness in marriage comes from the unity through love and from the trust through sharing common values in human life (T-153-3). They continued that having the same faith helps very little because there were many Christians who struggled in their marriages (T-153-4). The opponents argued that religious difference implied fundamental flaws from the beginning of marriage which might bring all kinds of problems that could not be resolved by love and trust (T-153-5).

The second topic was about whether or not it is right to allow people from other religious group to come into the church building, even in the particular situation of an interfaith wedding (T-154). The young couple decided to have their wedding ceremony, according to Christian rites at GEC because the Hindu law requires the non-Hindu partner to be converted to Hinduism before the marriage (T-154-1). The young man shared his plan and asked the church to permit them to use the church building for their wedding (T-154-2). Those who had opposed his interfaith marriage also opposed the plan to bring Hindus into the church building (T-154-3). Eventually, it was permitted by vote, but there was a condition that the marriage ceremony should not include any type of Hindu practices in their marriage rites (T-154-4).

6.2.7.3 Social Participation

According to a retired elder, one particular loss for BMM when it was transformed into an independent evangelical church was the legacy of social participation (T-117). Since the 1960s, GEC's theological stance developed into a conservative evangelicalism whose emphasis is on internal renewal of individuals rather than social reform (T-117-1). Furthermore, there was a radical change from conservative evangelism to fundamentalism in terms of social participation as a result of

the merger in 1998 (T-117-2). People from LC understood that the essence of the Gospel is redemption by the sacrifice of Christ and preaching the message of the good news to save souls is not only the primary role, but also the unique role of a local church (T-117-3). This fundamentalist view continually clashed with the view of social liberation theology. On a particular occasion, it was suggested that GEC should be part of a community project planned by local charity groups, including several local churches, aiming to tackle poverty and look after vulnerable elderly people in the area (T-139). The project was for running a food bank, providing a night shelter, topping up gas and electricity metres and supplying second-hand clothes to the poor and the homeless during the winter months (T-139-1). GEC was asked to support this project by making a financial donation, sending volunteer workers and providing the church building one night a week for the homeless (T-139-2). After much dispute, the church meeting decided that the church would not officially participate in the project, but allow individual members to voluntarily join (T-139-3). Figure 6.1 shows factors and variables under each factor in the domain of theological conflict at GEC.
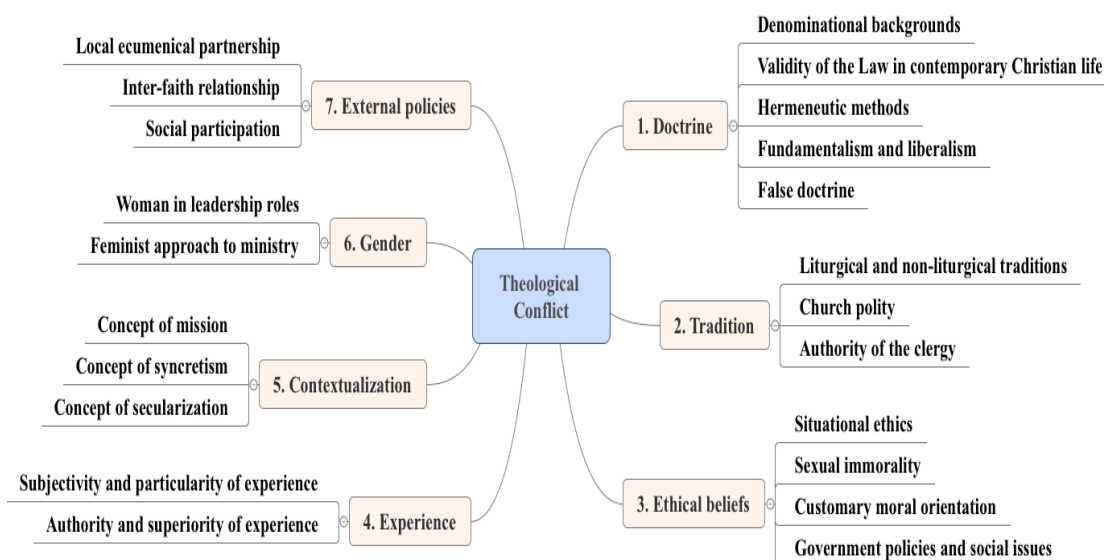
Figure 6.1 Factors and variables in the domain of theological conflict

6.3 Interpreting Factors in the Domain of Theological Conflict

The seven factors can be categorized into two types according to their nature and characteristics. The first four factors, doctrine, tradition, ethical beliefs and experience, are related to theological perception. They are sources providing particular frameworks for theological reasoning. The last three factors, contextualization, gender and external policies, are related to theological applications. They are sources providing particular perspectives for theological practices in contexts.

6.3.1 Clash of Christian Epistemology

A simple approach may suggest that theological conflicts at GEC seem to be caused by sectarianism or denominationalism. The root cause, however, is epistemological difference regarding the acquisition and justification of knowledge.

6.3.1.1 Classical Objectivism and Contemporary Constructivism

Where is reality and how is knowledge acquired? Epistemological differences regarding the acquisition of knowledge at GEC occurs between those who have a modern epistemological framework and those who have a postmodern epistemological framework. It is broadly agreed that postmodernism began in the 1950s and 1960s as a reaction to modernism (Goheen and Bartholomew, 2008: 109). However, modern cultural and philosophical frameworks are not severed, but coexist with postmodernity in contemporary societies. As a part of contemporary society, GEC also has a mixture of modern and postmodern frameworks in terms of theological reasoning.

The distinctive modern epistemology at GEC is classical objectivism. On the other hand, contemporary constructivism reveals postmodern patterns of theological reasoning. Objectivists at GEC think that theological understanding exists externally separated from them (T-118). They believe that knowledge is acquired when their theological reasoning is stimulated by information from knowers who are supposed to possess the knowledge that seems to be an objective standard of truth (T-118-1). Therefore, they are devoted to conforming to their doctrines, traditions and ethical beliefs established and transferred by their denominations (T-118-2). In this respect, a denomination is regarded as an agent representing and controlling knowledge and order, and an individual's theological framework is shaped by the agent. They are assured that certainty in every aspect of Christian life, which is the most important value in modernity, is continually secured by keeping the existing reality (T-119).

On the contrary, constructivists at GEC deny the existing method to acquire knowledge because in their belief, knowledge is not inculcated by teachers, but constructed by learners (T-120). They argue that there is no absolutely valid method in the acquisition of knowledge. From their perspective, learning is not adopting existing knowledge generated by someone, but adapting themselves to the world where they construct knowledge through making sense of their experiences (T-124). Therefore, for constructivists at GEC, personal experience in the Christian life is more important than existing doctrines, traditions and ethical beliefs formulated by others. These constructivists assert that doctrines, traditions and ethical beliefs that do not reflect personal experiences are irrelevant (T-128). From their viewpoint, theological frameworks should not be shaped by the authoritative agents, but by individuals and their knowledge based in their experiences (T-129).

One particular area that this distinctive difference is clearly observed is biblical hermeneutics. Objectivists at GEC employ the author-centred approach and constructivists employ the reader-centred approach. Objectivists believe that authors determine the meanings so that biblical exegesis is merely to reveal the meanings (T-130). Otherwise, the doctrine that God inspired all the authors so that the Scriptures are true words of God becomes useless (T-130-1). On the other hand, constructivists believe that the meanings are determined by the readers' interpretations based on their social and cultural experiences and contexts (T-130-3). They stress that neither existing commentaries nor their own findings in exegesis can be accepted as normative knowledge for other readers (T130-4).

6.3.1.2 Revelational Presuppositionalism and Evidentialism

How do we know what we believe is true? Knowledge acquired should be justified for its truthfulness. Revelational presuppositionalism is an approach in Christian theology to justify knowledge on the basis that truth, logic, meaning and value can exist only on the presupposition that the biblical God exists (Beilby, 2011: 99). In other words, the presupposition that God is the centrality of knowledge is essential to justify the truthfulness and correctness of what we know. Presuppositionalists assert that the true and infallible knowledge is revealed to those who have a belief in God and it is not achieved by the usual path of understanding, but a gift bestowed upon select individuals through a supernatural intervention by God (Sparks, 2008: 45). In this respect, presuppositionalism has two distinctive characteristics in relation to theological conflicts at GEC. Firstly, presuppositionalists at GEC are involved in the concept of 'theonomous knowledge' that is acquired and justified by God's revelation of the Scriptures and is based on His authority (T-155). Secondly, the approach of

presuppositionalists at GEC is close to Calvinism emphasizing not only the total depravity and inability of human reason to know the truth, but also God's irresistible grace upon the select in relation to predestination (T-155-1).

On the other hand, evidentialism is an approach in theology to justify knowledge not by logic, but by revealing evidence. Evidentialists are not opposed to logic, but to them it is not the main criterion for the justification of their claims (Olson, 2013: 633). Instead, they try to establish authority and reliability for what they know by presenting internal and external evidence normally subject to individuals' interpretations in relation to acknowledging the ability of human reason to know the truth. Evidentialists at GEC are associated with the concept of 'autonomous knowledge' that is acquired and justified by human perception and is based on authority of human reason (T-156). They have a close relation to Arminianism (T-156-1) whose emphasis is on man's free will that man has not been left in a state of total helplessness, but still in an autonomous status in reasoning by God's grace to repent, to seek Him and to know the truth (Standford, 1983: 316).

Conflicts caused by these distinctive epistemological approaches in theological justification are observed in several areas at GEC. One is about understanding salvation. Presuppositionalists who hold a deductive reasoning approach believe that salvation is an event accomplished by efforts of God, regardless of human conditions (T-140). On the other hand, evidentialists who hold an inductive reasoning approach believe that salvation is accomplished in combination between God's efforts and human responses (T-140-1). Another issue is about the authority of the Scriptures. Presuppositionalists believe that the Scriptures are the prime source of Christian faith and the centrality of Christian knowledge (T-141). On the contrary, evidentialists believe that the Scriptures are collections of human experiences about God in order to provide appropriate internal

evidence to know God along with external evidence such as scientific truth and archaeological discoveries (T-141-1). The last issue is about the authority of clergy. Presuppositionalists at GEC regard clergy as a man of God appointed by God for the purpose of exposing and spreading His truth (T-145). On the contrary, evidentialists regard clergy as just one of the congregation, whose talent or role is to preach (T-145-1).

6.3.2 Clash in Christian Praxis

6.3.2.1 Deontology and Consequentialism

Christianity combines orthodoxy which is correct doctrine, and orthopraxis which is correct action. How Christian praxis can be defined and judged as good or bad and right or wrong has become another overarching issue in relation to theological conflict at GEC. Deontologists at GEC define Christian praxis as practice informed and determined by absolute and objective rules and principles based on the Scriptures (T-131). Therefore, for deontologists the correct Christian practice is judged and legitimized by reflection of those rules and principles before they undertake it (T-131-1). In this respect, the deontological approach is relevant to principlism whose primary interest is to provide a framework by which people make decisions regarding their practices. Both deontology and principlism are generally regarded as a conservative approach considering texts, theories, principles, norms or values in practice much more important than situations or contexts where their practices take place and the consequences of their practices. Deontologists at GEC believe that an action which can be legitimized as right or good practice is the one which faithfully follows the framework provided by the community (T-131-2). There is no room for negotiation or flexibility in their practice because they are more interested in maintaining social order

through conducting expected practices within the social norms than emancipating a few people from social injustice through resisting the existing customary framework (T-132).

On the other hand, consequentialists at GEC define Christian praxis as practice executed to promote good and right consequences (T-134). Therefore, for consequentialists, the correct Christian practice is judged and legitimized by the good consequences produced by the practice after they undertake it (T-134-1). They believe that the worth and meaning of their practice are determined by its consequences. In this respect, consequentialists at GEC have a philosophical connection with utilitarianism or pragmatism which claims that the most important standard of Christian practice is its usefulness (T-135). In other words, they believe that what is good is what is working to produce practical consequences regardless of what theories and norms say about the motive and process of their practices (T-135-1). Their focus is not on preserving the authority of rules and principles, but on interpreting situations and the contexts of individuals to increase their satisfaction. They are more interested in the liberty or freedom of individuals than the security of their communities (T-137). Deontologists criticize consequentialists for legitimizing their practice subjectively because what is good in their belief system is based on self-centred interpretation without the consent of the public (T-132-1).

6.3.2.2 Inclusiveness and Exclusiveness

It is found that the issue regarding the legitimacy of Christian praxis is closely connected with the scope of Christian praxis at GEC. The scope of Christian praxis has a twofold meaning. Firstly, it is about establishing the extent in relation to ethical judgments and policies of ecumenical partnerships and of interfaith relationships.

Owing to the plurality and the complexity of contemporary ministry contexts, it becomes hard to draw a clear borderline in Christian practice to know whether or not it is biblically or theologically acceptable. However, exclusivists at GEC claim that the Scriptures and evangelical theology provide perspicuous and clear guidelines for Christian ministry (T-157). From their perspective, the social and cultural environments and contexts of Christian ministry vary extremely and change rapidly so that there is a danger of Christianity losing its identity through conceding to all the demands (T-158). In their belief, it would be better to adhere to the guidelines and standards provided to make their practice safest and best (T158-1). On the other hand, inclusivists at GEC assert that no guidelines without reflecting human situations are exclusively true and no interpretations irrelevant to human circumstances are absolutely perfect (T-159). Inclusivists at GEC assert that Christian practices are not only for those who are supposed to be within the boundary of Christendom, but also for everybody, particularly the disenfranchised, the marginalized, the oppressed and the poor regardless of their ethical beliefs or denominational and religious background (T-161).

Secondly, the scope of Christian praxis is about establishing the permissible limit in terms of employing diverse methods in Christian ministry. This issue is linked with the controversies on syncretism and secularization described in the analysis. Conservativists at GEC refuse change because they could not find any error in their practical theology and set of methods and skills that are still valid and applicable to their ministry context (T-138). They have scepticism toward considering useful methods, skills, and programmes that are used in the world to employ in Christian ministry (T-138-1). They have the tendency to be associated with only one belief and the set of methods and skills that are regarded as authentic. An illogical connection is observed in their pattern of reasoning that adherence to traditional beliefs and ministry methods are true evangelicalism (T-146). In contrast, liberalists at GEC refuse to follow the

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established ministry practices which are not creative or attractive, but conventional and anachronous from their viewpoint (T-149). They understand theology as theory and practice that must relate the teachings of the Scriptures to data found in other disciplines that deal with the same subject matter (Erickson and Hustad, 2001: 16). From their perspective, it is not acceptable to claim that only those traditional methods or skills are sacred and superior over others (T-149-1). They assert that GEC should be open to adopt a variety of useful methods and skills that can produce better consequences because one belief and set of methods and skills are not adequate for complex contexts and people from diverse backgrounds (T-149-2).

6.4 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have analysed seven factors to give factual accounts not only for the main causes of theological conflict, but also for their nature and characteristics. Each factor reveals its own distinctive features causing and developing theological conflicts at GEC. However, there is a commonality that theological conflicts at GEC occurred between two parties who have different perspectives and approaches in doing theology and church ministry. One party is traditional, hierarchical, authoritative, text-centred, emphasising order. The other party is reformative, egalitarian, humanistic, context-centred and emancipatory. I described and explained in the analysis section how the differences between the two parties function as catalysts increasing the rate of reactions from both parties toward theological issues and eventually, triggering conflicts. I have also interpreted data in a conceptual way on the basis of the discoveries through data analysis to make sense of theological conflicts at GEC in relation to explicating the different theological perceptions and practices of the two parties. The different theological foundations between 'modernism and postmodernism' and between

'conservatism and liberalism' have caused theological conflicts because they provide different theories for theological perceptions and different methods for theological practices.

The overall conclusion in relation to the theoretical background in chapter two is that theological conflicts at GEC are S-W (structural and within-frame) type. Theological conflicts at GEC are structural in that they are caused by external factors leading to disagreement between the parties. They are inter-group conflicts so that the personalities of individuals in each party are not involved in the conflicts. Theological conflicts at GEC can be described as horizontal between the two parties of equal status. It means that there is no final arbiter above the two parties internally and externally to judge and manage the theological conflicts at GEC. Theological conflicts are related to the micro-level of political conflicts because the two parties involved in the political conflicts are also involved in the theological conflicts. However, there is no clear evidence that theological disputes between the two parties have been used for their political purposes. Theological conflicts at GEC are genuine theological controversies that can be observed in an urban-based independent evangelical multicultural church in contemporary UK. In this respect, they are a 'within-frame' conflict that is caused by diverse approaches, methods and interests among parties, even though they share the same values and identity of the organization. Although their theological perspectives and approaches vary, the two parties at GEC are still within the frame of evangelicalism, including neo-evangelicalism which emerged from the reaction against fundamentalist evangelicalism during the late 1940s (Henry, 2003: ix). Neo-evangelicals have tried to reform traditional evangelical formulas through constructive engagement and dialogue with postmodern culture and philosophy (Olson, 2004: 57). They desire to be theological pioneers rather than guardians of fundamental evangelicalism (Olson, 2004: 57) and this reformative attitude allows for the diversification of evangelical traditions

to grow as a result of its increasing cultural and geographical diffusion as well as of divergent strategic responses by evangelicals to the inroads made by challenges from diverse contexts (Stanley, 2013: 27). Theological conflicts at GEC are also caused by the diversification of evangelical traditions having grown through the merger and multiculturalization.

Chapter Seven

Data Analysis and Interpretation
in the Domain of the Micro-level of Political Conflict

7.1 Introduction

Aristotle insisted that human beings are by nature political animals (De Aquino and Regan, 2007: 16). Later, the Stoics, like Seneca, called humans social animals (Morais da Costa, 2011: 38). Thomas Aquinas synthetically claimed that human beings are social and political animals (Regan, 2003: 213). According to these philosophers, by nature, human beings form and maintain relationships in a society not only to fulfil their desires and virtues, but also to survive and to overcome human vulnerability. In any society, people communicate and express their opinions to make decisions and establish policies. People form governing bodies and grant authority to elect leaders for effectiveness of administration. Some members who do not agree with the ruling party's direction or policy may form an opposition party. In this way, people consciously or unconsciously take part in political activities in diverse forms.

The church is not exempted from politics. Some Christian denominations, particularly Pentecostalism in Asia, believe that a true Christian should be above politics, above class, above nation, above the world and above everything (Anderson and Tang, 2005: 446). However, church history informs us that the church was heavily involved in politics during the medieval period and it still has great influence on how other social organizations and states make policies and laws. This is macro-politics that the church is engaged in along with other social organizations including the government.

However, the phenomena that I am going to analyse and interpret in this chapter are not those observed in the macro-politics that the church gets involved in, but those in micro-politics that are related to people's political behaviour within a local congregation. Micro-politics in the local congregational context do not only mean the political behaviour of members through everyday interactions in ministries, but also being aware of the power relations in the congregations and challenging and changing political structures. I have defined a local congregation in chapter two, not only as a faith community, but also as a social organization. If the church is partially a human gathering in a social perspective, we need to acknowledge that there are 'acceptance and rejection' and 'agreement and disagreement' among individuals or groups according to their political relationships as well as personal interests and theological inclinations. It means the micro-level political conflicts are naturally observed in political interactions of members in a local congregation.

7.2 Data Analysis in the Domain of Political Conflict

Micro-level political conflicts at GEC began with the merger in 1998 between GEC and LC. Although the merger brought several benefits to the church, both congregations began to realize that there was an invisible barrier between them so that they could not become united as one. This brought anxiety to both congregations in the initial period and the anxiety turned into fear for their future. This fear triggered micro-level political conflicts at GEC. The fear from the congregations pressurized leaders from both congregations to take the initiative through tactical plans and actions. These pressures shifted the situation from taking the initiative to fighting for hegemony and dominance. These initial conflicts were underpinned by a latent element of incompatibility that increased the polarization between the two parties. The

incompatibility is related to different values and directions that both congregations had pursued and different identities that both congregations had formed and maintained before the merger. This latent element of conflict manifested as animosity between the congregations and developed into a power struggle that was more aggressive than the initial fight for hegemony. When multiculturalization began in 2004, it was expected that the process would mitigate the situation. They believed that the ethnic minorities would become a buffer zone as a disinterested third party between the two conflicting parties. However, political conflicts entered upon a new phase because the ethnic minorities intentionally or coincidentally began to get involved in the political conflicts. Whereas initially, multiculturalization eased the situation, it intensified the conflict in the final outcome.

7.2.1 Fear

7.2.1.1 Fear of Change

It is natural that people have fear when they walk a path into an unknown world. It is risky to leave the comfort zone and take a new adventure. The merger between GEC and LC offered not only hope, but also fear. Firstly, both congregations had a fear of changes. There were some people from the both congregations who did not want to be disturbed by any changes in their church life through the merger (P-38). Some elderly people from GEC wanted the rooms and halls to be used according to their designated purposes. For instance, they could not tolerate it when the vestry was used by young mothers as a breast-feeding room (P-49) or when the room which had been used for the deacons' meeting and prayer was converted into storage (P-117). Some people, who had been members of GEC for a long time, indeed since it was still BMMC, had strong historical attachments to the furniture dedicated to commemorate old

members, friends, and their family members, and to rooms and halls which were full of good memories (P-34). A worn out couch thrown out by people from LC was brought in by people from GEC the next day and the same thing happened three more times (P-39). Fear of change was mostly caused by people's realization that there were distinctive differences between the two congregations. They began to observe dissonance that they had not had before in their own congregation. People disagreed and were dissatisfied with different styles and structures of worship, preaching (P-88-1) and leadership (P-28). Some people did not want to change the format of the leadership team after the merger because they were satisfied with their leaders and leadership structure (P-102).

7.2.1.2 Fear of Loss

People did not want to lose what had deeply become part of their church life. People feared losing their existing privileges which they had had for a long time. A disabled person had a fear of losing the disabled parking-bay designated to him and did not allow another disabled person from the other congregation to park in the bay (P-26). Some people sat on the same chairs and did not allow anyone else to sit on them (P-115). Some elderly people did not welcome people from the other congregation who might affect their long-term intimate relationships (P-132). However, the thing they feared most was losing their long-term involvement and roles in the church, such as Sunday school teacher, worship leader, door steward, and youth leader (P-113). They rejected spontaneous offers of help from people who were also involved in the same ministries for a long time in the other congregation (P-47).

7.2.1.3 Fear of Failure

The merger was not agreed by everyone from the beginning. There were people from both sides who expressed their negative opinions on the merger (P-116). Their main concern was that the merger was decided and executed by people who had never experienced it before without professional advice from experts in the field (P-118). Some people from both sides evaluated the other congregation on the basis of negative information they heard about the present leaders or about mistakes that the other congregation made in the past. For example, GEC was notorious for the unfair dismissal of pastors so that some people from LC were concerned about their leaders (P-120). Some members from LC thought that it was a complete failure for them to leave the area for which LC had begun its diverse ministry with clear visions (P-119).

7.2.1.4 Fear of Uncertainty

One reason that some people had a fear of uncertainty at GEC was due to the disorder caused by the lack of organization. The number of the congregation suddenly became double through the merger so that the facilities needed extra care. The facilities were used more frequently by more people, but a maintenance policy or methods were not developed yet (P-91). People used tools and utensils for cleaning and cooking and left them anywhere, so that others could not find them (P-121). It caused more serious feeling of uncertainty that there was no clear direction in terms of the vision of the merged church (P-122). Ambiguity in ministry direction made people confused: "I am afraid of the fact that no one can tell precisely what the purposes of the merger were and where we are heading" (P-124). Insecurity caused by the maladaptive behaviour of a leader from the opposite congregation made some people feel uncomfortable (P-88-4). Some people doubted the capability and competence of leaders from the other

congregation and felt insecure in terms of confidence in their ministry ethos (P-125), emotional stability (P-88-2), personality (P-92-3), and integrity in theology (P-123).

7.2.2 Initiative

7.2.2.1 Competition

Anxiety and fear caused and underpinned by the variables described above began to pressurize the leaders of both parties to take the initiative in the merged congregation. Therefore, leaders chose competition rather than collaboration between the two parties, in order to satisfy people from their own congregation, to occupy more and higher positions (P-2, P-29 and P-30), and to secure limited resources (P-130). In the early stages of the merger, the main task and role of leaders from GEC was looking after the premises, finance and administration. The leaders from LC were involved in ministry development. This was agreed by the both parties, in order for one party to counterbalance the other in terms of power-sharing. As leaders from both parties exercised their power in their involvement, several phenomena that intensified competition between the two parties were observed. Leaders from GEC began to exert their influence on people from LC to gain a competitive advantage in the struggle to take an early lead in terms of governance (P-1 and P-27). For example, they did not give the church keys to people from LC to use the premises for several months after the merger (P-131). They also made arbitrary decisions without accepting opinions from the leaders of LC (P-4). On the other hand, leaders from LC excluded people from GEC in terms of nominating workers in different departments of ministries (P-129). Some people from GEC were neglected from pastoral care and excluded from social events by leaders from LC (P-35). Rules for discipline were not applied equally when an

interpersonal conflict occurred between a person from GEC and another person from LC (P-5).

7.2.2.2   Manipulation

Manipulation is defined as a selfish ambition aimed to influence the perception or behaviour of people with covert and deceptive tactics (Amory, 2013: 17). Sometimes, communication becomes a means by which power is operated and it is used to manipulate some to believe that logical fallacies are true. One particular item is propaganda, which is a type of manipulation, using significant symbols such as words, pictures or tunes (Cull et al., 2003:319). Propaganda aims to influence people through providing one-sided information to obtain the desired results. Leaders from both sides used prayer meetings (P-46), preaching (P-8), and announcements during the service (P-65) as opportunities to accuse or criticize the other leaders from the opposing party. Sometimes, they attacked opponents by slandering (P-85) or spreading rumours about them (P-60).

In an organization, normally the higher a person's position is, the more important is the information that he deals with. Sometimes, the possession of information gives power for dominating others. This is a reason that people in organizations compete for higher positions and make efforts to secure their territories in order to restrict access to information. This general understanding about obtaining and retaining power through controlling information was applied at GEC. Important information was withheld from certain people and shared with only a few people (P-126) or distorted information was given to the other party (P-64 and P-127). The accurate information regarding agendas was not distributed before a meeting and people were forced to make decisions without full information on matters (P-128). It happened for the benefit of just one party without

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considering the congregation as a whole. Manipulators know the vulnerabilities of the victims as some people are vulnerable to pressure. They constantly criticized (P-41 and P-45), accused (P-15 and P-31), and even intimidated (P-54) the same people in order to pressurize them. Sometimes manipulators diverted people's attentions and interests from the present matter which would be disadvantageous to the party by creating another issue (P-86 and P-109). Lastly, ingratiation makes people vulnerable in terms of making right decisions with clear discernment. Leaders flattered some people from the opposing party to make them temporary supporters on certain matters (P-58).

7.2.2.3 Power Imbalance

The balance of power was defined by the American President Wilson during the First World War as an unstable equilibrium of competitive interests determined by the sword (Sheehan, 2000: 77). When the leadership team was initially formed, the number of elders and deacons were equally apportioned to both congregations to create an optimum status for maintaining the symmetry of power because they predicted that the imbalance of power would threaten the order and security of the merged church. They believed that the balance of power could at least play its role as a self-regulating mechanism through the dispersion of power and roles. However, this did not last long and leaders from LC rejected the balance of power as a way of maximising the power for dominant influence in the church (P-91-1). They tried to appoint more leaders from their side to take the initiative through numerical preponderance (P-91-3).

7.2.3 Animosity
7.2.3.1 Incompatibility

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The animosity between the two groups gradually grew as the aspect of micro-level political conflicts changed from taking the initiative to holding the hegemony. This deep-seated enmity was due to the realization of incompatibility between the two groups. At the first annual general meeting since the merger, people from LC who pursued dominance presented their concepts on the reality of a local congregation situated in a contemporary city and their view of church governance (P-133). People from GEC were pressurized to consent to those concepts presented by people from LC. People from GEC denied the pressure and held on to their own concepts: "We rejected their understandings of a local church and their ways of doing ministries because we thought that consensus automatically meant becoming a subordinate group" (P-134).

7.2.3.1.1 Incompatibility in Identities

During the 1960s BMM was transformed into a non-charismatic evangelical church. Its members were mostly lower class people and they were proud of their long-term legacy. On the contrary, LC was born out of the house church movement in the 1970s and grew as a charismatic evangelical church. Members of LC were made up of the middle class and they were reform-minded people. When the two congregations merged, both congregations were anxious about losing their identities, traditions and legacies which had been developed in their own contexts and church histories (P-21). People from GEC were especially anxious about losing their tangible and intangible spiritual heritage, so much so that they imbued articles with special and significant meanings (P-3). However, people from LC tried to get rid of all the articles which seemed to be symbols of old GEC. For instance, two leaders from LC smashed the huge wooden pulpit made and dedicated by a member from GEC (P-114). It intensified the animosity and increased the level of hostility. After a while, the leadership team decided

to replace the hard wooden chairs with comfortable upholstered chairs. When the congregations voted, the majority of people from GEC rejected the suggestion (P-36). They expressed a few reasons such as saving finance for other purposes or the usefulness of those old wooden chairs. However, according to the result of in-depth interviews that I took with several members from GEC after the church meeting, a majority of people said that those old wooden chairs were the last symbol of old GEC (P-18).

7.2.3.1.2 Incompatibility in Values

Due to these distinctive differences in relation to their background, history, characteristics of members, and theological inclinations, what they valued and pursued were also different (P-14). As mentioned above, the understanding of the roles and functions of a local church consisting of two congregations was incompatible. The majority of people from GEC viewed a local church as a Christian charity existing and working for public benefits. This view was held especially by elderly people who used to be members of BMM (P-7). The emphasis of their ministry was doing good deeds through charitable works. Fund-raising projects and running a food bank were as vital as attending Sunday services. On the other hand, people from LC viewed the local church as a salvage boat for saving souls (P-135). They denied the slogan created and used by people from GEC that a church is a bridge between God and its community (P-136). They tried to abolish all the events and programmes that GEC had been doing for the community and to establish more spiritual activities such as Bible study, evangelism, cell group meetings, and prayer meetings (P-96). These two fundamentally different viewpoints on the core values, visions and functions of a local church caused them to clash and the level of enmity to grow.

7.2.4 Power Struggles

The aspect of political conflicts between the two parties became more aggressive, so that the latent causes of conflicts began to manifest in antagonistic reactions to each other. The situation entered upon a new phase in obtaining power. Normally, power struggle occurs in an organization when two parties are equally committed to winning in order to acquire the dominant position. It means each party wants to break the power balance that is in roughly equal proportions in order to subdue the other party. However, the power balance at GEC was already broken during the initial period of struggles for the initiative and LC became the stronger side and GEC became the weaker side (P-139) because people from LC were reform-minded people who had financial power and were from a higher social stratum. At this point of time, each party had different reasons for seeking power. LC sought power to reinforce the control over the opponent (P-137). On the other hand, GEC sought power not to be victimized in the struggle (P-138). Therefore, LC naturally developed offensive-oriented behaviour and GEC developed defence-oriented behaviour.

7.2.4.1 Offence-oriented Behaviour: Sabotage and Elimination

The two methods of offensive-oriented behaviour of LC in the power struggle phase were sabotage and elimination. Sabotage means hindering or incapacitating the opponents. Elimination means removing the opponents from their positions or from the church in the worst case scenario. In the struggles for the initiative, one party forced the other party to concede to its demands or to promote or defend its principles in passive-aggressive forms. However, when the phase of the political conflicts shifted into the

power struggle, each party deliberately tried to disrupt and incapacitate its opponent to prevent it from reaching its fullest potential. People from GEC had special affection for the church building and many memorials such as picture frames, candle stands, lectern, and desk, because they represented their history. On the other hand, people from LC thought that people from GEC were dwelling in the past so that they tried to get rid of all those artefacts (P-40-1). People from LC believed that they were in the new era and the only way to succeed was in the discontinuity of the tradition of GEC (P-40-2). While this struggle was going on, a fire broke out and burnt everything inside apart from the structure of the building. People from LC interpreted this fire as a blessing from God and as confirmation that God had supported their reforms: "I believe that God sent the fire through which God achieved what we could not do" (P-6); "The fire got rid of all the traditional things that GEC was obsessed with" (P-6-1); "The fire proved that God was on our side" (P-6-2).

A form of sabotage is to damage the emotional, cultural and historical foundation providing the meaning of existence of a particular group of people through speaking and spreading untrue statements to destroy its reputation (P-40). Another form of sabotage is to deliberately prevent an opponent from playing his or her role in a strategic way in order to cause the person to feel frustrated (P-42). In order to incapacitate the other party, opportunities to take part in various ministries such as preaching, conducting the communion or baptism, were not given during this period (P-94). One example is that no one from GEC was put forward as a candidate for the position of new deacons (P-62). The worst form of sabotage in the power struggle at GEC was to eliminate political opponents from the church. A number of people resigned from their ministry positions and left the church during this period (P-11, P-66, P-78, P-103, P-107). The most common case was to pressurize a person to resign. There were several methods used to cause a person to be frustrated and to consider resigning. Firstly, they accused a person

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of making a small mistake and over-analysed it (P-71). Afterwards, the person was suspended from his involvement as punishment (P-59). Sometimes, they intimidated a person (P-43 and P-12). Another method was prophecy under the pretext of delivering God's message during a prayer meeting that a particular person would leave the church (P-89). Once the prophecy was heard by everyone in the prayer meeting, it caused great disturbance and intensified the conflict situation so that eventually the person left and they believed that it was a verification of the prophecy from God (P-97). Another method is mischief-making. They secretly spread rumours to cause disagreement or division among people in the opposite party to take advantage of the situation (P-10). The most painful form of elimination was to suddenly replace a person who had been involved in a particular ministry for decades with another person without any notice (P-9).

7.2.4.2 Defence-oriented Behaviour: Rebellion and Retaliation

Rebellion is resistance in order to be free from restraint or attack by the stronger. Retaliation means taking revenge in any forms. People from GEC developed their defence mechanisms in the situation that the once impenetrable power dynamics became unbalanced. Defence mechanisms on the micro-level are normally understood as unconscious intra-psychic processes serving to provide relief from emotional conflict and anxiety (Stone, 1988: 45). Defence mechanisms on the macro-level are also observed as the weaker group chooses a way of defence to make the best of a conflict situation primarily to survive and secondarily to regain the power balance. However, a problem in terms of employing a particular strategy of a defence mechanism at GEC was that the weaker group tended to choose an immature and aggressive defence mechanism to cause damage to the dominant party. There were several people from GEC who declared themselves rebels fighting against the dominant party (P-70). They

did not attend any official meetings like Sunday morning and evening services, prayer meetings, or meals together (P-22). They did not acknowledge the authority of elders (P-13). They created several groups such as the Feast for Women's Fellowship and the Fusion for Youth, and they had fellowship only by themselves (P-140). They did not inform the elders of any events they organized or submit any reports on the structure, purpose and finance of the groups (P-141). All the helpers of the Fusion and its summer camp were those who had left the church after the merger for various reasons, most having been eliminated in the power-struggle (P-141-1).

Another defence mechanism was retaliation. A passive way of retaliation was preventing the other party from getting opportunities and positions in ministries. For instance, when a person from the other party was being considered as a deacon or an elder in the leadership team, they slandered the candidate (P-142). A dominant elder from LC was constantly being accused of neglecting his pastoral responsibilities (P-95 and P-99) and eventually his resignation was unilaterally announced, without his consent, during a morning service as a retributive action (P-75). After the elder left the church, they immediately formed a new leadership team which was exactly the same leadership structure that GEC used to have before the merger (P-100 and P-144). The new leadership team was composed of people only from GEC as an expression of their desire for a reversion to the original status of GEC before the merger in terms of leadership structure and church polity (P-145). People from GEC interpreted this as a victory through regaining power in the long-term power-struggle (P-145-1). Some people, who had been eliminated and left the church, returned and began to attend meetings (P-94). Eventually, they tried to remove those who were appointed by the dominant elder and took back their positions (P-61). When the elder expressed his desire to return to the church and resume his former leadership position, all the new GEC leaders rejected it strongly and disallowed him to come back (P-83 and P-143).

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7.2.5 Schism

7.2.5.1 Distrust

The combination of the variables in the power struggle described above gradually intensified the political conflict and led to a clear schism between the two groups. There are several variables which aggravated fractionalization at GEC. One of them was distrust. People began to view everything as a political matter. Appointing deacons for different duties was not interpreted as a way of doing church ministry any longer, but as church politics (P-63). In other words, people perceived that deacons were not appointed to carry out different duties for church ministry, but instead to increase political influence in order to take control or even to overthrow the other party by having enough people from their own side on the leadership team (P-108). After a Sunday evening Bible study, several people felt that discussions were not purely based on the Bible text, but on political relations between the two groups (P-52). When a particular person preached, some people from the other party did not come to church on the Sunday (P-53). Ordinary members who did not get involved in the power-struggle were confused by the distorted information provided by their own leaders, including false accusations (P-105), rumours (P-55) and gossip (P-90). This caused severe distrust of people from the other party and as a result, one party disassociated from the other party and treated them as opponents (p-57), excluding them from meetings (p56) or leaving the church with disappointment (p50). Distrust hardened people's hearts and caused them to be apathetic toward any matters which arose in the church (P-84).

7.2.5.2 Divisiveness

It was agreed that Sunday morning service would begin with all-age worship and when it was time to listen to a sermon, the infants, junior and youths would move to their own activities. Sunday school teachers followed the agreement, but the youth leaders did not follow this format as they were against the elders (P-17). While Sunday morning services were going on, youths and their leaders met in the other hall (P-67). To make the matters worse, there were some adults in the youth meeting who did not want to go to the main service because of their hatred towards the preacher from the other party (P-87). This particular phenomenon brought a dispute about whether there was one church or there were two churches each Sunday in the building (P-20).

One particular item, which affected divisiveness in the church, was the social and economic strata of people in the two conflicting groups. The dominant group, whose majority members were middle class people, drew a distinctive line to give prominence to the superiority of the group through comparing their abilities, resources, and achievements with the ones of others not only within the church ministries, but also in their social and professional lives (P-76). There were several phenomena derived incidentally from the divisiveness caused by social and economic strata. Firstly, people who regarded themselves as superior created their own house groups and met by themselves (P-115). Secondly, they discriminated against socially lower class people in terms of preventing them from getting involved in different ministries and taking their names out of various rotas, for example, serving the Holy Communion, Bible readings and flower arrangements (P-24). Thirdly, they did not respect a particular elder and did not acknowledge his leadership because of his occupation (P-48). Lastly, they did not listen to the advice of elders and did not accept discipline from the leadership team (P-51).

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On the other hand, the subordinate group boasted of the church's long history and its spiritual and social influence for the poor by providing medical treatment and proclaiming the Gospel in the past. They were substantially obsessed with their history and tradition, which became another distinctive item of divisiveness. A lady, in her 80s, had kept all the leaflets, photos, newsletters, publications, correspondence, and annual reports printed since she joined BMM as a little girl. People from LC criticized the fact: "Some elderly people idolize artefacts and worship other tangible articles of BMM" (P-146). The merger was essentially intended to unite and enable them to share each other's legacy and heritage, but some people from GEC were too seriously imbued with their own history and tradition. They did not want any change to happen in the church (P-37). In some ministry departments, new workers were urgently needed to make things work and to introduce some new skills and perspectives to the existing workers. There were some people who voluntarily tried to step into different ministries, but most of the time they were refused by those who tried to maintain their vested rights in what they had been doing for a long time at GEC (P-147).

7.2.5.3 Injustice

The third variable in relation to the schism was injustice felt by the inequality, unfairness and unjustness in opportunities, discipline and admonition, and responsibilities. Inequality is a violation of a person's right to be treated equally. There were a number of people who wanted to join the worship band, but opportunities were not equally given to everybody (P-25). An elder visited only those who were from his group for pastoral visitations (P-80) or prayed only for those who were close to him in the public intercessory prayer (P-69). Some people experienced unfair treatment when matters arose between them and others because the process of investigation, judgment

and punishment were biased (P-106). When two individuals made similar mistakes on different occasions, one was severely disciplined while the other was not (P-72). It was reported several times that people intentionally overstepped others' boundaries to offend or irritate them (P-81). They undermined the authority and responsibility of others given for specific works in the church (P-82). Some interfered in the works of others inappropriately to cause obstacles (P-16).

7.2.5.4 Victim Mentality

After ten years of power struggle, both parties began to exhibit a victim mentality, a kind of self-image of victimization affecting individuals or a group with a pervasive sense of anger and resentment as well as of helplessness, pessimism, and defeatism. Victim mentality played a role during this period when both parties thought they were victims devastated by the other party (P-92-1). This phenomenon increased the degree of hatred and resentment towards the other party. According to the results of in-depth interviews, people from GEC believed that people from LC destroyed all the good traditions of GEC (P-148-1). On the other hand, LC thought the merger was advantageous only to GEC and they were exploited to serve the purposes of GEC during the ten years (P-148-2). These two completely different assessments on the merger prove the seriousness of the schism between the two groups. This victim mentality caused both parties to misjudge or misinterpret the other party's real motives or good intentions on various occasions (P-98 and P-104) and became a hindrance in preventing reconciliation between the two groups.

7.2.6 Multiculturalization

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7.2.6.1 Inexperience

The micro-level political conflict at GEC entered upon a new phase in 2004 as multiculturalization began in the church through launching KMC in order to equip international Christians with English and mission studies. Multiculturalization began five years after the merger. As the two groups had been unable to resolve the political conflicts on their own, they both welcomed the multiculturalization process expecting that the ethnic minorities would play a role as a political buffer zone (P-149). Initially, the ethnic minorities formed relationships with everybody and unintentionally and unconsciously stood in the politically neutral area without noticing any conflicts or schism. However, as time went by, some of the political issues were naturally exposed and they began to be affected by the division: "I often feel inevitable pressure to support either one side or the other" (P-23). During the initial period of the multiculturalization, the ethnic minorities who joined GEC through KMC were too young and inexperienced to analyse the conflict situation and to react appropriately (P-150).

7.2.6.2 Three-cornered Relationship

As the multiculturalization process accelerated, other ethnic minorities living in the locality began to join GEC and soon after the proportion of ethnic minorities increased up to one third of the population in 2007 (P-77). There were twenty nationalities at one time. This meant that the ethnic minorities became a force to be reckoned with due to their increased numbers and significant roles in the church. From this period onwards, the power balance was shifted to a three-cornered relationship among LC, GEC and the ethnic minorities (P-88-3). This three-cornered power relationship brought political stabilization by dispersing power for a while (P-88-2). It implied that the expectation of the two parties was to mitigate the political conflicts

through the influx of the ethnic minorities. However, it did not bring the ultimate solution to the political conflict. In a sense, the temporary political stabilization, established as the ethnic minorities began to play their active role in the three-cornered power relationship, took away opportunities of reconciliation between the two conflicting groups. When the three-cornered power relationship was broken by the sudden and unintentional development of a close relationship between people from LC and the ethnic minorities, the political conflict became worse than before as people from GEC reacted toward it in a more aggressive way (P-88-5).

7.2.6.3 Coalition

The ethnic minorities began fellowship and to work closely with people from LC because of their openness to diverse cultures and different styles of worship (P-68). They looked after the ethnic minorities and were sensitive to their needs (P-152). They offered the ethnic minorities the opportunities to get involved in various ministries (P-151). On the other hand, some people from GEC were intolerant of different cultures and traditions (P-74). There were even some people who had xenophobic attitudes (P-79). People from GEC began to criticize the close relationship between the ethnic minorities and people from LC as a coalition in which the two theologically and culturally different parties were united for the purpose of breaking the power balance (P-73). They mainly blamed people from LC: "They have artfully exerted their influence and power through the ethnic minorities to subdue us" (P-92-4). As the criticism and condemnation got more serious, the elder who represented and led the ethnic minorities resigned and left the church in 2011 (P-153). On the basis of his personal analysis and interpretation, he concluded that the long-term and deep rooted political conflicts between the two groups would be resolved by forming a new

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leadership team with people from outside GEC, who were neutral and able to transform the political situation (P-153-1). Five months after his resignation, another elder who represented LC also resigned because he totally agreed with the conclusion of the elder who had represented the ethnic minorities (P-154). Through these resignations, the power struggle ended abruptly and people from GEC have taken the leadership at present (P-155). However, the schism remains as serious as it has been.
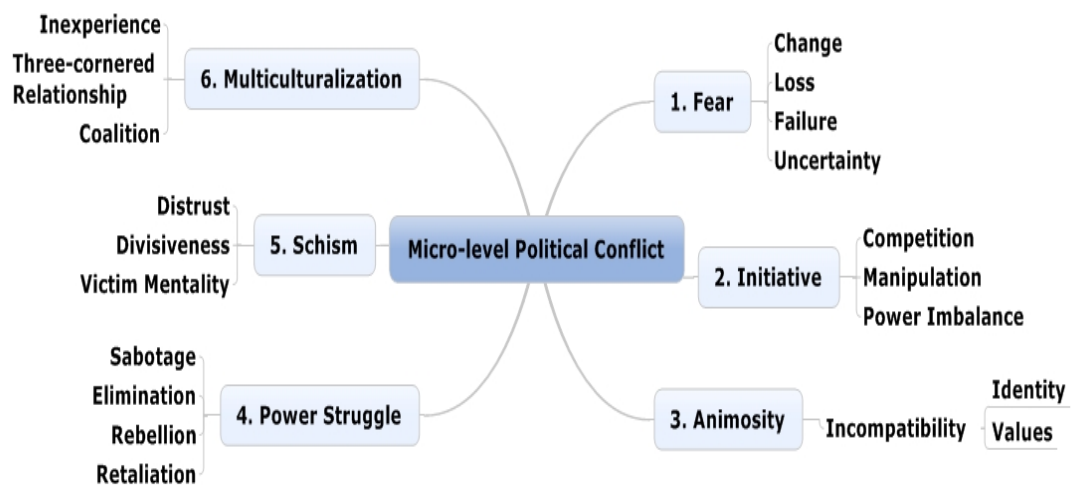
Figure 7.1 Factors and variables in the domain of micro-level political conflict

7.3 Data Interpretation in the Domain of Political Conflicts

Through data analysis, I have found two distinctive features in the domain of micro-level political conflict. Firstly micro-level political conflicts at GEC are an intergroup conflict in the pursuit of political power. It is a type of structural conflict caused by factors that are rarely associated with the different interests or personalities of individuals, but with the collective behaviour of the conflicting parties in order to win the political initiative and power with which each party intended to reform the structural issues to their advantage. The other is that the micro-level political conflicts at GEC are

the most unhealthy and difficult conflicts to deal with in terms of their intensity because they are caused by different group identities and values.

7.3.1 Symmetrical Schismogenesis

Competition is the rivalry between groups to achieve a common goal on fair terms, whereas conflict means there are clashes and interference between groups for the common goal. Social psychology suggests that groups are generally even more competitive and aggressive than individuals in conflict (Smith and Mackie, 2007: 515). In the social sciences, intergroup conflict is not simply a matter of misperception or misunderstanding, but is based on real differences between groups in terms of social power, resource scarcity, important life values, or other significant incompatibilities (Fisher, 2011: 177). In general, intergroup conflict in organizations requires three ingredients: group identification, observable group differences, and frustration (Daft, 2010: 492). In this respect, intergroup conflict is understood as a structural conflict in terms of the scale and nature of conflict. Conflicts occur in people's everyday interactions as well as in diverse systems whether political, religious or cultural. People normally accommodate themselves to these systems constructed by them and regulated by laws, norms and traditions. However, there are always certain people who realize injustice and unfairness in those social systems and try to transform them. Structural conflict occurs, for this reason, between supporters and abolitionists, conservatives and liberals, and haves and have-nots within an organization.

There are two different sorts of structural conflict: complementary schismogenesis and symmetrical schismogenesis as originated by anthropologist Bateson (1935) in the 1930s. In complementary schismogenesis, the mutually promoting actions are

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essentially dissimilar but mutually appropriate (Fries and Gregory, 1995: 80). Two different types of behaviour of groups at times cause serious rifts, but most of the time complement one another. For instance, the behaviour of a dominant group and a submissive group reinforce each other. In contrast, symmetrical schismogenesis describes a conflict phenomenon in which the mutually promoting actions between the two parties are essentially similar, but the two parties try amplifying hostility and enmity against each other (Charlton, 2008: 15). Aggressive behaviour by one party stimulates more aggressive behaviour by the opposing party. If this is repeated, a vicious cycle would continue in the conflict situation, and eventually may result in serious violence. In this regard, the micro-level political conflict at GEC is a type of symmetrical schismogenesis.

7.3.1.1 Discrepancy in Power

The two parties in the political conflicts take similar actions in the power struggle because they interpret a given situation in the same way. This symmetrical schismogenesis has caused a vicious cycle which ends when one group completely wins over the other in any way, shape or form. There is no way to create a common ground for reconciliation or agreement in this power struggle. The power balance between the two parties was demolished soon after the merger and the relationship of the dominant and subordinate was formed. Both parties could easily anticipate that only the winner in the conflict became the power-holder in the organization to control the other group to achieve their desired outcomes. The discrepancy in power from the initial period induced both parties to intensely struggle for restoring the balance of power as well as for maintaining the initiative. This is the reason that the micro-level political conflict at GEC is interpreted as the most unhealthy conflict among other conflict domains.

In the intergroup conflict at GEC, loss has become a central issue to the group defeated in the power struggle. What is regarded to be a loss by one party is counted to be a gain by the other. In the case of GEC, victim mentality caused by the loss of power reinforced their enmity and retaliation towards the dominant. Victim mentality is an obvious psychological problem, therefore, I assert that a social psychological approach is needed in order to understand how a group and individuals are affected by intergroup conflicts and to help them to respond appropriately and effectively during the conflicts in a local church context. Focusing on the psychological dimensions of intergroup conflict and analysing individuals' perceptions, emotions, and motivations, it is psychologically significant to understand what factors instigate and perpetuate intergroup conflict and how these factors relate to strategies that can resolve or alleviate conflict (Tropp, 2012: 4). Even though conflicts occur in their unique contexts and have their own characteristics, it is assumed that socio-psychological foundations and dynamics of those intergroup conflicts are similar regardless of time and place. Therefore, it is important to analyse conflict situations from not only a theological perspective, but also with sociological, cultural and social-psychological perspectives as to how people react before, during and after conflict. These multiple perspectives have enabled me to understand how conflicts are constructed and developed, how people get involved in the conflicts, what behaviour intensifies or alleviates the conflicts, and how to handle the conflicts constructively and creatively in the peace-building process. I clearly articulated in the analysis from socio-cultural and socio-psychological perspectives how the micro-level political conflict at GEC began, how the two groups' negative attitudes and patterns of behaviour contributed to the conflicts, and how the conflict dimensions were developed and shifted as the conflicts entered into different phases.

7.3.1.2 Discrepancy in Identity and Values

Conflict inevitably occurs at any time, in all places and in all human relationships. Some healthy conflicts contribute to recognising differences between groups through reflections and affect them to change their behaviour. This kind of conflict will help the organization grow and develop. This is called a within-frame conflict caused by differences in interests or methods of doing things. However, the micro-level political conflict at GEC is a type of between-frame conflict caused by different group identities and values that, in the majority of cases, are non-negotiable. Social psychologists have emphasized for the last three decades the role of group identity and values that the group hold in the causes and consequences of intergroup hostility and conflict. In particular, social identity theory and self-categorization theory emphasize the potential for group-based identities and values to foster support for the status quo among higher power and status groups, and to foster intergroup competition and movements for political change among lower power and status groups (Asmore et al., 2001: 3). A group's identity is based on their shared values, beliefs, or common concerns and is generally embedded in the life of members of the group and often reinforced so that when their group identity and values are ignored or threatened, they normally do not tolerate the situation.

Micro-level political conflict at GEC is an example of how intergroup conflicts are inevitably caused and destructively developed by different identity and values between the parties. Discrepancies in group identity and values became sources of psychological and cultural motivation which elicited conflict behaviour of the two congregations and drove them to pursue their goals after the merger. The most successful mergers occur when the combined entity adopts a new identity and checks compatibility on values, priorities, cultures and theology between the merging and merged church (Spacek, 1996: 3). However, the two congregations did not consider

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these things carefully when the merger happened. Their main motivation for the merger was simply to fill their needs through the other party, without seeking to fulfil the common values. Initially, their needs were met by each other's contributions. However, a power struggle began not long after when each party began to deny the identity and values of the other party. The conflict status was developed into a highly disruptive, chaotic and uncooperative status because the conflicts involved interpretive dynamics of history, tradition, culture, values, identities and beliefs of the two groups that were framed in ways that were mutually exclusive (Rothman and Olson, 2001: 297).

7.3.2 Collective Moral Desensitization

Why do people behave differently when they are in a group? One of the questions that I had when the research was undertaken is "How do Christian faith and morality function in different nature, scale and intensities of conflict to resolve and manage conflict?" I have wondered whether Christians can respond differently to conflict because of their faith in Christ and moral beliefs based on the Scriptures. An interesting finding is that the majority of individuals at GEC have acted upon their faith and moral beliefs in response to unreasonable or misunderstood behaviour of others in interpersonal conflicts. However, it has been observed that the individuals' collective behaviour in the group and strategies that they employ in response to intergroup conflicts are not much different from what individuals in other social organizations collectively do to win conflicts. It is evidence that the collective moral perception and decision of members in an intergroup conflict could be worse than the one that they do independently in an interpersonal conflict.

Why do individuals' personal Christian faith and moral beliefs not function in the way that they are expected in the process of collective perception and behaviour in a high intensity intergroup conflict? There are three major reasons identified at GEC through in-depth interviews, which explain why individuals behave differently in an intergroup conflict. Firstly, a few people mentioned there would be no strong personal responsibility that individuals should take as a result of their collective behaviour (P-161). It means that perceiving conflict issues and making decisions to react toward those issues are dependent on whether or not individuals should take responsibility for the result of their behaviour. This phenomenon informs that the individuals' behaviour in a conflict situation may differ according to the scale of the conflict and their self-perception of themselves, as an individual or part of a group in the conflict. Secondly, some members of each group conform to the perception and moral decision of their leaders without discerning between right and wrong in an intergroup conflict (P-162). This type of blind conformity is a way of displaying their loyalty to their leaders and the group (P-162-1). In an intergroup conflict, members of each party tend to reinforce their group identity for a stronger sense of belonging to solidify the party (P-162-2). This tendency of individuals of each group is to seek approval of their membership from their leaders or peers, allowing them to share the benefits of the power of the party (P-162-3).

There is a more fundamental reason for the phenomenon. The majority of the members of each group intentionally subjugate their Christian moral beliefs in their collective behaviour for the sake of fulfilling the group's primary purpose in the conflict (P-163). They are aware of the sharp conflict situation that losing a battle means being eliminated by the other party. They focus more on the temporary target to win by whatever means necessary, than on the permanent biblical principles to keep peace between the parties. Each party tries to maximize the in-group favouritism and out-

group derogation. Each party increases the intergroup bias to view the other party as enemies and to behave hostilely. In this case, moral desensitization sanctions the irrational and immoral behaviour of individuals in the group against the other party. This is strong evidence against the theory that individual behaviour is generally determined at the individual level regardless of the scale and nature of the conflict. Group membership and identity in an intergroup conflict affect an individual's perception and moral behaviour, even desensitising believers to following their Christian moral beliefs when they only focus on seizing power. In fact, according to the latest research on congregational conflict executed by Cobb, et al (2015, 792), an intergroup conflict causes in-group solidarity among members in each group, which eventually impacts individuals to be less moral in actions and reactions in the conflict.

7.4 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have described the nature and characteristics of the six factors of the micro-level political conflict at GEC, extracted out of the taxonomical and conceptual analysis. I also described the inter-relationships among the six factors to describe an ethnographic story about the characteristics and intensity of micro-level political conflicts as well as to explain the development process. I have interpreted the aspects and dimensions of the conflict within the framework that I established in chapter two in order to provide a method to categorize and classify each conflict domain into a type of conflict and to propose possible applications. The micro-level political conflict is categorized as S-B type of conflict, which stands for the combination of structural and between-frame conflict.

S-B type of conflict is the worst conflict among the four types of conflict. It happens in the pursuit of the non-negotiable or irreplaceable goal, which is gaining the initiative and political power in GEC's case. Both parties are reluctant, even unwilling, to consider a way for conflict resolution because there has been an unbridgeable gap between the groups created by different group identities and values and developed by emotional wounds during the conflict. In this regard, GEC has no ability to resolve this micro-level political conflict spontaneously and autonomously. In this case, conflict transformation, which differs from conflict resolution, conflict settlement or conflict management, is needed to transform the conflictual relationship between the two groups through a third party's mediation aiming to create unity, not only by addressing the roots of conflict and improving understanding of the opposed party, but also improving and transforming the structural issues.

Chapter Eight

Conflict Approaches

8.1 Introduction

In the previous four chapters, I have analysed and interpreted data in the four different conflict domains. I have articulated the nature, intensity, characteristics and scale of conflicts to indicate the type of each conflict domain in order to link them to the four types of conflict proposed in the theoretical background chapter. The purpose of connecting the four conflict domains to the four types of conflict is finally to suggest possible approaches to deal with each type of conflict in the most effective way. Therefore, what I intend in this chapter is to introduce the conflict approaches that have been developed and applied in other social organizations. Conflict theories, approaches and strategies are complex and confusing because the terms of similar concepts are interchangeably used. For instance, peace-making, peace-keeping and peace-building are used in the absence of clear demarcation of their meanings. I will clarify the definitions of the four conflict approaches: conflict resolution, conflict settlement, conflict management, and conflict transformation. I will explain the aim and strategies of each approach along with describing the conflict aspect and intensity to which each approach is applied.

8.2 Four Conflict Approaches

8.2.1 Conflict Resolution

Conflict resolution is a problem-solving approach to low intensity conflict situations caused by interactions between individuals or groups because of divergent opinions and interests or behaviour. The problem-solving approach asserts that it is almost always possible to resolve conflict for both parties and have their needs met in a conflict situation (Zastrow and Kirst-Ashman, 2010: 510). The conflict resolution approach helps the conflicting parties find out the best possible solution to resolve the conflict. This approach aims to achieve a win-win result to avoid resentment, hostility, and subversive actions of a win-lose situation (Zastrow and Kirst-Ashman, 2010: 510). At its best, problem-solving involves a joint effort to find a mutually acceptable solution. The parties exchange information about their interests and priorities, work together to identify the true issues dividing them, brainstorm in search of alternatives that bridge their opposing interests, and collectively evaluate those alternatives from the viewpoint of their mutual welfare.

However, there are also the difficulties in the problem-solving approach. Firstly, it requires mutual effort for both parties to resolve the conflict. It means that the collaboration of both parties is the crucial component in the problem-solving approach. Secondly, it requires not only a similar level of ability of both parties in discerning the root cause and in anticipating the result that the solution might bring, but also a similar degree of maturity in personality and spirituality in a Christian context. According to the dual concern model proposed by Pruitt (1983), an integrative solution is produced by strong concerns for both the outcomes of self and the other party. Figure 8.1 delineates the importance of collaboration and maturity in terms of considering the other party's needs as well as the self in problem-solving.
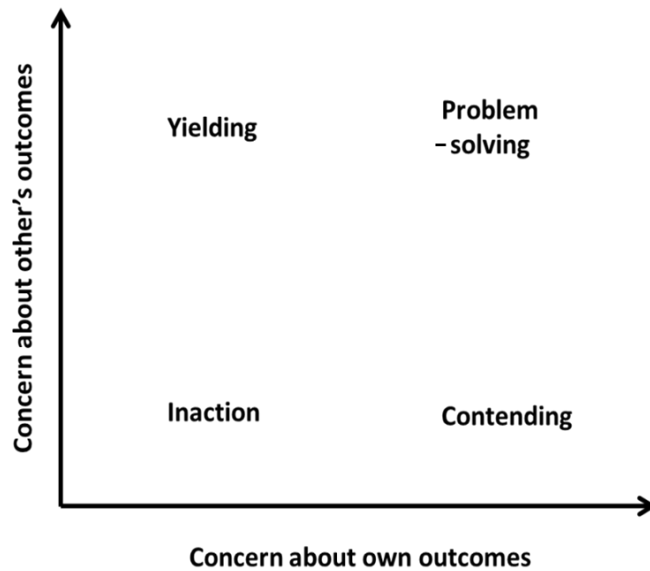
Figure 8.1 The dual concern model by Pruitt (1983)

Finally, in some cases, the problem-solving approach requires a sacrifice from both parties to meet in the middle. In this approach, practical issues may be resolved, but emotional issues may remain. This partial solution may be suggested by a party on the basis of his or her egocentric interpretation of fairness and justice (Bazerman et al., 2007: 208) to justify his or her effort for conflict resolution. This may lead the other party to be driven by moral obligation without his or her psychological or emotional decision. This partial solution is regarded as a second-best solution or a superficial treatment of difference because of a latent dissatisfaction caused by giving up their preferred alternative (Coleman et al., 2006: 416).

The closest concept of the win-win result in the problem-solving approach is an integrative solution which can achieve rapprochement and mutual trust through finding an option that fully meets the needs and wishes of both parties (Kirchler et al., 2001: 192). From the Christian perspective, an integrative solution is related to reconciliation in broken relationships. The integrative solution enables both parties to identify the

main cause and make mutual efforts to find a solution by which both are satisfied through restoring trust and relationship. It also encourages both parties to exercise their Christian faith for reconciliation through apologising and forgiving to meet the biblical standard of justice that brings satisfaction between the parties. The most significant common ground between the integrative solution and reconciliation is that the ultimate goal of both is peace-making (Daffern, 1999: 755). On the other hand, the difference is that the biblical meaning of reconciliation requires balance between truth and mercy as well as between justice and peace (Lederach, 1999: 53), while the integrative solution emphasizes collaboration between the parties to bring satisfaction through finding a creative way to remove concerns as well as to meet the needs (Tyson, 1998: 124). In other words, reconciliation focuses on healing relationships through restoring the biblical meaning of justice (De Gruchy, 2002: 2), while the integrative solution focuses on the satisfactory ending of conflict.

Conflict resolution is a practical approach which is a combination of cognitive and behavioural approaches. There are two stages in conflict resolution. The first stage is about identifying the causes and evaluating the problem, which will provide appropriate information for selecting the best solution. The cognitive approach provides an analytical framework in the first stage (Griffin and Moorhead, 2010: 202) helping the parties to clarify the nature of the problem, to define the desired and ultimate objective, and to establish an action plan. The second stage is about undertaking the action plan and evaluating its outcome. The behavioural approach provides strategies for implementing actions effectively, to review the outcome, and to consider other alternatives if the outcome is not satisfactory (Cornish and Ross, 2004: 11). Self-reinforcement is one of the most significant principles in the behavioural approach to keep both parties motivated in improving their action strategies to eventually reach an integrative solution (Meichenbaum, 1978: 46). The primary role of a leader in conflict

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resolution is to become a facilitator who assists both parties to confront the reality of conflict and to be continually interested in the communication or a conciliator who provides useful information to the both parties from the neutral and unbiased position without compelling his or her opinions, or making a decision on behalf of the parties.

8.2.2 Conflict Settlement

Conflict settlement focuses on negotiation or bargaining between the parties with a view to reaching a mutually acceptable agreement (Ramsbotham et al., 2011, 14). In other words, conflict settlement aims for a compromise of the conflict situation that is achieved when each party gives up something to reach an agreement (Krogerus and Tschäppeler, 2011: 36). Conflict settlement is used to avoid a win-lose or lose-win result, so that there is no winner or loser in conflict settlement because none of the parties attain their desired outcomes. Therefore, each party could achieve only partial satisfaction through conflict settlement.

According to the explanation above, conflict settlement is involved in handling more serious and complex conflicts than conflict resolution. Conflict settlement is used to end conflicts whose fundamental causes are related to values and identities without necessarily dealing with those underlying causes (Burton and Dukes, 1990: 83-87). It means that conflict settlement is more interested in finding a way to preserve the relationship through reciprocal respect for each other's values and identity than in eliminating the fundamental causes. Therefore, although a particular conflict might be settled, another similar or related conflict may arise again later if the underlying causes are still present (Burton, 1990: 5). This is a limitation of the compromise approach that

might bring a functional restoration in the relationship, but there are latent emotional or behavioural issues which may become a source of subsequent conflict.

Another limitation in the compromise approach is that it is commonly used in conflict situations in which both parties have equal power (Rahim, 2011: 108). It means that the compromise approach is more likely to be used in dealing with conflicts between peers than between superiors who normally dominate and subordinates (Rahim, 2011: 108). In order to overcome the power imbalance between the parties, conflict settlement often employs mediation which can assist a weaker party who is disorganized and unable to negotiate by helping them prepare for a productive exchange that will benefit both parties (Moore, 2014: 522). However, if hierarchical values and the peer structure remain strong in the organization, mediation undertaken by internal mediators may produce results that are not in the best interests of the weaker party (Rudd, 1996: 213). It is because that the primary interest of conflict settlement is not in balancing power through assisting the weaker party, but in upholding the existing social and cultural norms (Burton and Dukes, 1990: 83-87). On the other hand, external mediators are mistakenly inclined to use inducements or some form of coercive incentives such as a threat or punishment in order to speed up the process of mediation (Okoth, 2008: 150).

Compromise means that both parties agree not to confront the reality of the problem. From the Christian viewpoint, conflict settlement does not primarily aim to bring reconciliation, even though its main interest is in peace-making between antagonists. It is impossible to achieve reconciliation without the confrontation of conflict issues and the mutual effort of both parties (Abu-Nimer, 2001: 246). However, it is still possible that one party can forgive the other party, even though reconciliation is not possible due to the lack of reciprocity from the other party (Browning and Reed,

2004: 201). Different from reconciliation, forgiveness can be achieved even though the underlying cause still remains after an agreement to settle the conflict situation. Mediation employed in conflict settlement is also limited to help both parties reach reconciliation as long as its primary purpose is to seek a point of compromise, rather than to improve the quality of the relationship and trust between the parties (Kelman, 2004: 117). Sometimes, in a local church context, both parties are pressurized by the rest of the congregation to accept what mediators suggest because they have recognized that the continuing tension between the two parties is increasingly unhealthy. Sometimes, both parties are forced by the sense of moral obligation as Christians, so that they reluctantly make conciliatory gestures. This is not close to the biblical meaning of reconciliation in the narrative of God's redemption, which demonstrates the balance between forgiving grace and restoring justice to accomplish His plan for reconciliation with men.

In spite of these limitations described above, conflict settlement should not be viewed as a negligible achievement in Christian environments. For conflict settlement is a means of reaching some form of agreement caused by widely dividing differences, it is important to establish common ground and to create alternatives (Spoelstra and Pienaar, 2008: 3). The first step is an assessment of the conflict situation to measure how far positions and desired goals of both parties are different. Honest communication exchange between the parties is vital to build common ground which can convey several benefits in this initial phase. Firstly, both parties are at length able to start gathering objective information to identify the conflict issues as well as to recognize the damaged relationship. Secondly, the both parties can verify the willingness of the other party in terms of ending the conflict situation. Finally, the weaker party can feel fairness from the beginning. At this initial stage, it is important to help the weaker party to overcome

an assumption that generally the party with less power might be less satisfied with the results, in order to enable them to fully engage in the conflict settlement process.

The second step is to clarify a negotiating objective and alternative options. In conflict settlement, the negotiation objective should be carefully balanced between dealing with the conflict issue and maintaining the relationship. Thomas and Kilmann (1974) used two dimensions, assertiveness and cooperativeness, from which they defined five conflict handling modes as in the figure below:
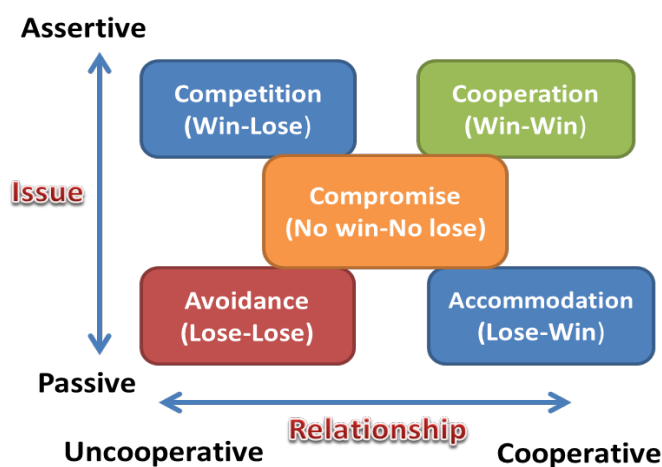
Figure 8.2 Conflict-handling modes of Thomas and Kilmann (1974)

Among the five conflict-handling modes conflict settlement is neither the competition mode in which one party becomes assertive to deal with only the issue, nor the accommodation mode in which one party accedes to the demands of the other party to avoid the end of a relationship. Compromise is the most relevant mode to conflict settlement seeking a middle-ground which is the intermediate between assertiveness and cooperativeness in response to conflict (Hellriegel and Slocum, 2011: 392). Lederach (1997:29) suggested that the four principles of the conflict handling process, truth, mercy, justice and peace, should be well woven in order to resolve the conflict or settle it. However, the competition is an extreme approach as only the truth for revealing

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faults and justice for punishing the guilty party are asserted. On the other hand, accommodation is another extreme approach as it emphasizes only mercy for acceptance and peace for appeasement.

The final step is making a decision as to how to undertake the process and participating in it. Both parties can choose either a direct or indirect style of handling conflict. A direct style refers to communication for negotiation between the parties without representatives or negotiators. On the other hand, an indirect style refers to intermediation by the third party. There are mainly two reasons that people choose an indirect style of communication in conflict. Firstly, one party may feel incapable, powerless or fearful of losing when participating in the negotiation process. The party that has less power may prefer to use representatives or mediators. Secondly, there is a cultural element that people from individualistic cultural backgrounds prefer a direct negotiation style, while those from collectivist cultural backgrounds prefer an indirect mediation style (Narula, 2006: 309).

8.2.3 Conflict Management

Conflict management is a structural approach to handle conflicts between groups in an organization (Schermerhorn, 2010: 429). Conflict management involves designing effective macro-level strategies to minimize the dysfunctions of conflict and enhancing the constructive functions of conflict in an organization (Rahim, 2002: 208). There are two important features of conflict management in the statement above. Firstly, conflict management basically acknowledges that conflicts can be observed in any organization and there are constructive conflicts which contribute to change organizational structures for effectiveness and better outcomes, if those conflicts are effectively managed (Fenn and Gameson, 1992: 376). Its aim is not to end conflict, but to enhance the learning of

members and group outcomes through the process of managing conflict in organizational settings (Rahim, 2002: 208). Secondly, conflict management has a control function in order to reduce the negative side of conflict and increase the positive side of conflict. This is another aim of conflict management as it involves maintaining conflict at a moderate level that is functional for the organization (Champoux, 2011: 266).

As far as the control function is concerned, there are two different styles of intervention for conflict management: conflict mitigation and conflict containment. Conflict mitigation is a process of de-escalating conflict intensity from the high and destructive level to a lower and less damaging level, which is capable of management and open to further improvement (Fisher, 1990: 111). Conflict mitigation requires an analytic diagnosis of conflict and its context as well as a sensitive advisory process to help both parties to change their behaviour and to challenge ways of perceiving the conflict. Furthermore, it involves helping both parties focus on latent structural problems regarded as the root causes of intergroup conflicts, instead of only concentrating on manifest issues.

Conflict containment is used when the conflict intensity is destructively escalated so that intervention is inevitable and necessary. Conflict escalation means both parties become more assertive and their primary goal changes from maintaining conflicts on the moderate level to winning. The parties move from light tactics to heavy tactics such as threats, power plays, and even violence (Pruitt and Kim, 2004: 89). Conflict containment is a way of intervening to prevent conflicts from growing out of control through limiting the spread of destructive interactions and the duration of destructive interactions between the parties (Hansen, 2013: 80). Some scholars such as Glazer (1997: 137) and Coleman et al. (2006) consider that conflict containment is a form of conflict resolution. However, I argue that the main purpose of conflict containment is

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preventative peace-keeping during ongoing conflicts, rather than peace-making achieved by the termination of conflicts. Hence, conflict containment should be regarded as an approach in conflict management (Ramsbotham and Woodhouse, 2000: 5).

In spite of interventions through conflict mitigation and containment, sometimes the escalated conflicts remain in unhealthy situations. Deutsch (1973: 353) describes three particular symptoms resulting from the escalation of conflict:

1. Communication between the conflicting parties is unreliable and impoverished.
2. It stimulates the view that the solution of the conflict can only be imposed by one side or the other by means of a superior force, deception, or cleverness.
3. It leads to a suspicious, hostile attitude that increases the sensitivity to differences and threats while minimising the awareness of similarities.

In these cases, arbitration can be employed to have recourse to either a higher authority within the organizational structure or an external third party. One important element is that the arbitrators should be neutral to both parties and impartial in the decision-making process. Different from litigation, both parties in arbitration can choose the arbitrators who have expertise relevant to the conflict area (Cooley and Lubet, 2003: 5) and knowledge about the background of the conflict and the history of the organization. Another difference between arbitration and litigation in local congregational contexts, in most cases, is that arbitration is non-binding, which means that an arbitration award is not mandatory (Tangl, 2014: 135). Instead, the award in practice plays its role as an advisory opinion of the arbitrator's view of the respective merits of the parties' cases (Tangl, 2014: 135). It means the arbitration process helps both parties manage the conflict on the moderate level by reflecting their claims and tactics on the basis of the award. If a party refuses to accept the arbitration award, the conflict continues at the high destructive intensity. In the worst case, although it is rare in local congregational contexts, the party may take the conflict issue to the judicial adjudication through litigation. Nevertheless, I still consider the judicial adjudication process as a tool of

conflict management because there is still a possibility for resolving and settling the conflict after the judicial award. I strongly agree with Hansen (2013: 80) that conflict management paves the way for conflict resolution and settlement, after it mitigates and contains the intensity of conflicts. Some scholars (Moffitt and Bordone, 2005) consider arbitration and adjudication as tools for conflict resolution and other scholars (Bercovitch et al., 2009: 53; Boyle, 1999: 38) as tools for conflict settlement. I argue that, in a local congregational context, arbitration should be regarded as an effective tool of conflict management (Ramsbotham and Woodhouse, 2011: 278; Diehl and Lepgold, 2003: 70). Problem-solving for conflict resolution, and negotiation and mediation for conflict settlement are consensual approaches for mutual satisfaction and agreement in which decisions are made by both parties. Conversely, arbitration or adjudication is an adjudicative approach for awards in which decisions are made by the third party.

As stated briefly above, conflict management is for peace-keeping using conflict mitigation and conflict containment as methods (Ramsbotham et al., 2011: 14), and also arbitration or adjudication situationally. Conflict management is an ongoing process so that constant observation and monitoring are needed for diagnosis, managing the conflict under control, and keeping manageable and sustainable peace in the organization. Synthetically speaking, peace-keeping in conflict management is achieved by intervening between the parties and stopping further escalation by separating hostile parties, containing the severity of a conflict, reducing tensions, and providing opportunities and incentives (Bercovitch, 2011: 265). In this respect, it is hard for conflict management to result in forgiveness and reconciliation in a short space of time in intergroup conflicts. Nevertheless, in local congregational settings, a conflict management approach is a useful tool in order to handle destructive intergroup conflicts which seem to be hard and dangerous to directly handle by a conflict resolution or conflict settlement approach. In other words, conflict management is a longer process

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than conflict resolution or settlement due to ceaseless peace-keeping efforts until an opportune time comes for forgiveness and reconciliation. This peace-keeping process brings other results, apart from providing opportunities for forgiveness and reconciliation in the future, as it teaches members how both parties coexist and produces better outcomes for the organization (Rahim, 2002: 208).

8.2.4 Conflict Transformation

Conflict transformation is normally employed to handle intergroup conflicts which are deep-rooted and protracted, caused by structural issues (Strömbom, 2013: 32-33). Conflict transformation is a more holistic approach than the other three conflict approaches described above. It is not a resolutionary approach, but a revolutionary approach (Lederach, 1995: 11). It means that the conflict transformation is not involved in eliminating the causes to stop conflicts or in settling conflicts to create temporary harmony, but involved in understanding the nature of the underlying conflict (Ishem, 2009: 76), identifying structural problems, and changing them to transform conflict into a constructive and a positive force for achieving the main goal of the organization.

There are several distinctive features of conflict transformation. Firstly, conflict transformation is a long-term point of view in the peace-building process. Conflict transformation takes note of structural problems in an organization as the root causes of conflicts, especially power asymmetry and injustice (Ramsbotham, 2010: 218). It requires long periods of time to build peace in a long-lasting and a highly intense between-frame intergroup conflict situation. In the situation, transforming the organizational structure through restoring equity in power and justice requires long-term persistent efforts, unless one party is completely eliminated (Lederach, 1995: 14).

Secondly, conflict transformation looks at the conflict from the macro-perspective, such as the social conflict theory of Karl Marx, who regarded conflict as an inevitable

result of social evolution (Man, 1985: 392). In terms that conflict is understood as a dynamic force of change, the primary role of conflict transformation is to unlock the potential of conflict, in order to convert its destructive elements into a positive source for reconstructing social realities. Due to the influence of the social conflict theory, conflict transformation is sometimes viewed as a dialectical framework for synthesising differences and transforming conflict to change and reconstruct social realities (Ishem, 2009: 73). During the transformation process, both parties inevitably alter their perspectives and eventually produce a new reality that is a synthesis of the original opposing perspectives (Ishem, 2009: 74). The parties should be helped through this continual dialectical process to change their perceptions and communication patterns, to open up new possibilities, and to reshape the common goal.

Finally, conflict transformation encourages all levels of people in an organization or a society, from high to low, including those who are directly involved as well as third parties, to play their roles in their social positions in order to achieve the goal of transforming conflict (Strömbom, 2013: 33). Conflict as a social phenomenon is not only caused by structural issues such as social policy or organizational polity, but also by the accumulation of the interactions of social members in their daily lives. Hence, conflict transformation is involved in both changing destructive relationship patterns in the interactions of people and seeking systemic change for peace-building (Lederach, 1995: 18). In order to achieve the both purposes, it is important that all levels of members should know the need of change and collaborate for transformation in their social positions. In order words, peace-building requires a lot of attention and awareness of the importance of change, and commitment and collaboration of social members at all levels, top leaders, middle range, and grassroots (Contreras, 2015: 13). In particular, the role of the middle range level is vital to facilitate communication between the top

and the grassroots and to create harmony between the top-down approach with power and the bottom-up approach with strong demand (Nordquist, 2013: 127).

There are four steps in the strategies to satisfy all the characteristics of conflict transformation addressed above. The first strategy is educating members to erase ignorance and raise awareness of conflict issues and of the need for transformation (Lederach, 1995: 12). This strategy assists members to see the reality of conflict through increasing their ability of recognising not only the overt phenomena of conflict, but also the covert factors of conflict. Education provides a lens through which to see what they have not seen, especially social structural problems such as power asymmetry and injustice. This stimulates members to desire resolving the problematic reality and even to take action for changing it. In particular, education is significant in conflict transformation to enhance perceptions of the grassroots because political activities of people in the high-ranking posts are important to transform the conflict situation, but not sufficient to develop sustainable peace without the collaboration of the grassroots (Smithey, 2011: 43).

The second strategy is advocacy. Education motivates members to confront the reality and provides the courage to take action. However, it is likely to meet with resistance and opposition by those who prefer to maintain the present situation because of the benefit that they have taken from it (Lederach, 1995: 13). Those who pursue change but are not strong enough to overcome resistance, need empowerment. Hence, advocacy is employed to support the weaker side for increasing their voices and power. Advocacy ultimately aims to establish a balance of power between the parties. The relative balance of power established by advocacy provides a starting point for the dialectical process in conflict transformation (Burke et al., 2009: 866).

The third strategy is negotiation or mediation. The dialectical process is a trial to synthesize the tense confrontation between thesis and anti-thesis. In order to find

creative solutions through the synthesizing process, a change of mind, which collectively refers to perceptions, perspectives or points of view, is necessary for both parties to see past and present circumstances and future possibilities (Cooley, 2006: 88). A change of both parties' minds can be achieved by a negotiation or mediation. In the negotiation process, both parties should not impose their will or try to eliminate the other side, but rather must collaborate to reach an agreement to a restructuring of the relationship and dealing with fundamental substantive and procedural concerns (Lederach, 1995: 13-14). Mediation in conflict transformation is the third party's intervention in a form of persuasion without forcing a value choice (Cooley, 2006: 88), when both parties do not have the ability for effective negotiation.

The last step is establishing institutions. Even though conflict transformation employs negotiation or mediation, it is not interested in an immediate successful termination of conflict. Rather, it is interested in the gradual progression of changing structural issues to build peace. As far as conflict transformation is understood as the continual process until sustainability of satisfactory peace is achieved, it is important to establish democratic and legal institutions or biblical institutions if it is a local congregational context, whenever the both parties arrive at an agreement as an intermediate outcome. Rupesinghe (1995: 77) addresses its significance as follows:

> Transformation can be meaningful only if it is not merely a transfer of power, but if sustainable structural and attitudinal changes are also achieved with the society and new institutions emerge to address outstanding issues.

Institutions established by mutual agreement of both parties function as a stabilizer to limit the ulterior motive of the stronger party intending to break the power balance and manipulate public opinion (Dayton, 2009: 66), and as criteria to judge similar social issues in the future.

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The ultimate purpose of following the steps of conflict transformation is to achieve the rehabilitation of trauma and reintegration among parties involved in conflict. The peace-building process is not regarded as successful without the rehabilitation and reintegration of the parties involved as well as other groups affected by the conflict (Del Castillo, 2008: 257). Although establishing democratic or legal institutions are important in the process of long-term peace-building, a social system is not sufficient for rehabilitation and reintegration. An institution established by agreement of both conflicting parties may become a thesis and there will be an anti-thesis against it later. In order to overcome it and to achieve rehabilitation and reintegration, fostering a culture of peace across multiple levels of societal organization is vital (Kisielewski and LeDoux, 2009: 153). A culture of peace is a set of values, attitudes, modes of behaviour and ways of life that prevent conflict (Arment, 2012: 172) and provide social security which is genuine evidence of rehabilitation and reintegration. A peace culture encompasses a wide range of elements such as justice, fairness, equity, dignity, respect, and solidarity. Among those elements, tolerance, which enables social members to celebrate diversity, is particularly important for reintegration in a racially diverse and culturally plural society, in order to allow people to develop and exercise their unique capacities and to contribute to their communities (Korostelina, 2012: 4).

8.3 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have explained the definition, aim, and strategies of each conflict approach in order to provide theoretical and practical information about dealing with different types of conflict in a congregational context. In addition, I explained the core relationship between each conflict approach and some core biblical principles such as forgiveness, reconciliation, justice and peace. This chapter is critical in order to lay the

groundwork for creating linkages between the four conflict domains and the four approaches, and for suggesting practical methods to deal with each type of conflict at GEC in the next chapter.

Chapter Nine

Applications

9.1 Introduction

Applied ethnographic research is involved in analysing and interpreting the problematic social situations and proposing appropriate solutions to encourage the members of a community to make the world a better place. The primary purpose of this chapter is to suggest applications for handling each conflict type with a specific conflict approach. In order to fulfil the purpose, there are two significant tasks. Firstly, I explain legitimacy and efficiency in relation to matching one particular conflict approach to a conflict domain. It has been hypothesized since this research was undertaken that the four major conflict approaches are postulated to fit into the four conflict domains at GEC, in order to generate theories regarding handling each particular type of conflict in the most effective way in a local church context. The conflict handling-model established in chapter two has been effectively used to verify the hypothesis. The system established for classifying conflict types has enabled me to categorize the conflict domains into different types according to their scales and nature. It also provided me with the crucial standards to appropriately select the conflict approaches for different types of conflict. Most of all, it enabled me to create the conflict handling-model through which the four conflict domains are well connected to the four major conflict approaches. Figure 9.1 depicts the conflict handling-model further developed and concretized in this research.
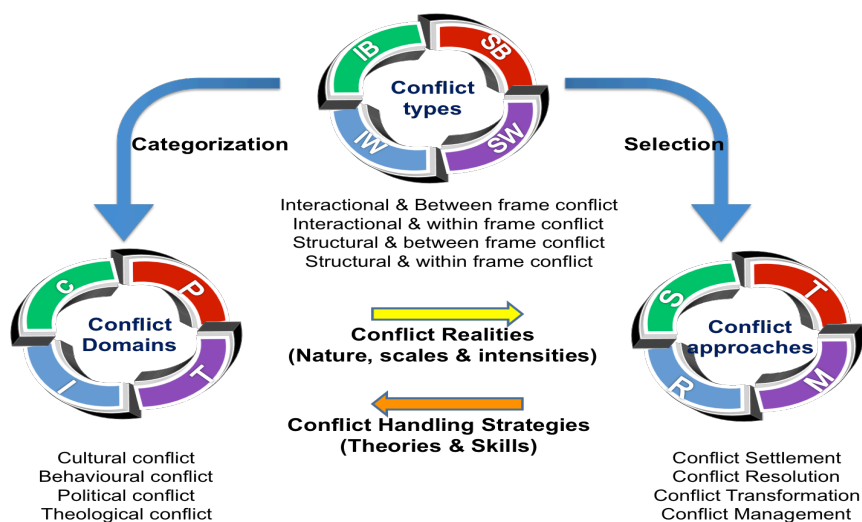
Figure 9.1 The conflict-handling process

Secondly, I suggest practical as well as theoretical strategies toward different conflict domains. It is important to mention that these suggestions are for handling conflicts at the macro level, rather than at the micro level. The suggestions will be made to handle conflicts not at the item level, but at the domain level because it is impossible to suggest strategic applications to every single conflict situation. In other words, the applications in this chapter are intended for handling the conflict domains (the conflict types), not for individual conflict issues. For this reason, there will be some generic and theoretical applications because of the nature of the conflict domain, such as the domain of cultural conflicts, although other applications are contextually grounded and specific to the research field. In terms of the pedagogical aspect of the applications, both generic and specific applications are necessary in this research. The specific applications will enable the readers to understand the contextual issues and specialized strategies of handling conflicts in the research field. On the other hand, the generic applications will increase the generalizability of them from the research field to many similar congregational settings in order to maximize the academic and practical impact of the research. In this respect, both the generic and specific applications contribute to the pedagogical purposes of the research for both those in the research field and those who

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are not. In order to suggest applications to each conflict domain to resolve, settle, manage and transform different types of conflict, it is also important to show a table presenting distinctive features of the four conflict approaches, extracted from the explanation in chapter eight. Table 9.1 shows the features, aims, strategies, and roles of leaders in each conflict approach.

Conflict approaches	Conflict aspects	Conflict intensities	Aims	Strategies	Leaders' roles
Conflict Resolution	Interactional conflict between individuals or groups caused by behaviours and difference in opinions or interests	Low intensity; Displeased or Dissatisfactory	Win-Win result; Forgiveness, Reconciliation, Satisfaction, Healing	Problem solving, Integrative approach, cognitive and behavioural approach	Peacemaker; Facilitator, Conciliator
Conflict Settlement	Interactional conflict between individuals or groups caused by cultural and social identity and values	Between low and medium intensity; Disruptive	No win-No lose; Agreement, Respect, Liberty	Compromise, Bargaining, Negotiation, Mediation	Peacemaker; Mediator or Negotiator
Conflict Management	Structural conflict betweeen groups caused by differences in reasoning, and using methods and resources	Between medium and high intensity; Distructive	Coexistence, fairness, Unity	Mitigation, Containment, Arbitration, Adjudication	Peacekeeper; Arbitrator
Conflict Trasnformation	Structural conflict between groups caused by deep-rooted political and class issues, or different goals, values and beliefs	High intensity; Deep-rooted Protracted Disastrous	Justice, Equality, Rehabilitation, Reintegration	Dialectical approach, Education (Consceientisation), Advocacy, Mediation, Establishing institutions, Forstering a culture of peace	Peacebuilder; Reformer

Table 9.1 Distinctive features of the four conflict approaches

9.2 Applying the Four Conflict Approaches to the Four Conflict Domains at GEC

9.2.1 Interpersonal Behavioural Conflict and Conflict Resolution

9.2.1.1 Interrelationship between Interpersonal Behavioural Conflicts and Conflict Resolution

I apply a deductive reasoning called syllogism which draws one logical conclusion through presenting two premises (Sternberg, 2009: 505), in order to find the

legitimate connection between the domain of interpersonal behavioural conflict and conflict resolution. The first premise is that the domain of interpersonal behavioural conflict was analysed and interpreted in chapter four and, as a result, conflicts in the domain are categorized into the I-W type. The second premise is that the conflict resolution is the most appropriate approach to the I-W type of conflict as it is explained in chapter eight. Therefore, the logical conclusion is that conflict resolution is the most effective approach to deal with interpersonal behavioural conflicts at GEC. I present several connection points between the two in order to support this as a justifiable conclusion.

Firstly, interpersonal behavioural conflicts are the lowest intensity conflicts caused by individuals' interactions. Human interactions intentionally and unintentionally become the sources of conflict in various dimensions and diverse contexts of human relationships. However, the key point of conflict aspects and intensity of the interpersonal behavioural conflicts at GEC is that all the causes are identifiable and conflict issues are tractable to a greater or lesser degree. Therefore, the termination of a conflict is dependent on the willingness and maturity of the conflicting parties to resolve the issue in collaboration. This is exactly what the problem-solving strategy intends to perform in the conflict resolution to draw a win-win result through creating a mutually acceptable and satisfactory solution.

Secondly, the ultimate outcome through handling an interpersonal behavioural conflict effectively is making peace by restoring a broken relationship. The primary aim of conflict resolution is also to achieve rapprochement and to restore mutual trust. An integrative approach, which is one of the strategies in the conflict resolution, is mostly interested in the balance between seeking one's own needs and feelings and considering others. It means that the conflict resolution does not only seek a way to resolve the conflict issue, but also to restore the relationship. In a local congregational context, the

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conflict resolution approach is to create a foothold for forgiveness and reconciliation through keeping a balance between truth and mercy, and between justice and peace.

Finally, interpersonal conflicts are not only behavioural, but also emotional and psychological. Sometimes, emotional scars or psychological trauma may remain, even though the conflict issue is resolved and both parties are able to reach a satisfactory solution. Conflict resolution is a cognitive and behavioural approach to enable both parties to search for the root cause and to take actions not only to resolve it, but also to heal the emotional and psychological residue such as resentment or anger through authentic confessing or voluntary compensation from the guilty party.

9.2.1.2 Practical Suggestions for Interpersonal Behavioural Conflicts
9.2.1.2.1 Suggestions for Preventing Interpersonal Behavioural Conflicts

Conflict prevention has two different meanings. Firstly, it means that interpersonal conflict can be prevented before it happens by the better understanding of self and others. According to a survey, more than eighty percent of the congregation at GEC think that individuals should take responsibility for conflicts in which they are involved (IB-210). More than half of those members mention that they have not been supported by the rest of the congregation or leaders when interpersonal conflicts occur (IB-210-3). They state that they have struggled in finding practical ways of analysing the causes (IB-210-4) and dealing with the conflicts (IB-210-5). It means that there is a great need to equip the congregation with some practical knowledge and skills in relation to being aware of interpersonal conflict, uncovering the underlying causes, responding appropriately to avoid escalation and proposing satisfying solutions.

I suggest that holding a workshop on a regular basis may achieve several purposes, if the curriculum reflects diverse dimensions of interpersonal conflicts at GEC, which

are addressed in chapter four. Firstly, it can enhance the understanding of self, as far as the intra-personal dimension of interpersonal conflicts is concerned. Conflicts in the intrapersonal dimension can be prevented through helping individuals to be reflective and introspective and be aware of how one's character and temperament contribute to interpersonal relationships, and to analyse in what conflict situation one is most vulnerable. Secondly, as far as the interpersonal dimension of interpersonal conflict is concerned, a workshop can enhance the understanding of others not only in the social aspect, but also in the cultural aspect. Individuals at GEC live in a contemporary society which is morally plural and culturally diverse, so that they naturally experience differences in moral perception, decision-making and reaction. A workshop can provide opportunities for individuals to share as to what causes interpersonal conflicts and how they handle and resolve them in their culture and sub-culture, and compare them with the biblical principles of forgiveness and reconciliation. This can improve social and cultural understanding of others and reduce interpersonal conflict between individuals whose cultural backgrounds differ. In particular, sharing examples of taboo or offensive behaviour in a culture can prevent pseudo-conflict caused by an ignorance of other cultures. A workshop can also improve communication skills. One can identify communication problems through honest feedback from others, which cause discomfort or disagreement in personal conversations or meetings. This can improve one's reflecting ability to evaluate communication with practical questions such as "How I could have used more effective language for better communication?" and "In which way my communication could have set a more trustful tone or reduce defensiveness?" Finally, as far as a contextual dimension of interpersonal conflict is concerned, a workshop can facilitate learning for individuals to identify structural issues and improve them together. If the root structural causes of interpersonal conflict remain untouched, then reducing or eliminating the overt expression of the conflict may be a meaningless

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exercise (Lederach, 1995: 16). Those issues may become another source of interpersonal conflict in the future. As it is addressed in chapter four, GEC needs to improve the quality of church governance, such as administration and organization which have a direct effect on congregational life. It can be achieved by collaboration between the leaders and the congregation through workshops in which they identify weakness and vulnerability in relation to the organizational structure and its performance, and establish short-term and long-term plans to improve and transform those structural issues.

The second meaning of conflict prevention is that an interpersonal conflict must be prevented from widening to groups or the entire congregation (Everist, 2004: 32). As I addressed in chapter four, it is observed that some interpersonal conflicts have been identified as a proxy conflict in which individuals fight on behalf of the groups involved on the micro-level of political conflict. As mentioned in chapter four, some interpersonal conflicts are mutative. It means that they have a possibility to become a source of schism. Counter-measures by leaders in an early phase are important to prevent these sorts of interpersonal conflicts from being escalated to the level of intergroup conflict at GEC where the micro-level political conflicts between the two groups affect other conflict domains.

9.2.1.2.2 Suggestions for effective handling of Interpersonal Behavioural Conflicts

9.2.1.2.2.1 A Model of the Rational Approach

The rational approach is a systematic and logical process of the decision-making process in an organization (Griffin and Moorhead, 2010: 210). I suggest that this approach also useful to deal with interpersonal conflicts in a Christian context in terms

of assisting individuals to improve their ability to make logical choices and decisions negating the role of emotion in an interpersonal conflict situation. In other words, the rational approach to interpersonal conflict is for individuals involved in conflicts to collaborate from the beginning of the process to the end until the problem is resolved to mutual satisfaction.

I suggest several steps that both parties can follow in collaboration. The first step is to analyse the problem to identify the root cause. Some interpersonal conflicts are resolved at this early stage by acknowledging faults and forgiving the guilty party. However, many interpersonal conflicts are more complex. Therefore, both parties also have to establish a goal to achieve through the process at the first stage. The second step is to generate several alternative solutions and to evaluate each one of them to select one particular solution. The third step is to implement the solution and apply the decision in equal commitment and motivation (Friffin and Moorhead, 2010: 211). The fourth step is to evaluate the outcomes and compare them with the goal established in the beginning. If the outcome is the same as the goal, or both parties are satisfied with the outcome regardless of the goal, the whole process is terminated and the conflict is overtly resolved. If there is a discrepancy, then both parties carefully analyse each step to find out mistakes and modify the process. I suggest that leaders may intervene in the situation to play their role as a facilitator or conciliator to assist them, and to overcome the criticism that the rational approach has a limitation, the so-called 'bounded rationality' (Verma, 2009: 225). There are two major contributions that the leaders can make through the intervention. One is that they can provide the biblical principles and practical advice from their experience to help both parties overcome their biases or mistakes in bounded rationality. The other is that the leaders can help them create a common ground through mutual concessions by satisficing which is a strategy of decision-making that encourages both parties to find the available alternatives until they

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reach an acceptable standard (Colman, 2006: 670) or by suboptimizing that both parties try to intentionally choose what seems to be optimal, not what seems to be optimum. The diagram below delineates the process of the rational approach to interpersonal conflicts at GEC and the optional intervention of leaders as facilitators or conciliators at the last stage of the process when the outcomes are not satisfactory.
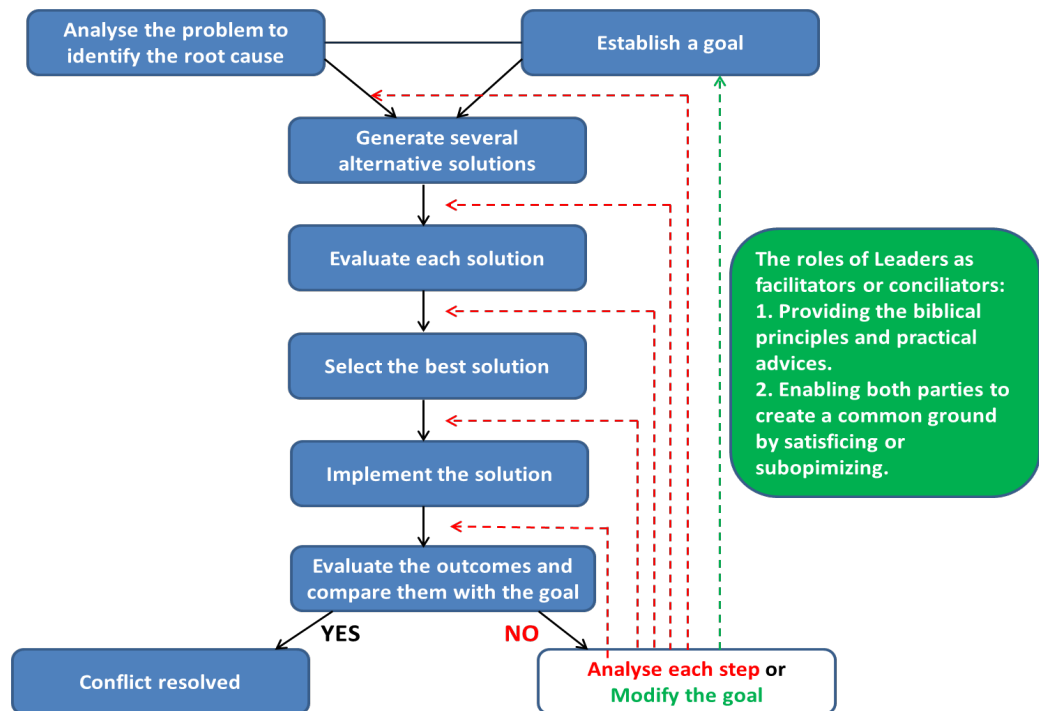
Figure 9.2 A model of the rational approach to interpersonal conflicts at GEC

9.2.1.2.2.2 A Model of the Healing Approach

The main reason that one party or both parties are not willing to co-operate for a solution is that individuals find it difficult to separate emotional or psychological aspects from the conflict issues (IB-241). When emotional or psychological aspects are mixed with the conflict issues, characteristics of interpersonal conflicts shift from collaboration to a competition to win, and one or the other party may have a tendency exaggerating the secondary issue to make it the central one (Van De Vliert, 1998: 363). There may be physical violence between the parties, if they do not control their sense of

outrage (IB-27). On the other hand, one or the other party may choose either a restriction of interactions or a withdrawal of communication as a defence mechanism, when they are emotionally hurt or psychologically unstable because of their low-normal fragility in character or temperament (IB-112-5). In these cases, the conflict resolution should change its strategy from the rational approach to the healing approach which transforms emotional wounds or psychological trauma into positive and constructive inclinations. I define the healing approach as a process to ultimately achieve a restoration of the broken relationship through healing negative emotions by recovering justice.

There are two different forms of recovering justice: retributive justice and restorative justice. Retributive justice is rooted in deontology and utilitarianism demanding offenders are accountable for their misbehaviour through prosecution and punishment to recover justice (Amstutz, 2005: 67). This approach is based on the concept that prosecution and punishment are the best solution to sustain a community. This definition of justice often does not take into account the needs of victims for restitution, healing or reconciliation (Murithi, 2009: 143). On the contrary, restorative justice is a compassionate and therapeutic approach based on the principle that both the conflicting parties and the community are involved in a search for a solution that promotes restoration and reconciliation (Leonard, 2011: 35). The goal of this framework is for the both sides to work together on the basis of consensus to achieve reconciliation to find a way that they can continue to coexist in the same community after resolving the conflict (Murithi, 2009: 143).

I suggest a model of the healing approach on the basis of the restorative justice approach to resolve interpersonal conflicts in non-cooperative situations. Restorative justice encourages the both parties to participate in a practical process which is designed to restore the relationship through healing wounded emotions (Strickland, 2004: 2).
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There are several steps to follow to achieve healing and final reconciliation in the process. Firstly, both parties and leaders of GEC should meet together. The parties should honestly share their perspectives and feelings regarding the conflict to face the truth. Leaders, as facilitators or conciliators, should remind both parties of the values and norms of the community, especially biblical principles. Secondly, leaders form supporting groups to provide psychological, social and spiritual assistance for the parties. However, it is mainly for empowerment that provides the parties with practical tools to develop solutions. For example, both parties are supported to reflect on their motives and behaviour, and furthermore, on offender accountability and victim responsibility from the Christian perspective. Thirdly, both parties take action on the basis of their reflections. For example, the offender apologizes to or compensates the victim. The victim may make the first move towards resolving the conflict in love and mercy. The fourth step is forgiveness. This is the actual healing point for both parties through the satisfaction of the victim and forgiveness for the offender. Finally, there is reconciliation between the parties. Figure 5 delineates a model of the healing approach suggested to resolve interpersonal conflicts in non-cooperative situations between the parties at GEC.
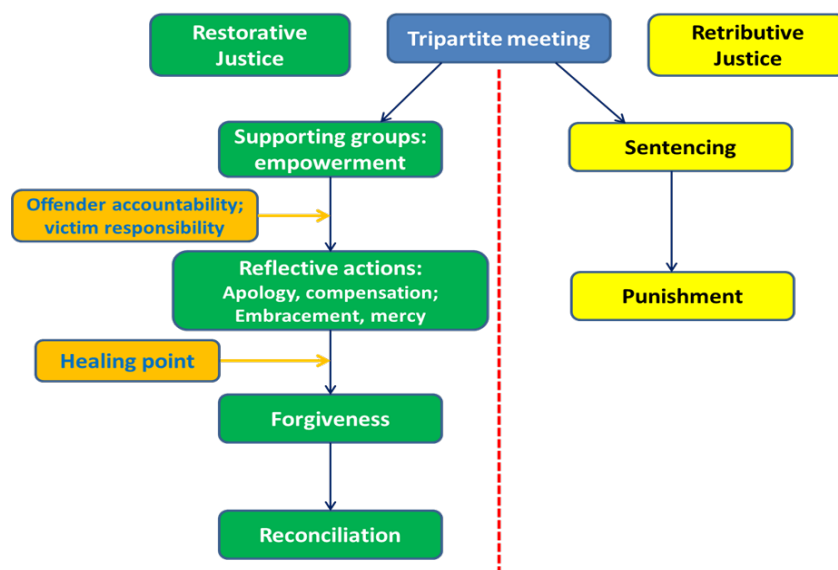
Figure 9.3 A model of the healing approach to interpersonal conflicts at GEC

9.2.2 Cultural Conflict and Conflict Settlement

9.2.2.1 Interrelationship between Cultural Conflicts and Conflict Settlement

The data analysis and interpretation inform that the cultural conflicts at GEC are categorized into the I-B type. In other words, cultural conflicts at GEC are caused by interactions of individuals who have different frames of cultural identities and values. This indicates that the nature and the intensity of the conflicts are disruptive and above the borderline between healthy and unhealthy conflicts. It means that it is difficult for individuals who hold distinctive discrepant beliefs and behaviour to reach a mutual satisfaction through cooperation in identifying the causes of the conflicts and resolving them peacefully. These kinds of conflicts should be approached by negotiation or mediation to settle the issues and terminate them through mutual agreement, in which there is neither winner nor loser.

Conflict settlement is a strategy for a compromise between the issue and the relationship, and between one's own outcome and the other's outcome. It implies that conflict settlement is effectively applicable to conflict situations and the underlying causes cannot be directly dealt with or eliminated because they are not a matter of solving, but a matter of respecting. Conflict settlement tries to end the conflict peacefully not through resolving it, but through finding a way to coexist in discrepancy or diversity. This principle is well matched to the nature of cultural conflicts at GEC where one's cultural identity and values are neither better nor worse. What is required to deal with cultural conflicts at GEC is to learn how to reciprocally respect others' cultural identities and values to create a common ground to connect individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds and to help them feel comfortable. The common ground

can be established by a constant intercultural negotiation process which is the main strategy of conflict settlement.

9.2.2.2 Practical Suggestions for Cultural Conflicts

The analysis and interpretation in the domain of cultural conflict suggest that the ten factors can be categorized into the two underlying issues: cultural identity and cultural values. It means that the cultural behaviour of individuals at GEC is rooted in the two latent elements. In this regard, one of the methods to handle cultural conflicts at GEC is to improve individuals' cultural competence through enhancing their ability to be aware and sensitive of others' cultural behaviour. One's cultural behaviour is guided by cultural schema, regarded as a generalized collection of cultural knowledge created by interactions with people within the culturally homogeneous group, including cultural identity and values (Cheng et al., 2014: 280). Therefore, the ultimate purpose of improving one's cultural competence is to reframe cultural schema for not only understanding the cultural behaviour of others from culturally heterogeneous groups, but also behaving appropriately in the multicultural setting.

9.2.2.2.1 Negotiating Cultural Identity

According to the acculturation curve model, individuals who experience intercultural transitions will obtain a state of stability, which is generally referred to as the acquisition of intercultural competence, after going through stages of euphoria, culture shock, and acculturation in sequence (Alaminos and Santacreu, 2009: 99). However, cultural conflicts caused by individuals' different cultural identities at GEC indicate that the curve model cannot be generalized into all multicultural settings. The

reason that individuals at GEC do not acquire the state of stability in the multicultural context is that both indigenous members and ethnic minorities have the tendency of self-categorization (C-132) to define their identities on the basis of the perception of intragroup similarity and intergroup difference (Bierhoff and Küpper, 1999: 147). Self-categorisation at GEC increases self-stereotyping that one reinforces consistency of a cultural image with stereotypes of the salient in-group (C-132-1). Self-stereotyping arises from the normal cognitive process dividing people between us and them, discriminating and showing prejudicial attitudes against individuals holding different cultural identities (Simon, 2014: 255). Cultural superiority, one of the factors causing cultural conflicts in the category cultural identity, is a good example of self-stereotyping that individuals reinforce the supremacy of their cultures through exaggerating the differences between them and others (C-129).

Persistent reinforcement of one's cultural identity by self-categorization has finally resulted in the incongruity between one's primary identity defined by one's self-view and one's secondary identity defined by the views of perceivers of the person. On the one hand, one sticks to the desire for a consistent self-identity formed in a cultural group. This is 'self-verification theory' that one tries to validate cultural identity and to justify cultural behaviour. On the other hand, the perceivers develop expectancies regarding evolving cultural identity to be more culturally appropriate in a multicultural setting. This theory is called 'behavioural confirmation' in psychology that the perceivers demand a target individual to fulfil their expectancies. In this research, cultural identity negotiation means finding a midway point to reconcile these competing stances. The perceivers and the target individual should compromise their stances to reach an agreement between the perceivers' expectancies and the target person's cultural self-identity. This congruence provides a common ground for the both parties to adapt the status of stable identities, which allows them to acquire a sense of cultural

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coherence in cultural behaviour within the multicultural setting. What GEC needs is to enable individuals from different cultural backgrounds to negotiate their cultural identities to reach a congruence in terms of obtaining and maintaining the cohesive and stable cultural identities in the congregation to reduce cultural conflicts and to improve their group performance.

As the target individual struggles between the perceivers' expectancies and cultural self-identity in order to settle the tension between identity persistence and identity alteration, the individual is still the same as before, yet affected permanently by this process of cultural identity negotiation (Jackson, 1999: 5). The cultural identity negotiation is an endless process until the person acquires cultural competence. There is not any particular strategy formulated for the process of cultural identity negotiation. Therefore, I propose a strategy for an effective cultural identity negotiation in a small or middle scale multicultural congregation. The strategy is based on the four components of cultural competence (Chiu and Hong, 2005: 501) because I believe that effective cultural identity negotiation is one of the most important methods to obtain cultural competence. The strategy can be divided into two major sections: information seeking and appropriate practices. The information seeking section consists of two components. Firstly, the target individual should be sensitive to intercultural variations in awareness of cultural identities between self and others. An accurate awareness of the identity domains of the self and the perceivers helps the person understand the gap of incongruence between the expectancies of the perceivers and self-identity. Secondly, the target individual should use the knowledge generated through the process of awareness to foster effectiveness of cultural identity negotiation. This knowledge can enable the person to see both the need of cultural identity alteration and the legitimacy for expectancies of the perceivers. Gathered information should be applied in the cultural identity negotiation process by which the target individual enhances his ability to find a

midway for a stable identity. Firstly, the target individual needs flexibility in terms of moving from the high certainty of cultural self-identity to the intermediate place where the identity negotiation between the certainty of cultural self-identity and the certainty of the perceivers' expectancies occurs. Secondly, both the target individual and the perceivers should be involved in the identity negotiation process to achieve a status of stable identities through compromising their own cultural stances. The most important skill in this stage of identity negotiation is an effective communication skill to engage in honest dialogues to share emotions, different perspectives, and anticipations of expected positive outcomes. Figure 6 depicts a model of cultural identity negotiation proposed in this research.
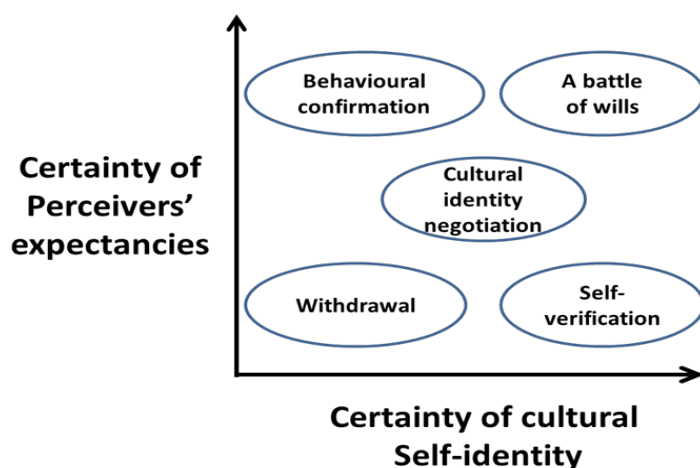
Figure 9.4 A model of cultural identity negotiation

9.2.2.2.2 Negotiating Cultural Values

Individuals in a society have a common set of cultural values which are the core principles and standards about their perceptions, judgments, and interpretations on the behaviour of others. One's cultural values ingrained by enculturation and interactions with people in the in-group are challenged in response to the perception of value

differences between oneself and people of the out-group in a multicultural setting. An interesting point found at GEC is that distinctive discrepancies in cultural values between in-group and out-group have become a determinant of people's attitudes causing conflicts in the process of their acculturation (C-137). Individuals, especially British members at GEC, have chosen 'in-group favouritism' and 'out-group derogation' (C-137-1) as a mechanism to take advantage through being united among them on the concept of cultural affiliation (Sidanius et al., 1999: 108). This phenomenon is particularly seen in exclusiveness that illustrates the correlation between pride and superiority of the in-group and the negative views on the out-group. Several core variables under the factor of exclusiveness are cultural prejudice, ethnocentrism and discrimination that are typical examples of cultural imperialism of the culturally dominant group (C-138). The intention of the culturally dominant group is to promote and impose their cultural values on the subordinate ethnic minorities at GEC (C-138-1).

There are several types of cultural actions and reactions observed at GEC between the culturally dominant group and the subordinate groups in the process of acculturation to settle the tension and conflicts caused by differences in cultural values. Firstly, some ethnic minorities intended to be incorporated or absorbed into the dominant culture (C-141). From the subordinates' perspective, this process of cultural adaptation can be understood as a form of assimilation in that individuals choose to lose their cultural values of their former group (Gibson, 1988:24). From the dominant group's perspective, their high certainty of expectancies for cultural synchronization of their cultural values toward the culturally subordinates can be interpreted as a cultural hegemony that implies the domination in a culturally diverse society by the dominant group (Carayannis and Pirzadeh, 2013: 215) to subjugate the cultures of the subordinate groups.

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The second type is cultural accommodation which is a high level of cultural embracing without preconceptions and stereotypes against the cultural values of out-group. The majority of the ethnic minorities are receptive to the cultural values of the dominant group, while they also maintain their cultural values strongly rooted in their former culture (C-146). A considerable number of white British members at GEC also adapt cultural elements of the ethnic minorities for the purpose of settling the cultural tension without conforming to them in practice (C-146-1). This mutual cultural accommodation allows both parties to express their cultural values without challenging individuals of the out-group to change their cultural perceptions, judgments and behaviour. It is obviously a peace-making strategy that a multicultural congregation may employ to ease the tension caused by cultural value differences. However, imprudent cultural accommodation for the purpose of conflict settlement may produce either cultural chaos or syncretism (Padilla, 2013: 109).

Cultural assimilation and accommodation have a commonality that both are an outcome of the out-group homogeneity effect that individuals regard out-group cultural values with positive attitudes. However, there are two phenomena caused by individuals' negative reactions toward cultural heterogeneity of the out-group: marginalization and separation. A few ethnic minorities at GEC choose marginalization as a strategy to reject both the values of the dominant culture and of the culture of origin (C-143). This phenomenon can be also understood as cultural indifference of the dominant group. A few members of the dominant group have apathetic attitudes that they are neither aware of cultural transition and differences in cultural values, nor hostile to the cultural values of the out-group (C-143-1).

Cultural separation is another negative strategy of a few ethnic minorities at GEC that refuse to adopt the cultural values of the dominant group, but maintain their cultural values of origin (C-145). This phenomenon is rooted in both the reactions against the

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discriminatory attitudes of the dominant group and the self-reflection to overcome the inclination of their internalized cultural inferiority (C-147). These people intend to keep their autonomous and independent cultural values and norms, and overlook or disregard the cultural values of the dominant until they see the dissolution of inter-group biases of the dominant group, and their cultural values are considered or accepted as important as the dominant in GEC (C-147-1). From the dominant group's viewpoint, these ethnic minorities' intentions can be interpreted as cultural subversion attempting to transform the established cultural values of the community (C-147-2).

None of the types described above are appropriate to the concept of negotiating cultural values that can be applied to GEC. Therefore, I suggest cultural integration which I regard as the most effective strategy for negotiation of cultural values between the dominant group and the subordinates at GEC. Cultural integration is neither cultural appropriation that the dominant group adopts some cultural values of the subordinate group, nor cultural amalgamation that produces cultural hybridity through blending more than two cultures. Cultural integration has three distinctive features in relation to negotiating cultural values. Firstly, it encourages individuals to keep their involvement with both their own culture of origin and the culture of others. It means that individuals do not lose their cultural values while they interact with others. Secondly, individuals are encouraged to exchange their cultural values, and opinions of the opponents' cultural practices. Different from cultural accommodation, cultural integration does not cause a cultural anarchy, but a cultural equilibrium because of the attitude of mutual respect for the cultural values of the out-group. This process enables individuals to re-evaluate cultural values of their own and others through perceiving differences. It also enables individuals to reflect on the multicultural context where their cultural practices are based so that they are able to recognize the discrepancy between the desired outcomes of both parties in the negotiation. Finally, cultural integration is a dynamic

process that drives a mutual transformation of the dominant and the subordinate to re-establish cultural values through negotiation on the basis of the results of the comparison between the desired outcomes and the needs of the context to make them more relevant to their multicultural setting (Boas, 1940: 435). Therefore, cultural integration is an inclusive approach in which individuals negotiate cultural values with attitudes of embracing and mutual support of the values of others. In particular, the experience of cultural value negotiation among individuals enables them to find a middle way by reforming their values whenever they feel dissonance by perceived value differences. Figure 8.7 depicts a model of cultural value negotiation proposed in this research.
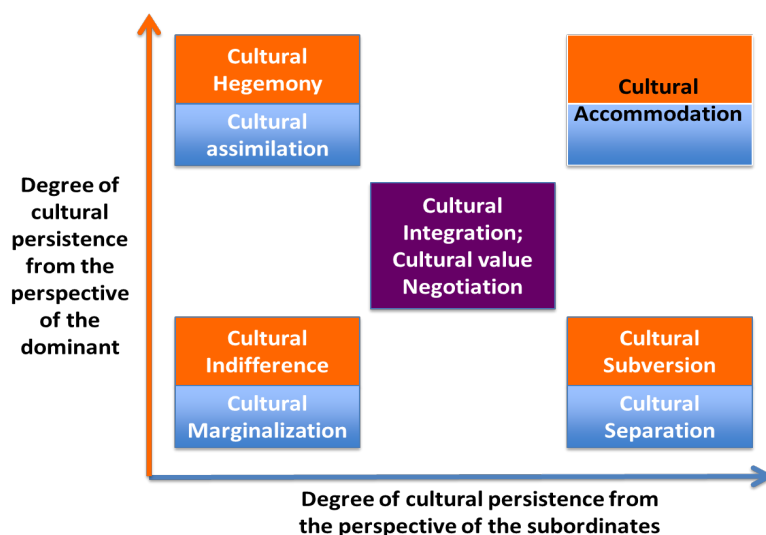
Figure 9.5 A model of cultural value negotiation

9.2.3 Theological Conflict and Conflict Management

9.2.3.1 Interrelationship between Theological Conflicts and Conflict Management

There are several important connections between theological conflicts at GEC and conflict management. Firstly, theological conflicts at GEC are categorized as the S-W

type of intergroup conflicts, and conflict management is the most suitable approach to deal with those types of conflicts caused by differences in perception and practice between groups. Conflict management is interested in proposing macro-level strategies to change and challenge the organizational culture and structure to produce better group outcomes as well as in micro-level strategies to enhance the learning of members to attain principles of coexistence in diversity. These two levels of strategies are the key elements to manage theological conflicts at GEC.

Secondly, the intensity of theological conflicts at GEC is between medium and high, and is quite destructive because of their connections with some of the micro-level political conflicts. The conflicts of this intensity cannot be resolved or settled without a process of conflict de-escalation. Conflict management can be used to prepare the way for conflict resolution and conflict settlement through reducing negative aspects and increasing positive aspects of the conflicts in a medium-term strategic plan. However, the primary aim of conflict management is to maintain conflicts caused by incompatibilities in perception or practice at a moderate level through mitigating or containing high intensity and unhealthy conflicts. In this regard, conflict management is the right approach for a peace-keeping process between parties with theological differences in perception and practice at GEC.

Finally, in some cases, theological conflicts at GEC remain at an unhealthy level in spite of the consistent efforts of mitigation and containment. It is because that there is no arbiter at GEC who is able to arbitrate between opposing parties with ecclesiastical authority and theological qualification. This is a common problem of non-denominational, independent churches which emphasize their ecclesiastical autonomy, but there is not a system of ecclesiastical jurisdiction when a consensus approach does not work and an adjudicative approach is needed for dealing with an incompatible

theological dispute. Arbitration and adjudication are important strategies of conflict management to keep those unhealthy conflicts under the control within the boundary of within-frame conflict. As a non-denominational church, the authority of the theological arbitration at GEC is not necessarily granted to a particular person or people, or an external organization, but possibly to a well-formulated statement of faith or church constitution with the mutual consensus of the parties.

9.2.3.2. Practical Suggestions for Theological Conflicts

According to the interpretation of theological conflicts, there are two distinctive underlying causes of theological conflicts at GEC: clashes in Christian epistemology and in Christian praxis. Practical suggestions to theological conflicts at GEC will be proposed in order to handle those two underlying causes in the light of the strategies of conflict management.

9.2.3.2.1 Strategy One: A Modified Concept of 'Mere Christianity'

The term 'mere' stemmed from what Baxter (in Mills, 1998: 294), a Puritan preacher in the 17th century, had described himself as 'a mere Christian' in his writing. This background indicates that the term 'mere' implies 'true' or 'real' (Longenecker, 2010: 29) in the concept of 'mere Christianity' proposed by Lewis (1995). Lewis argued that there was a basic truth which was the essential core of faith that transcended traditions, doctrines, and denominations. His emphasis was on seeking the highest common factor that would reveal the central truth of true Christianity to embrace as much of the Christian faith as possible (Longenecker, 2010: 35). It was a trial to constitute a common orthodoxy on the basis of what has been believed by all Christians

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in every place at all times. Therefore, the concept of 'mere Christianity' intends to unite Christians of all traditions and denominations to overcome diverse theological trends and movements created by the needs of times in particular contexts.

However, there is a weakness of 'mere Christianity' that Lewis could not completely overcome regarding denominationalism (Lewis, 1995: 11):

> I hope no reader will suppose that 'mere Christianity' is here put forward as an alternative to the creeds of the existing communions-as if a man could adopt it in preference to Congregationalism or Greek Orthodox or anything else. It is more like a hall out of which doors open into several rooms. If I can bring anyone into the hall I shall have done what I attempted to do. But it is in the rooms, not in the hall, that there are fires and chairs and meals. The hall is a place to wait in a place from which to try the various doors, not a place to live in.

Through the metaphor, Lewis mentioned that the denominations (the rooms) are more important than non-denominationalism (the hall). In his concept of 'mere Christianity', believers are encouraged to anchor their faith in a particular denomination (a room) to deepen their relationship with God through the foundational truths of the denomination and to work together with theologically like-minded people. I argue that this concept of 'mere Christianity' may aggravate the denominational separation in a multicultural and multi-denominational congregation like GEC.

I suggest, therefore, a modified concept of 'mere Christianity' to overcome the weak point of the original concept emphasising the rooms (denominationalism), and to introduce a new perspective to make the hall (non-denominationalism) a place to live in. I suggest that individuals at GEC, who shut the doors of their denominations (rooms) and enjoy staying in their own theological comfort zone, should come out into the hall which is the place where they can practice what they believe in theological diversity. In this modified concept, the hall becomes a testing ground for the spiritual maturity of individuals at GEC to see how they overcome the denominational barriers and how they

are united by the highest common factor among the foundational truths of each denomination. The highest common factor must be based on the Scriptures and it will become the important core principle for unity and coexistence in the theological diversity of GEC.

The intention of applying the modified concept of 'mere Christianity' to GEC's theological conflicts is not suggesting a non-denominational movement to achieve a doctrinal uniformity, but rather a practical approach to seek the core teachings of Christianity transcending diversities in doctrine, denomination, experience, hermeneutics, ritual, and tradition. The core teachings become the foundation of faith and the standardized criteria that can be used for the theological arbitration process. In chapter six, I concluded that theological conflicts at GEC were controversies of theological reasoning, perception and practice based on the two philosophical paradigms, modernism and postmodernism. In short, modernists are absolutists denying pluralism, and postmodernists are relativists denying objectivism. It seems that the two paradigms are incompatible. However, there is an underlying commonality in perceiving the reality between the two paradigms, even though the tendencies of individuals' theological perceptions and reasoning vary at GEC. From my observation at GEC, modernists in absolutism become subjectivists by themselves through denying multiple realities perceived by others (T-160), and postmodernists in relativism become objectivists through proclaiming that only their perceived reality is true (T-169). This particular phenomenon is evidence that individuals at GEC have the common desire to seek the true reality, although their tendencies of perceiving it vary (T-163). If they remain in the rooms of their traditions, denominations and philosophical paradigms, their perceived realities are partial and their partial understandings of the reality are likely to clash with one another as observed at GEC. However, these tendencies can be overcome if they come out of their rooms to the hall as suggested in the revised concept

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of 'mere Christianity' and learn what the true reality is through seeking together the core teachings of Christianity based on the Scriptures.

9.2.3.2.2 Strategy Two: Unity, Liberty and Charity

Living in the hall can achieve unity by agreeing with the core teachings of Christianity and it contributes to mitigating or containing theological conflicts caused by differences in Christian epistemology. However, there is another need of mitigation or containment for conflicts caused by differences in Christian praxis. The agreement in the essentials of Christianity does not guarantee the unity in Christian praxis in the life of the congregation and beyond. It is impossible to establish guidelines for every single practice like a code of conduct outlining the responsibilities and practices according to individuals' roles and positions in an organization. GEC needs an overarching principle, which can not only mitigate the tensions caused by different opinions in praxis, but also firmly underpin the unity in essentials. I suggest that GEC should pay attention to the dictum that St. Augustine had proposed and John Wesley often quoted as principles of coexistence in disagreement and diversity: "In essentials, unity; in non-essentials, liberty; in all things, charity" (Schaff, 1882: 650).

At GEC, the phenomenon of theological polarization in Christian praxis is more severe than in Christian epistemology. It means that individuals' theological propensities are divided by less important issues at GEC. Individuals at GEC are inclined to legitimize their theological perceptions through their practices. In this regard, I strongly agree with Geisler and Rodes (2008: 17):

> Fundamentalism has constructed nonessentials into essentials, just as surely as liberalism has made nonessentials out of essentials.

In order to overcome the theological polarization caused by non-essential issues at GEC, individuals, especially leaders, have to de-essentialize theologically less important issues and create an atmosphere in which individuals are encouraged to practice what they believe in liberty within the boundary of the essentials.

In order to demonstrate that the simple principle can be effectively applied in theological conflicts, I present a typical example of theological conflict at GEC. In 2008, GEC formed a church choir and there was an altercation regarding wearing uniforms before the first performance (T-46). When a person suggested wearing uniforms, there was an immediate reaction against it. The rest of the members were divided according to their viewpoints on the issue and the divergence of opinion between the two parties caused a heated dispute. The proponents of wearing uniforms asserted that there would be some benefits. Firstly, wearing uniforms would create a symbolic identity, empowering the members to have self-awareness that they took part in a sacred ministry (T-46-1). Secondly, it would give the members a sense of belonging and loyalty to the choir, which might help the members to improve their performance (T-46-2). Finally, it would give the members a sense of unity that everyone in the choir is viewed as equal regardless of their level of experience in music, their professions, or their social and economic status (T-46-3). On the contrary, the opponents strongly refuted the assertions with their own opinions based on their theological background. Wearing uniforms is a divisive idea that would separate the choir from the congregation (T-46-4). The congregation may interpret the uniform as a symbol of authority, or the choir members may regard it as a form of excellence or privilege (T-46-5). These opponents have non-liturgical backgrounds and they also opposed a minister wearing clerical dress during services (T-81-1). Conversely, the proponents are from liturgical traditions in which wearing uniforms provides an important symbolic meaning that the choir members are

not only the servants of God, but also representatives of the congregation praising God on their behalf (T-46-6).

Hearing all the assertions in the heated dispute, the choir conductor introduced the principle and began to clarify the issue with several questions as follows (T-46-6):

> The first question was "Is it an essential issue related to the core teaching of the Christianity?" Both parties answered "No". The conductor said straightforwardly "Then, we do not need to be necessarily in agreement for the issue." The second question was "Is it a non-essential issue related to traditions or practices?" They all answered "Yes". The conductor said "Then, everybody needs freedom to choose what seems to be right and we all should respect the choice of others in charity."

The following Sunday, some people came on the stage wearing the uniform and others did not. The congregation did not have any clue as to why some wore uniforms. However, the choir members were united by the core truth of the Scriptures and free to express their own theological convictions in the matter. They stood in unity and sang in liberty to fulfil the greatest commandment, charity. The most encouraging fact was that a few people acted in a different way from their original assertions. Some proponents decided not to wear it and some opponents decided to wear it as a result of their theological reflections for a week on the primary purpose and function of the choir (T-46-7). It is evidence that individuals at GEC have the capability of using theological reasoning to discern between the essential and non-essential issues, and of mitigating the intensity of conflict through applying the principle.

9.2.4 Micro-level Political Conflicts and Conflict Transformation

9.2.4.1 Interrelationship between Political Conflicts and Conflict Transformation

The conflicts in the domain of micro-level political conflicts at GEC are of the highest intensity and the most unhealthy among other conflict domains because of their

scale as structural conflicts and nature as between-frame conflicts. The ostensible reason for the intergroup political conflicts at GEC is a power struggle between the groups. However, the underlying cause is the distinctive discrepancy in group identity and values. The reason that each group has struggled towards seizing power is to maintain their group identity and implement values on their own terms. In other words, each group thought that power would be the most appropriate means to maintain their beliefs and traditions as well as to execute their practices on the basis of their values. Each party believed that there would be no peace at GEC without peace between the groups, and there would be no peace between the groups without total surrender of the opposition group (P-179). To make the matters worse, moral perceptions and the behaviour of individuals have been affected by the structural issue that the two congregations are always in opposition. It is easy to come to the conclusion that neither a short-term peace-making nor a mid-term peace-keeping approach is applicable to the domain of political conflicts at GEC. In other words, conflict resolution, settlement or management are not appropriate for handling political conflicts at GEC. Instead, a long-term peace-building approach is needed to transform the structural issue such as power asymmetry or injustice between the groups.

Conflict transformation is not only interested in transforming organizational structures or establishing democratic institutions on the macro-level, but also in improving behaviour, perceptions, and communication patterns of individuals on the micro-level. GEC needs to get involved in educating individuals to provide them with learning opportunities to be more aware of the reality of conflicts, to correct intergroup bias, and to enhance their fostering a culture of peace. It can promote a transformative and sustainable peace-building process in which individuals become more self-motivated to behave responsibly with respect and tolerance. Particularly, this strategy of

education can play a vital role at GEC to enable individuals to overcome the collective moral desensitization.

The ultimate purpose of conflict transformation is rehabilitating individuals and reintegrating them into the united community. It was stated in the analysis of political conflicts in chapter seven that individuals in the weaker party had a victim mentality which aggravates the schism at GEC. The rehabilitation process begins when the weaker party feels that the equity in power and justice is restored. In order to achieve the status of equity, it is important that the weaker party should be empowered to increase their voice and power. Advocacy is one of the strategies in the conflict transformation that can enable the weaker party to overcome the victim mentality, and to change their negative and passive attitudes causing misjudgment or misinterpretation.

9.2.4.2 Practical Suggestions for Political Conflicts

9.2.4.2.1 A Top-down Approach

Transforming the intergroup conflict into a peaceful situation initially requires institutional reform and realignment in the organizational structure at GEC. A top-down approach to an intergroup conflict focuses on achieving immediate stabilization and security to ease the antagonistic attitudes between the conflicting parties, and to prepare a foundation for a long-term peace-building process. There may be a criticism that a top-down approach may fail in the consensus building through collecting extensive opinions and building relationships at all levels. However, it can be an urgent counter-measure to prevent the intergroup conflict situation from being escalated and to restore the balance of power. An example of a top-down approach at GEC was that the conflicting parties agreed to invite KMC students and local ethnic minorities as an external force to mitigate the tension of power struggles and schism caused by the

unequal power distribution from the beginning of the merger. Both parties expected that those ethnic minorities would become a buffer zone between them, and that the influx of ethnic minorities would contribute to establishing a three-cornered relationship for political stability. As mentioned in chapter seven, these expectations were fulfilled until the three-cornered relationship was broken by the coalition between LC and the ethnic minorities. This failure suggests several lessons that GEC has to bear in mind in terms of executing a top-down approach.

Firstly, both parties must be more reformative in dealing with the substantive issues in order to create a better organizational structure conducive to sustainable peace. Both parties should have analysed and addressed the underlying structural problems, changing them, and establishing fairer and more impartial institutions. For example, there is a need of change in the human resource management system at GEC in relation to the selection of leaders. Since the merger, people from LC seized power and have been in charge of human resources for the sake of their political purpose. It has been unfair and unjust to people from GEC that they have not had equal opportunities to be nominated as leaders. It is crucial in a peace-building process, not only to cease the recurrence of superficial conflict phenomena, but also to dismantle the problematic institutions in order to establish more effective institutions.

Secondly, all activities and strategies of a top-down peace-building approach should be de-politicized. The intense political conflicts at GEC have caused individuals to develop a tendency that they analyse and interpret all the activities of the opposition party as political intentions. In particular, this phenomenon is more severe in individuals of the weaker party because of their victim mentality. One of the most important things to build peace is to establish confidence-building measures to overcome prejudice and misinterpretation of the behaviour of the opposition party and to build mutual trust. Depoliticization in all the activities planned and executed by either the dominant or

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subordinate party at GEC will help to reduce tensions and avoid needless escalations of the intergroup situation.

Finally, there is an urgent need of change in the political structure in order to build ultimate peace at GEC. When the three-cornered relationship within the congregation was demolished by the unintended coalition between LC and ethnic minorities, the senior elder appointed the youngest elder representative of the ethnic minorities as his successor (P-153-2). Regardless of the stance of the young elder being appointed, the congregation's opinions diverge greatly on this matter (P-92-5). People from GEC thought in a critical way that the young elder was the senior elder's right-hand man and the senior elder was going to continually operate his power through the young elder (P-92-6). They began to react against the decision in action: a few members left GEC because there would be no more hope of restoring justice from their perspective, if the political dominance would continue by the coalition (P-92-8). Some people began to irritate and intimidate the young leader and his family to prevent him from being appointed as the senior elder (P-92-7). Eventually, he did not accept the decision, but resigned his position as an elder and left GEC (P-153) because he thought that he could not be regarded as a politically neutral person between the two conflicting parties (P-153-3). Whoever is appointed as a candidate for the senior position from either one or the other should face serious opposition from the other party. It means that GEC needs to appoint a politically neutral outsider for the senior position to stand between the two parties and embrace them on an equal basis. The person will not only lead the congregation, but also take a role of peace-builder through mediation or reformation in maintaining an objective distance.

9.2.4.2.2 A Bottom-up Approach

The aforementioned top-down approach may bring some positive outcomes, but there are several matters to consider: firstly, the outcomes often fail to take root in the long-term. Secondly, they are sometimes not relevant to the reality of conflicts. It means that they do not touch the hidden adverse effects. For example, the top-down approach may contribute to stopping a vicious cycle of hatred, but may not heal trauma by loss and memory of injustice. Therefore, there is a need of more integrative and holistic approach to transform the conflict and build peace at the grassroots level. A bottom-up approach can be more comprehensive than the top-down peace-building policies or institutions in terms of constructing a sustainable peace. A bottom-up approach is a multi-dimensional process because it considers diverse factors from identifying contextual constraints to ensuring participation of all members of the community.

The first practical suggestion that I make in terms of a bottom-up approach is conscientization which is equivalent to educating members according to Lederach (1995: 12). Conscientization is defined as the process in which social members, not as recipients, but as knowing subjects, achieve a deepening awareness of reality which shapes their lives and of their capacity to transform that reality (Freire, 1970:27). According to the definition, conscientization aims for personal growth in self-awareness and self-determination (Schubeck, 1993: 46). There are two reasons that conscientization is urgently needed at GEC. Firstly, individuals at GEC have a tendency of other-directedness in perception and behaviour in intergroup conflicts. Individuals at GEC should overcome feelings of individual powerlessness which leads them to blind conformity. They have to be trained to raise the awareness of themselves and the awareness of the reality of the conflict situation (Ugwu and Enna, 2015: 72), and to act as individuals free from any constraint rather than acting as members of the group that they belong to. Secondly, collective moral desensitization is a problem aggravating the polarization between the conflicting parties at GEC. It must be pointed out that they

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need moral re-armament without which there is no possibility of fostering a culture of peace. They have to learn how to make moral decisions according to their Christian beliefs and moral norms, and act independently without fear of being criticized or alienated by their peers or leaders. Conscientization as a type of bottom-up approach to the intergroup conflicts at GEC should be focused on a shifting of individuals' minds from prejudices and stereotypes. It is a gradual process, but its effect will be wider and longer than a top-down approach interested in a temporary peace agreement.

The second suggestion is rehabilitation as a foundation of reintegration and reconciliation in the long-term. Firstly, rehabilitation should aim to heal some individuals who have trauma caused by hostile behaviour and a victim mentality caused by loss of positions, relationships, and traditional artefacts. These people have a cognitive connection with the negative past and live with psychological pain. As long as these people are neglected without proper therapeutic treatment, their wounded susceptibility may play a role as a cause of other conflicts. They normally remain as a latent factor acting passively to show indifference toward any type of peace-building. However, they sometimes actively cause negative effects on the community, especially displaying aggressive characteristics when a situation is similar to their negative experiences. I also suggest a collective healing process for the weaker party which has been affected by the stronger party's diverse heavy tactics. The weaker party should be encouraged to confront the trauma and embrace the past history, and be psychologically and spiritually assisted to release the pain and transcend the trauma (Van Noy, 2007: 34). Secondly, rehabilitation should improve personal confidence in terms of expressing their opinions without fear or constraints as well as re-engaging with church ministries for those who were eliminated from their ministry positions by their opponents. This can be a small step to restore fairness and justice, and to ensure transparency that gives the victims a sense of security to be reintegrated into the community. These gradual and

steady peace-building efforts in the rehabilitation approach can make a positive impact on individuals' congregational life, which may bring a complete transformation in the future.

9.3 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have proposed practical suggestions to each conflict domain. In order to do so, I have explained the legitimacy and efficiency of connecting one particular conflict domain to a conflict approach through finding similarities in features and character. It means that this application chapter is based on the result of interconnections between the theoretical background and the analysis and interpretation in the four conflict domains.

In this regard, there is a crucially important contribution of this application chapter as it demonstrates how to categorize a conflict into a particular type and how to approach it with the most relevant and effective strategies to resolve, settle, manage, or transform conflicts. If a conflict remains in a domain status, it is hard to choose an approach to deal with it because its nature and scale are not clearly identified. However, after the conflict is classified and categorized into a particular type, it becomes clear which conflict approach should be employed to handle it in the most effective way. This paradigm for analysing and interpreting, categorizing, and handling different types of conflict may broaden perspectives of leaders and individuals at GEC in terms of understanding the nature, intensity, and scale of conflict, and utilizing diverse strategies and skills in various conflicting situations. It may also enable Christian leaders and communities in similar settings to be equipped with theories and practical skills required for more effective pastoral ministries, especially for preventing and handling different types of conflicts.

Chapter Ten

Summary and Conclusion

10.1 Introduction

The purpose of this study was twofold. One was to analyse and interpret conflicts as a social phenomenon in a multicultural congregation to provide a thick description to understand how human behaviour and beliefs as well as structural issues function as underlying factors of different types of conflicts at GEC. The other was to establish a systematic framework to demonstrate how to categorize conflicts into domains, to classify them into types, and eventually to handle them with employing the most effective conflict approach according to their nature, scale and intensity. In particular, I have suggested practical applications to each conflict domain in GEC. In this conclusion chapter, I intend to explain the outcomes of the research and its possible impact to the research field. I will also describe the contributions that this study can make in academic terms as well as in practical aspects of handling conflicts. Finally, I acknowledge the limitations of the study and suggest some areas for further study.

10.2 Research Outcomes and Contributions

The main outcome in this research is to establish a holistic model of pastoral ministry particularly in relation to handling diverse and complex conflicts in a multicultural congregation. The holistic model consists of three important research outcomes that are countermeasures for the research problems described in the introduction chapter.

10.2.1 A Comprehensive Understanding of Conflict

One of the research problems was that there was no theoretical framework to analyse and interpret conflicts in the research field to have a comprehensive understanding of people's beliefs and behaviour without undermining the multiple realities of the complex conflict situations. This study has provided a comprehensive understanding for the complexity of human beliefs and behaviour as well as of structural and contextual issues that exist in the research field as factors of conflict. In order to uncover the multiple realities of conflict in the research field, I have employed two methods: Multidisciplinary perspective and multidimensional perspective.

10.2.1.1 Multidisciplinary Perspective

The notion that a local church is both a social organization and a faith-based community leads me to employ both sociological and theological perspectives on conflict in this research. A believer is a social and cultural being subjected to the cultural and social context as well as a religious being so that his or her behavior should be investigated in multiple perspectives. The contribution that this study has made to the present knowledge of conflict studies in local congregational settings is that it has been undertaken from a multidisciplinary approach that has demonstrated a new approach to investigate conflicts from diverse perspectives of various academic disciplines. I have analysed and interpreted diverse conflict situations in the four independent domains not only from the viewpoint of social science (sociology, anthropology, and psychology), but also from the viewpoint of theology (doctrine, ecclesiology and congregational studies). This multidisciplinary approach provides the readers with a broader

perspective and more profound understanding of congregational conflict in terms of identifying the underlying factors, understanding the reality, nature and intensity of different types of conflict, and finally finding appropriate applications beyond the general boundaries.

In particular, this multidisciplinary perspective has played a key role to explain the extent to which believers keep their moral integrity in various conflict situations. It is a matter in which sociological aspects and theological aspects of believers' congregational life are interwoven because moral beliefs and behaviour of believers in conflicts are critical consequence of what they pursue in their Christian faith (Halverstadt, 1991: 4). It was clearly observed that some of the members at GEC had a moral ambivalence when they had to make a moral decision that supported keeping their moral beliefs, while at the same time, denied pursuing their desired outcomes from the conflict situation. The phenomenon of moral ambivalence was more severe when the intensity was higher. Firstly, it was observed that members struggled with making a moral judgment in terms of choosing an appropriate method to react when they were in a between-frame conflict caused by a fundamental issue that was not negotiable or replaceable. For instance, when one's cultural identity and values were denied, ontological security and epistemological legitimacy were offended. Secondly, individuals felt a serious moral ambivalence in a structural conflict when they realized that their moral decisions were not based on the biblical moral values such as forgiveness, reconciliation, compassion, justice, and peace. It was difficult for them to subjugate their Christian moral beliefs and biblical principles for the benefit of their groups. Nevertheless, individuals at GEC were inclined to consider achieving their group's goals more important than peace-making, peace-keeping or peace-building in the community. In this case, their collective behaviour reflected moral desensitization of individuals in the group, although their moral behaviour in the reaction and the choice

of conflict approaches at the micro-level of conflict reflected their moral beliefs. These phenomena draw a conclusion that the higher conflict intensity is in a conflict whose underlying cause is related to a fundamental issue or a group's main goal, the lower their level of moral integrity is in terms of selecting a morally acceptable method to react or resolve it. Figure 10.1 depicts the inverse proportion between the conflict: intensity and moral integrity in conflicts at GEC.
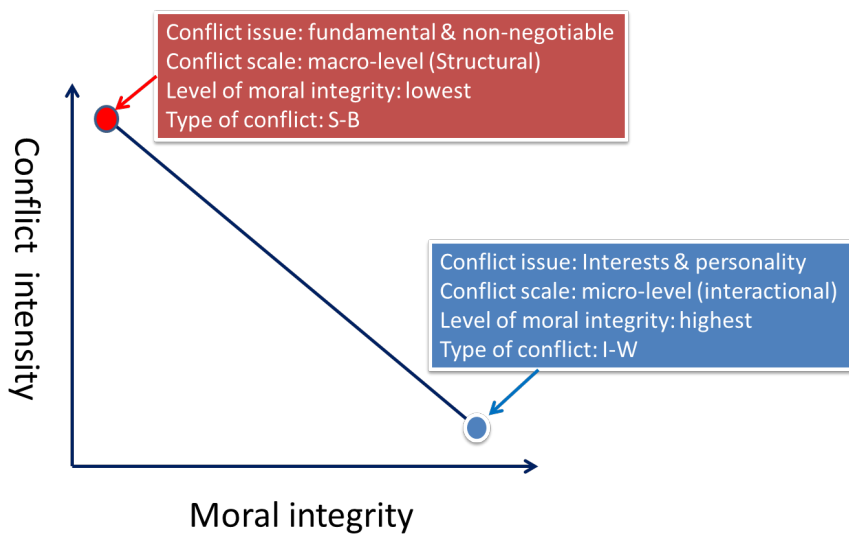
Figure 10.1 The inverse proportion between the conflict intensity and moral integrity

Why is the phenomenon of a discrepancy between individuals' moral beliefs and their moral behaviour observed in the high intensity conflicts at GEC? Firstly, sometimes, individuals at GEC were fearful that their cultural or social sense of belonging was denied in a micro-level conflict situation. It is also observed that individuals expressed their loyalty to their groups by a certain behaviour in a macro-level conflict situation in order to reassure themselves that they belonged to the group, although the behaviour seemed to be morally wrong. In these conflict situations, a survival mechanism of individuals takes precedence over their moral integrity. Secondly, collectivism caused individuals to pursue the goal or benefit of their groups prior to the

common good of the entire community. The biblical concept of unity as the body of Christ and the effort of establishing 'shalom' in the community are replaced with the ambition of each group to win the battle for their desired outcomes, such as power. In other words, individuals' moral integrity has been weakened in the structural and between-frame type of conflicts as ecclesiastical organicism was replaced with sectarian collectivism on the micro-level political conflicts at GEC.

10.2.1.2 Multidimensional Perspectives

In the research, conflicts were analysed and interpreted in both interactional level and structural level. In other words, conflicts at GEC were analysed and interpreted in intrapersonal, interpersonal, structural and contextual dimensions. This multidimensional perspective guided me to see inter-relationships among factors and conflict situations and evolve the conceptual multidimensional frameworks. One is a multifactorial analysis of conflict at the micro-level and the other is a multifaceted analysis of conflict situation in macro-level.

A multifactorial analysis of conflict enabled me to overcome the limitations of a one-dimensional approach analysing factors superficially without considering the inter-relationships between factors within the same domain or in other domains. Without identifying the interactions between intervening factors in a conflict, the conflict is not accurately analysed and an appropriate approach cannot be selected. For example, an interpersonal behavioural conflict between two individuals in the same ministry department was initially regarded as a personality clash, but later it was identified as a structural issue as their job descriptions were vague. While I was analysing the theological conflict domain, it became clear that the individuals' theological stances on the concept of mission and its application were significantly different. Through the

multifactorial analysis, I found that the superficial factor in a conflict may play its role in terms of escalating the conflict situation or changing the characteristics of the conflict, but it is not the underlying factor of the conflict that must be dealt with as a priority.

A multifaceted analysis of conflict situations enables me to view the interconnectivity among the conflict domains. The political conflict between two groups in a power struggle is the most fundamental and the highest intensity conflict at GEC. Although a percentage of data are evenly distributed to each conflict domain, the political conflict has affected the other conflict domains so that some conflicts in other domains take the form of proxy conflicts. This proxy conflict phenomenon was observed as both an interactional conflict and structural conflict. It was observed that some behavioural conflicts were simply an extension at the micro-level of political conflict on an interpersonal conflict level. The theological conflict at GEC was also a type of proxy war as the two groups involved in the conflict were also involved in the power struggle. This multifaceted analysis informs that the political conflict must be dealt with to reduce the level of intensity in other conflict domains.

10.2.2 A Typology of Conflict

Typology is an organized system of types, which makes significant contributions to a conflict analytical process such as understanding conflict intensity and dimensions, creating categories for the classification of conflicts, and considering effective conflict approaches (Collier et al., 2012: 217). In this study, I have established a typology of conflict that has facilitated analysing conflicts through providing a framework for classifying conflict types. The typology has also facilitated employing appropriate applications to different types of conflict through connecting conflict domains to conflict approaches. There are four stages in the procedure of formulating the typology and each stage demonstrates its own crucial task for the whole typological analysis.

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1) Categorization

I was overwhelmed by the huge amount of data collected in the research field and in different formats. In order to identify predictable patterns of conflict I itemized the data and grouped them into similar concepts. Eventually, all the data were categorized into the four main conflict domains according to their contents and scales.

2) Classification

In chapter two, I laid a theoretical foundation for the research to provide a sociological and theological understanding and perspectives about conflicts in a local congregation situated in a specific social context. I synthesized sociological and theological perspectives in order to create the four conflict types: IW, IB, SW and SB. Conflicts in any organizations can be generally classified into the four types.

3) Comparison

Conflicts in each domain were analysed and interpreted so that the nature, scale and intensity of each domain were clarified. The distinctive characteristics in each conflict domain were compared with the concept and descriptions of each conflict type in order to identify commonality or similarity between the conflict domains and the conflict types. This comparison stage confirms the type of conflicts in each domain and it becomes the foundation to connect each conflict domain to a particular conflict approach.

4) Connectivity

Conflict domains are phenomena and conflict approaches are practical applications. It is impossible to employ a particular approach to a conflict domain without knowing its type. The four types of conflict play an essential part in bridging the four conflict domains (phenomena) and conflict approaches (applications) in chapter nine.

One of the outstanding contributions that the typology has made in the research is to reveal the interrelationship between reactions of individuals or groups in a particular conflict and the intensity of the conflict. The data analysis and interpretation in the four domains have informed that the intensity of different types of conflict is determined by the scale and the nature of the conflicts. Table 10.1 shows the levels of conflict intensity according to its scale and nature.

Intensities / Categories	Low	High
Conflict scales	Interactional conflict	Structural conflict
Conflict nature	Within-frame conflict	Between-frame conflict

Table 10.1 The levels of conflict measured by scale and nature

An individual or group reaction varies in the different conflict domains so that classifying and categorizing each conflict domain into a particular type of conflict on the basis of its scale and nature was a vital process in this research to realize the intensity of conflicts in each domain. Table 10.2 shows how different types of conflict can be categorized into the different levels of intensity.

Levels of intensity	Low	Between low and medium	Between medium and high	High
Types of conflict	I-W	I-B	S-W	S-B

Table 10.2 Types of conflict and levels of intensity

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10.2.3 A Systematic Approach to Conflict

As the methodology of this research is an applied ethnography, I proposed applications to the problematic situations in the research field on the basis of the research findings. In chapter eight, I introduced the four major conflict approaches and explained the definition, purpose, and specific methods of each conflict approach. I also made connections between the four conflict approaches and the four conflict domains through identifying the commonalities and similarities between them in chapter nine. These four combinations are the most appropriate and optimized methods to handle different types of conflict phenomena whose characteristics, scale, and intensity vary. It is a systematic approach that identifies the most effective methods to handle diverse and complex conflicts for optimum outcomes and to evaluate the results with a set of formulated criteria. Furthermore, I have proposed practical solutions to each conflict domain in order to demonstrate the use of each conflict approach for peace-making, peace-keeping and peace-building works in a local congregational setting.

10.3 Research Impacts

The primary motive of undertaking this study was to equip the leaders of GEC, including myself, who had not had the multicultural experience and cross-cultural competence. The ultimate aim in the study is to generate necessary theories and to develop practical skills to improve the problematic situations in the research field. The thesis structure, its contents and outcomes reveal the motive and aim effectively. The only challenge remaining is to apply the theories and practical skills in the diverse conflict situations to deal with them in the appropriate manner. In particular, the

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political conflict, as it is the underlying cause affecting other conflicts directly or indirectly, will be approached in conflict transformation to begin a long-term peace-building process and to create a culture of peace in collaboration with the present leadership team at GEC.

The secondary motive was to help other Christian leaders in other similar ministry contexts through disseminating the knowledge and skills generated in this study. This research has been undertaken rigorously to generate a local theory which is also applicable to similar multicultural settings. It means that those who are involved in leadership roles in multicultural congregations or faith-based organizations can find theoretical and practical help through the study in terms of handling diverse conflict situations. I established a conceptual theoretical framework to analyse and interpret conflicts, a typology to classify conflicts into types, and finally a systematic mechanism to suggest effective approaches to different types of conflict. This holistic model to complex conflicts in the research field will provide the readers with a broader perspective and more profound understanding of congregational conflicts in terms of identifying the underlying factors, understanding the reality, nature and intensity of different types of conflict, and finally finding appropriate applications beyond the general boundaries.

10.4 Limitations and Suggestions

Although the study has achieved its purposes and aims, I am aware of various limitations that may exist in this study. There are several inevitable methodological limitations due to the intrinsic nature of this study. This study is based on field research conducted mainly by myself. As far as data collection is concerned, data may be

selectively collected. Selective data collection does not mean that I collected data that seemed to be useful for the research. It means that it was impossible for me to collect all the data in the research field because I was a human bound by time and space so that I could not observe or hear all the conflict situations in the research field and make them as data. I spent over seven years in the research field and collected data for more than three years so that the amount of data was enough to proceed with the analysis and interpretation. Therefore, the selective data collection does not make a significant difference to the research outcomes. However, it could bring more dynamic results in data analysis and interpretation, if the data that I missed were used in the study.

I acknowledge that there may be two kinds of biases in the study. Firstly, there may be my own cultural bias in analysis and interpretation of the data. I am a cultural being subjected to my own cultural norms and perspective to view conflict situations. In order to overcome this cultural bias, I was consulted by the two elders about the results of data analysis and interpretation for each conflict domain. They agreed with the most of them, but there were a few items where we had different opinions. I accepted some of their opinions, but I did not for others. Secondly, there may be biases of the informants in the interviews or questionnaires. I could observe that two individuals who were involved in the same conflict had different interpretations of the specific conflict. It was also found that some participants in questionnaires put some wrong information in order to keep their confidentiality. I have tried to minimize these biases of informants by using participant observation as the primary data collection method.

These limitations are naturally related to a suggestion for further study. A collaborative research toward conflicts in a multicultural congregational setting is necessary to overcome the limitations addressed above. A collaborative research group should consist of people whose cultural backgrounds are diverse so that their culturally

diverse perspectives can contribute to the analysis and interpretation of data in a more objective way. It will be more beneficial that the collaborative research group includes some external people who have expertise in cultural studies and conflict studies in congregational settings so that they can view conflicts from the external perspective as well as provide theoretical frameworks. This combination of internal culturally diverse members and external experts contributes not only to overcoming biases in analysis and interpretation, but also to a better understanding the complex conflict situations, and designing and implementing the research in a more effective way.

10.5 Conclusion

This conclusion chapter explains how far the original research purposes have been achieved. The whole research process produced not only a thick description on the problematic situations in the research field, but also a holistic model to handle the situations in theory and practice. Nowhere is without conflicts. A local church is no exception to this statement. A healthy church is not that it has no conflicts, but that it has the capability to deal with conflicts in a healthy manner. Mayer (2015: 113) quotes Reagan as follows: "Peace is not absence of conflict. It is the ability to handle conflict by peaceful means." I hope this thesis will be a practical guide to those who want to equip themselves with theories and practical skills of peace-making, peace-keeping, and peace-building to not only survive, but also to thrive in various conflict situations.

APPENDICES

Appendix I

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

You are being asked to take part in this research study conducted by Guichun Jun from Oxford Centre for Mission Studies (OCMS). Please read this form and the ethical guidelines attached to this form and tick the boxes that apply and sign your name.

1	The researcher informed me of the purpose of the study, research procedures, any risks or benefits, and confidentiality involved and I fully understand them.	YES ☐	NO ☐
2	I have read the ethical guidelines and I agree with them.	YES ☐	NO ☐
3	I understand that participating in the research is voluntary and I am free to withdraw at any time.	YES ☐	NO ☐
4	I understand that the data about me cannot be withdrawn once they are already collected, in the case of withdrawing myself from the research.	YES ☐	NO ☐
5	I consent to each data collection method: • Observation • Audio-recording during interviews • Questionnaires	YES ☐	NO ☐
6	I understand that my personal information will be stored securely and will only be used for the purpose that I agreed to.	YES ☐	NO ☐
7	I understand that the results of this research may be published and the publication will not contain any identifiable information about me and about the research field.	YES ☐	NO ☐

I, _____, freely consent to take part in this research.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Questionnaire on Conflict Experience

Have you ever observed or experienced any type of conflict at GEC?

Yes (   )   No (   )

If 'Yes', please continue to answer the questions.
If 'No', please put this questionnaire into the collection box.

Please respond to each question by putting a tick (V) on the option that you think best describes your experience in various conflict situations at GEC. There are no right or better answers. If some questions are not relevant to you, please do not feel the need to answer them. When you have finished answering the questions, put this questionnaire into the collection box.

1   When a conflict occurs, I am usually not able to identify its underlying cause.

Strongly agree (   )   Agree (   )   Neutral (   )   Disagree (   )   Strongly disagree (   )

2   When a conflict arises, I do not receive support from other church members in terms of finding a practical way to resolve it.

Strongly agree (   )   Agree (   )   Neutral (   )   Disagree (   )   Strongly disagree (   )

3   When I do not know how to react in a conflict situation, I have at least one person at GEC to consult and receive biblical and practical advice to resolve it.

Strongly agree (   )   Agree (   )   Neutral (   )   Disagree (   )   Strongly disagree (   )

4   When I realize that a conflict seems to be beyond my control due to its scale and intensity, I normally ignore the situation rather than trying to find ways to resolve it.

Strongly agree (   )   Agree (   )   Neutral (   )   Disagree (   )   Strongly disagree (   )

5   I think it is more important to win an argument than to compromise to make a counterfeit peace.

Strongly agree (   )   Agree (   )   Neutral (   )   Disagree (   )   Strongly disagree (   )

6   During a conflict, I always think that I am a believer and my strategic plan to handle the conflict is based on the biblical principles.

Strongly agree (   )   Agree (   )   Neutral (   )   Disagree (   )   Strongly disagree (   )

7   Sometimes, I find that people regard my innate temperament strange, so I have felt internal discomfort and I consider it as a form of conflict.

Strongly agree ( )   Agree ( )   Neutral ( )   Disagree ( )   Strongly disagree ( )

8   Generally speaking, people at GEC are not equipped with cross-cultural competence and as a result they do not understand others' cultural practices and it is a source of interpersonal conflict.

Strongly agree ( )   Agree ( )   Neutral ( )   Disagree ( )   Strongly disagree ( )

9   I have observed or experienced interpersonal conflict caused by any types of organizational structural issues regarding administration and leadership.

Strongly agree ( )   Agree ( )   Neutral ( )   Disagree ( )   Strongly disagree ( )

10   I have experienced cultural discomfort when someone whose cultural background is different compels me to change my cultural behaviour.

Strongly agree ( )   Agree ( )   Neutral ( )   Disagree ( )   Strongly disagree ( )

11   I have noticed that behaviour of individuals at GEC is based more on their own subjective cultural norms and ethical standards than on the commonly shared cultural norms and generally accepted ethical standards in the community, and as a result this causes conflict between individuals.

Strongly agree ( )   Agree ( )   Neutral ( )   Disagree ( )   Strongly disagree ( )

12   I believe that one's culture is neither better nor worse than others'. But, from time to time, I notice that some people at GEC have cultural superiority and they try to impose their cultural values and practices on others.

Strongly agree ( )   Agree ( )   Neutral ( )   Disagree ( )   Strongly disagree ( )

13   Individuals at GEC hold different theological stance on various issues and this is a serious phenomenon which jeopardizes the unity of the church.

Strongly agree ( )   Agree ( )   Neutral ( )   Disagree ( )   Strongly disagree ( )

14   Some individuals at GEC regard their doctrinal positions as more important than others and they repeatedly emphasize their views to others in various meetings.

Strongly agree ( )   Agree ( )   Neutral ( )   Disagree ( )   Strongly disagree ( )

15   I think that there is inequality or discrimination in participating various ministries at GEC based on gender, sexual preference or denominational background.

Strongly agree ( )   Agree ( )   Neutral ( )   Disagree ( )   Strongly disagree ( )

16   Generally, individuals at GEC are inclined to pursue their own goals or their small groups' goal than to cooperate to fulfill the goal of the community.

Strongly agree ( )   Agree ( )   Neutral ( )   Disagree ( )   Strongly disagree ( )

17   Sometimes, it is observed that an interpersonal conflict between two individuals is seen as an extension of an inter-group conflict between two parties.

Strongly agree ( )   Agree ( )   Neutral ( )   Disagree ( )   Strongly disagree ( )

18   I have felt that individuals' reaction and moral decision in interpersonal conflict are more rational and biblical than the ones in intergroup conflict.

Strongly agree ( )   Agree ( )   Neutral ( )   Disagree ( )   Strongly disagree ( )

19   I think that sometimes an intergroup conflict is necessary to seize power in order to reform the community.

Strongly agree ( )   Agree ( )   Neutral ( )   Disagree ( )   Strongly disagree ( )

20   I personally think that there is no bright future in the community if my group loses the battle in the intergroup conflict and therefore we must use all possible means to subdue the opponent.

Strongly agree ( )   Agree ( )   Neutral ( )   Disagree ( )   Strongly disagree ( )

21   I have considered leaving GEC because of a conflict that I have observed or experienced.

Strongly agree ( )   Agree ( )   Neutral ( )   Disagree ( )   Strongly disagree ( )

Appendix III

Samples of data collected by participant observation, field note and self-reflection

A. Samples of data from the domain of cultural conflict

A. 1

133	2/10/07	Self	S / R	2004	Brenda (pseudonym) & self	A cultural clash caused by cultural heterogeneity	C

This particular incident happened in a prayer meeting just several days after I had arrived in Britain. I spent several days in a totally new social and cultural environment with a mixture of expectations and concerns. I had mainly two concerns: one was that I had a language barrier in communication with others in English. The other was that I was not equipped with cross-cultural skills. I think that the latter was more of a serious matter than the former. In fact, the cultural barrier has been more difficult to overcome than the language barrier in the short term.

Several days after my arrival, I was invited to a prayer meeting on a Friday night. I expected a powerful and spiritual prayer meeting in which people would pray together in a loud voice as Korean Christians normally did. However, the style of prayer meeting was very strange to me. In a word, it was my first cultural shock in Britain. People sat on chairs in a circle. Some of them sat with their legs crossed. One particular person chewed of gum. From my cultural point of view, there was no respect for God in their attitude. Another strange thing was that there was neither a specific person leading the meeting nor a message preached by someone during the meeting. One person began to sing and others sang along to the song. Afterwards, people prayed one by one in turn. While one person was praying, others were listening and responding to the prayer. I could not concentrate on prayer because I felt a cultural discrepancy in the meeting in terms of their disrespectful attitude toward God (it was obviously my cultural assumption) and different style of prayer.

The worst thing happened that night was that while the prayer meeting was going on, a lady came towards me and imposed her hand upon my head to pray for me. I was immensely shocked and immediately thought that I was spiritually contaminated. In Korea, lay people, especially women, are prohibited from laying their hands on ordained ministers, as an ordained minister I was very shocked. Korean cultural system is hierarchical so that there is a clear structure in which individuals are ranked according to levels of importance based on their roles and titles. Korean Christians generally believe that God's blessings come from above through the hierarchical structure. It means that ordained ministers can impose their hands upon the heads of lay people who are lower in ranks in the spiritually hierarchical structure. On the other hand, if lay people lay their hands upon the heads of ordained ministers, this is understood as an act against the spiritual order. This hierarchical cultural structure is important in Korean Christianity for authority of ministers, which is directly related to their office as mediators between God and His people.

Having experienced this cultural heterogeneity in the given context, I began to reflect on my cultural behaviour rooted in my own cultural background. What I felt at that time was more than just cultural discomfort. I was angered due to my cultural misjudgment. As aforementioned, I assumed their attitude toward God in the prayer meeting was

impious. From my cultural perspective as a Koran Christian, crossing legs or chewing gum is a disgraceful attitude toward God in a prayer meeting. However, after spending more than three years in this cultural and social context, I realize now that it was totally my misunderstanding of the culture of evangelical Christians in Britain. When the incident occurred, I was absolutely sure that I was right and they were wrong. However, I was culturally biased so I interpreted and judged the particular cultural phenomenon on the basis of the standards and values inherent to my own culture. This realization has caused me to have a fear of failure in terms of continuing my ministry in a multicultural environment.

I am challenged in this multicultural ministry context to develop my cultural competence not only to survive, but also to thrive. I needed to break my own cultural shell to learn cultural appropriateness in this multicultural setting, as a chick must break its eggshell to get life. As long as I remained in my own cultural shell, I would judge others' cultural behaviour on the basis of my own cultural norms and values formed in Korea. The more I spent time at GEC, the more I realized that it is not only me who do not have cross-cultural skills, but also other members from various places including British. Therefore, I am motivated to equip myself with cultural competence in order to grow together with others to eventually create unity in a culturally diverse community. I have observed various types of cultural conflicts at GEC caused by different perspectives and interpretations in a given situation between individuals whose cultural backgrounds differ. Cultural heterogeneity is obviously a source of conflict at GEC when people from different cultural backgrounds express their embodied cultural values and norms without considering the ones of others. Frankly speaking, I was not exempt in terms of causing some cultural conflicts at GEC and I was struggled and was frustrated in those conflict situations.

How can I increase the level of cultural appropriateness in my cultural practice? How can we, collectively as a community, have a comprehensive understanding of cultural conflicts caused by cultural discrepancy among individuals at GEC? What is the most effective way to enable individuals at GEC to acquire cultural competence in order to finally achieve cultural integration? I can easily anticipate there will be difficulty in motivating others to evolve their cultural identity and negotiate their cultural values for cultural appropriateness because cultural identity and values are the most fundamental elements underpinning their existence and perception as cultural beings. I feel challenged by this huge and tough task ahead of me for the next few years in this research.

Key terms: cultural misjudgment, cultural conflict, cultural assumption, cultural heterogeneity, cultural bias, cultural competence, cultural integration, cultural appropriateness, cultural identity evolvement, and cultural value negotiation.

A. 2

249 357	5/2/08 9/5/09	Self	F / N P / O S / R	2008 2009	Jane & Ellie Jane & Tanya (Pseudonyms)	Two different incidents regarding seniority issue	C

Incident One (Data set no. 249):
On a Sunday (5th Feb. 2008) after the morning Service, I could hear loud and contentious noises in the minor hall. I went into the hall and found that Jane and Ellie

were arguing with each other. Jane is from one of the Caribbean islands and Ellie was born and brought up in Britain. Jane converted from Hinduism and was baptized at GEC in 2005. Even though Jane has been living in Britain for over fifteen years, it is observed that she still carries her own cultural baggage with her as a Caribbean woman. She is in her early forties. On the contrary, Ellie is a typical young British lady in her late twenties. She has been attending GEC since she was a little baby and her father is a deacon at GEC. Interestingly, they work in the same company. On the basis of what both of them told me about their relationship, they do not speak to each other in the work place.

On that Sunday, Ellie and her husband David led the worship in the service and Jane personally did not enjoy the worship because of Ellie's cold indifference to her at the workplace. After the service, Jane approached Ellie and suggested to Ellie that she should include some others who were gifted in leading worship. Ellie immediately replied, "You should not intervene in what I am doing at GEC. I am not under your authority." Jane was really annoyed by Ellie's cynical response towards her. Jane replied, "How dare you speak to me in that way in front of others? Do you not know that I am much older than you? You need to accept what I suggested to you just before." Ellie replied again, "In this country where you are living, age is not important. You have to understand the culture of the society where you are living now. In this society, respect is earned by maturity in personality and faith, not automatically handed over based on age." After this explosive conversation, Jane felt sick and could not go to work for several days. Jane experienced a cultural shock when Ellie who was younger than her aggressively confronted her. She had never experienced it in her home country. She perceived and interpreted Ellie's attitude as an insult and offensive behaviour. On the other hand, Ellie perceived Jane to have the wrong sense of entitlement based on her cultural concept of seniority.

Incident Two (Data set no. 357):
Tanya is in her early twenties and is from a country in Southeast Asia. She got married to a British man. She used to live in a small village which is isolated from the rest of the world. It had no electricity or even cars in the village. This meant the traditions and culture of the village was well preserved without any external cultural invasion except for Christian missionaries who came to the village in the1970s. She was born and brought up in a Christian family. Her father is one of the lay leaders in the small village church. She came to Britain because of her marriage and began to attend GEC in 2005. She has been involved in the worship team and the choir as she is recognized as a gifted person in music.

Every Tuesday we gathered together in my house as a house group. On one occasion, Jane approached Tanya and criticized that Tanya dressed immodestly in the house group. In addition, Jane continually criticized Tanya and said that she dressed immodestly before the congregation when she sang in the worship team or in the choir. Jane justified her action with her cultural concept of seniority as follows: "I am telling you this with love because I am older than you. Sometimes, you wear tight clothes so that men in church could see your bodyline. Sometimes, you wear low-cut tops. You are a great singer, but from my perspective, your music ministry is not very effective because you wear inappropriate clothing."

Hearing what Jane said to Tanya, I was concerned about Tanya's reaction to it. However, Tanya truly appreciated Jane's comments and said, "Thanks Jane for your honest criticism. I have never thought that my clothing was immodest for church

because it is absolutely normal in my village. I will try to be careful to dress more modestly in church. I regard you as my older sister and respect your opinion."

Reflection on the both incidents:
Why did Ellie and Tanya show different reactions to the same cultural practice of Jane in relation to seniority? These two different reactions indicate that people have their own criteria in deciding whether or not they accept or refuse a particular cultural practice of a person from a different cultural background. From my observation at GEC, people feel comfortable when they meet culturally homogeneous person. They can develop intimate relationship in a short period of time. They can find many things in common and the cultural similarities reinforce their intimate relationship. On the other hand, people feel uncomfortable when they meet people of different culture. Basically, they become careful about making any mistakes through their behaviour which might be absolutely normal in their culture. They easily identify differences in cultural behaviour of the other person so it is likely that their relationship remains superficial.

Constant cultural interactions among individuals at GEC have enabled them to use their cognitive abilities to identify some people who are culturally close and others who are culturally distant. This cognitive process in their minds at GEC has caused them to categorize people into cultural in-group and cultural out-group. Individuals feel a sense of trust and security in the cultural in-group. On the contrary, they do not cooperate with others in the cultural out-group because of the our-group biases generated in the process of categorization. In serious cases, it may develop into cultural antipathy. I have personally observed that to some extent, this in-group and out-group differentiation has psychological impacts in relationship at GEC. This psychological impact is especially obvious when an individual is in conflict with someone who is in the cultural out-group.

Why did Jane receive different reactions from Ellie and Tanya? On the basis of what I have described above, it is observed that there are in-group favouritism and out-group derogation in the reactions of Ellie and Tanya toward Jane's cultural practice in relation to seniority. An individual's cultural practice cannot be evaluated as 'good or bad' or 'right or wrong' unless it trespasses against the fundamental moral principles that can be found in every cultural society. Jane's cultural practice is not a matter to evaluate as 'right nor wrong' or 'good or bad'. Therefore, individuals at GEC have to develop a sense of cross-cultural acceptance not only to behave appropriately, but also to prevent unnecessary cultural conflict.

Key terms: Different concept of seniority, cultural clash, cultural acceptance, cultural antipathy, cultural homogeneity, cultural heterogeneity, cultural interaction, cognitive process, cultural categorization, psychological impact, cultural in-group, cultural out-group, in-group favouritism, out-group derogation.

B. Samples of data from the domain of interpersonal behavioural conflict

B. 1

147	21/12/07	Self	P / O S / R	2007	Tony, Frank (pseudonyms) & the elders	Being punished twice	IB

Tony is a single man in his late thirties. Tony had been caught by the cyber-police for downloading and possessing indecent images of children in 2002. The elders of GEC explained about the incident when I joined GEC in January 2004. He spent several months in prison. When he was released from prison, he could not return to GEC because there were several members who were strongly against it. Their argument was that Tony was going to be a stumbling block to church growth because the incident was widely known in the community where GEC was located through the local newspaper. In fact, several people from the community gathered around the church building and threw eggs and stones at the building several days after the incident. Gordon (pseudonym), senior pastor of GEC, described it as the most difficult time in his church ministry. The congregation was suffering from the internal political conflict and at the same time, the church was externally blamed for the immoral behaviour of Tony by the community.

In order to resolve the conflict between Tony, who was willing to return to GEC, and those who were against his return, the elders suggested that Tony would have a period of probation for two years in another church (Emmanuel Gospel Hall; pseudonym) under the supervision of the leadership team of EGH. This suggestion could help the two sides to reach a compromise. After spending two years at EGH, Tony tried to return to GEC with an excellent recommendation letter from the leadership team that Tony showed clear evidence of repentance and of following Christ. However, he faced strong resistance again from several young parents who had children. It was a normative conflict in which there were two plausible but incompatible arguments. In spite of strong resistance from young parents, the elders made a decision that Tony would come back to GEC under the condition that he had to observe the safeguarding policy set by the government and some extra specific regulations required by the elders. Tony faithfully observed all the policy and the specific regulations so the conflict seemed to disappear between him and those who were against his return to GEC.

However, another serious incident happened. Frank and Emma (pseudonyms) approached the elders to discuss about their daughter's dedication service. Frank and Emma have attended GEC since they were young children and both sets of the couple's parents were long-term members of GEC. Therefore, all of them know the incident which Tony was involved in years ago. Frank requested that the elders prohibit Tony from attending his daughter's dedication service. I had a meeting with the other elders to discuss about what Frank had requested. I personally expressed my opinion to other elders that there was no direct connection between the dedication service and Tony's incident. From my viewpoint, it was just a nasty scheme of a man who had moral superiority to discourage Tony who was socially purged of his crime and who had spiritually repented. Unexpectedly, the other elders agreed with what Frank had requested. The elders' argument for their biased decision was that Tony had to take responsibility for what he had done in the past. I countered the argument that Tony's sin was not continually valid but had expired because God Himself did not remember our sins and lawless acts after our true repentance (Hebrew 10:17). From my personal viewpoint, the elders could not but support Frank and his family due to their close relationship for many years. Eventually, Tony was prohibited from attending the dedication service. Several days later, Tony expressed his resentment about the elder's moral ambivalence. The elders advocated his return to GEC when the young parents refused it. However, they prohibited him from attending a church service. He felt that he was punished twice for the same crime.

Here are some critical questions raised in my mind regarding this incident: Why and how are moral reasoning and moral judgment of Christians often biased by self-interest which denies the commonly shared moral code in the community? Why must a man take continual responsibility for his immoral or criminal action after being legally purged of his crime and truly repentant in faith? Who can prohibit a person who has clear evidence of repentance from coming to the Lord to worship Him? What is the role of leaders in a local church when two individuals are involved in an interpersonal conflict because of discrepancy in their moral norms?

Key terms: Rejecting a former criminal, normative conflict, moral superiority, prohibiting a person from coming to a service, biased moral decision, validity of sin, moral ambivalence, plausible but incompatible arguments, double punishment, discrepancy in moral norms.

B. 2

579	15/9/10	Self	P / O S / R	2010	Sam (pseudonyms) & self	Sam's uncooperative behaviour	IB

Sam is a young man teaching history in a secondary school. He is a talented person able to do many practical things. Sam created the church website for GEC several years ago. The website was well designed and had functioned effectively for the last several years. Although the website ticked all the boxes in the beginning, as time went by, the need for upgrading its contents became apparent in addition to the need for uploading video and audio sermons onto it. Gordon, on behalf of the leadership team, explained to Sam the need for change on the website and politely requested it. However, Sam did not do anything for several months and gave no reason. Thus, the leadership team made a decision to proceed to make the changes with another person. Several weeks later, a friend of Gordon who was involved in OM (Operation Mobilization) introduced a Korean web-designer, Trisha (pseudonym), who just arrived in the UK as a volunteer missionary through OM. The leadership team entrusted me with the task of contacting her due to cultural and linguistic links. I contacted Trisha and explained what our needs were. She was quite willing to help us. On the same day, I sent an email to Sam to explain the situation and asked for the admin username and password to access the database server of the web service company. To my disappointment, even after several days I still did not receive a reply from him. Thus, I asked Gordon to contact him and ask for the username and password. The next day Sam sent me an email in which he simply wrote the username and password but nothing else. There was neither a message nor a greeting in the email. I felt emotional discomfort by his behaviour, but I replied back and expressed my gratitude for providing the username and password for the sake of maintaining a good relationship with him.

Trisha faced a problem during the work progress. She told me that the security level should be upgraded in order to create a message board in which she would be able to upload the video and audio files. She told me that Sam, as the main admin, was the only authorized person to request the company to do so. I contacted Sam through email and explained why we needed to upgrade the security level. Unusually, he immediately replied to me with one sentence: "I do not know anything about it". I sent him a text message to his mobile phone immediately after reading the email from him. I explained to him again why he needed to request the company to upgrade the security level and

kindly asked him to cooperate in this matter. He replied to me with a short sentence: "Our present website is perfect. It does not need any change at all."

This incident deepened my understanding of interpersonal behavioural conflict. Sam is an intelligent man who is well educated. He has attended GEC for more than ten years and I have never had any interpersonal issue with him. Sam did not reveal the exact reason behind why he behaved in that way, but I would like to provide the results of my own analysis on his behaviour. Firstly, there is a psychological factor in his uncooperative behaviour. He did not want the church website to be changed. He was very much proud of the website and himself when people complimented his work. He probably interpreted the need for change as meaning his skill was out of date or there was a fault on the website. This interpretation caused him to withdraw himself from the conversation to defend himself and his work. His uncooperative behaviour and communication problem were rooted in his character trait which caused a defensive psychological reaction. This is evidence that character traits are a factor in interpersonal behavioural conflict. Secondly, there is a cultural issue in his uncooperative behaviour. Sam did not want the church website to be updated by a woman from Korea. It may be my cultural assumption, but I am sure that he had some degree of cultural superiority.

Additional information updated on 3rd Nov. 2010
After many complications, the new church website was modified and the function of uploading video and audio sermons was added. When the test trial period was over, I visited the website to upload several video sermons onto the website. Surprisingly, I found that the page was closed. I contacted the Korean web-designer to find out whether or not she was involved in it. She told me that she had not done anything since she finished modifying it. What immediately struck my mind was that Sam had done it because he did not want it to be modified from the very beginning. I reported it to the leaders and Gordon contacted Sam via email to find out whether or not he was involved in it. For three weeks, he did not reply to Gordon nor attended Sunday service. Gordon sent another email to him, but there was no response from Sam. He did not answer the phone either. He proved himself as the suspect by rejecting communication with the leaders. The leadership team concluded that Sam had closed the church website as an act of retaliation against the leaders and against the Korean web-designer. He incorrectly thought that the leaders undervalued his work and underestimated his ability. He also had an inferiority complex to the Korean web-designer since she upgraded the church website in a more professional way. This incident plays an important role as it showed that my analysis on his behaviour (written above, dated on 15th Sep. 2010) turned out to be true.

Key terms: stubbornness, psychological factor, withdrawing from conversation, defensiveness, communication problem, character traits, cultural superiority, rejecting communication, retaliation, imprudent assumption, inferiority feeling.

C. Samples of data from the domain of micro-level of political conflict

C. 1

551	30/11/10	Self	F / N	2002	Gordon (pseudonym)	Different interpretations on the fire	P

Gordon became the senior pastor at GEC when GEC and LC merged in 1998. He had been leading a successful church in a middle class area. They met in a local school so their long-term prayer was to have their own church building. This problem became a major factor in considering the merger constructively. However, they did not think very hard about how to overcome the differences between the two congregations. People from LC were charismatic and reformative, but people from GEC were conservative and non-charismatic. The majority of people from LC had professional jobs and were middle-class. In contrast, the majority of people from GEC were poor and not very well-educated. The two congregations could not associate very well with each other because of their distinctive differences in the aspects of theological tendencies and social strata.

I had a personal meeting today with Gordon to discuss various issues in the church. At the end of the meeting, Gordon shared some of his experiences at GEC. Under his permission, I could jot down several things that seemed to me as important for data in this research. He recollected his frustration when he first began his ministry at GEC. He said that the most difficult thing to overcome was the fixed mindset of people from GEC, which had been based on their long history and traditions accumulated as Britannia Medical Mission founded in 1875. When the two churches merged, people from GEC did not allow people from LC to touch any of the photo frames or furniture with memorial plaques dedicated to different members of GEC in the past. Gordon said that the object which prevented integration between the two congregations the most was the huge wooden pulpit that was completely untouchable and unmovable. From his perspective, people from GEC worshiped it. He said that it was idolatry. Thus, he and James (pseudonym) came to church with an axe one night and destroyed the pulpit. He believed that it was an act of reformation for the future of the church. He told me that he had been inspired by the story of Gideon, where he destroyed all the idols in his father's house and built an altar to the Lord. Gordon simply identified what he had to do in the beginning of his new ministry at GEC with what Gideon did in the beginning of his calling as a judge. He believed that it was an obvious confirmation from God at that moment, so he put it into action. However, he said that his plan did not work as he had expected. What he and James did caused the initial stage of political conflict to become a volatile situation. The level of hatred toward each other suddenly escalated. The worst thing that happened was that Gordon and James lost their trust as leaders at GEC. He told me that he lost his power to continue to reform the community into the direction that God wanted. He thought that his reformation plan had completely failed.

After this incident, Gordon and people from LC changed their strategy from taking action to praying to God. People from LC had their own prayer meeting in Gordon's house once a week. They prayed that God would remove all those traditional objects that people from GEC were obsessed with. Gordon said that they prayed in patience for several months until one day the church building was set on fire. An unknown young man broke a window and poured fuel in and threw a burning match into the building. The fire was extinguished before it damaged the structure of the building, but everything in the church hall was burnt completely. Gordon told me an interesting thing regarding the different responses to the fire and what it had done. Gordon and people from LC believed that it was not only a physical fire to burn the traditional stuff in the building, but also a spiritual fire from God, which confirmed that God was on their side in the conflict situation as God authenticated that He was the only true God by sending fire from above similar to the days of Elijah. Gordon made a joke as follows: "We sang 'Send fire today' on Sunday before the fire and we sang 'Blessed insurance' on Sunday after the fire". However, people from GEC thought that the fire destroyed all their

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spiritual legacy and important memories about their excellent history. They suffered from the serious loss of their valuable traditional stuff which was regarded as their identity.

Was the fire a blessing or a tragedy? Why were their responses to the fire different? When people are involved in intergroup conflict to seek initiative or power, it seems that they become less moral. They interpret and evaluate all situations in their favour and use everything to their advantage. It is observed at GEC that people are more interested in seizing power rather than making peace at the micro-level political conflict, although they are Christians who are supposed to believe in God who describes Himself as love. It is sad to observe that believers in the political conflict for seizing power become desensitized to immorality. The Bible says, "Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn." (Romans 12:15, NIV). However, one group was overjoyed at what they perceived to be victory, while the other group was in deep sorrow by the loss. People were tired, hurt, wounded and victimized. What is the remedy for this serious schism and conflict at GEC?

Key terms: distinctive difference between the congregations, church reformation, seizing power, destroying the wooden pulpit, escalating the level of hatred, volatile situation, different interpretations of the fire, becoming less moral, moral desensitization.

C. 2

441	10/11/09	Self	P / O S / R	2009	Mark and Emmanuel (pseudonyms)	Struggles of ethnic minorities in the political conflict	P

The long-term political conflict at GEC has resulted in devastating impacts on congregational life. The power balance between the congregations was broken and the asymmetric power balance created a dominant and subordinate relationship between the two. People from LC used offensive tactics to maintain their dominant position. One of them was to eliminate some influential people from their roles and involvements in the church to make them to feel powerless and frustrated. As a result, some people left GEC with anger and resentment in their hearts. On the other hand, people from GEC developed a defence mechanism in order to survive until an opportune time came to retaliate against the people from LC. One of their defence mechanisms was to form sub-groups with those who were eliminated and eventually left GEC. They did not attend any official church meetings, but met together by themselves in various places including the church building in order to support those from GEC remaining to fight. Some of them did not return their church keys when they left GEC because they regarded themselves as members of old GEC and one day they would return to GEC. This retaliation scheme caused the congregation to be more fragmented.

The division between the congregations became wider. The degree of distrust between the congregations escalated. The power struggle became tougher and more intense. Both offence-oriented behaviour of people from LC and defence-oriented behaviour of people from GEC amplified the hostility and enmity that caused individuals of both parties to be less interactive in congregational life. There are seven house groups at GEC. One underlying principle in terms of forming a house group is to allocate people to a house group on the basis of the geographical locations of their homes. If this

principle is abided by, there must be a mixture of people from both parties in every house group. However, each house group consists of people either only from GEC or only from LC, except for my house group which had a mix of people of GEC, LC and ethnic minorities. The phenomenon reinforced people's group-based identity and only solidified their in-group unity.

Having observed this schism at GEC, ethnic minorities who recently joined became confused. I observed that they struggled with the segregation phenomenon among believers at GEC. For example, Mark and Molly (pseudonyms) are from Nigeria. They joined GEC in 2008. Several months after they joined GEC, Mark approached me and expressed his disappointment with the political conflict at GEC. He said, "I feel awkward and do not have any idea how to behave when a party condemns the other party". Here is another evidence. Emmanuel is from Zambia. He joined GEC in early 2009. He was invited to different social events organized by people from GEC. As time went by, he found that only half of the church met in those events most of the time. Eventually, he realized that there were subdivisions in the church and it was obviously a form of sectarianism as a result of the political conflict at GEC. He expressed his frustration, "I have heard various criticism from both parties. However, the more I hear their complaints and criticism toward each other, the more confused I am and I do not know which side I need to support." I replied to him, "We do not need to support either parties in this political conflict, as we do not know the exact underlying causes and factors and how it started and evolved. We, as ethnic minorities that God has drawn into GEC in this difficult time, have to play our role as a buffer zone between these two groups. I am sure this is one of the reasons that GEC has become a multicultural congregation. We need to become peacemakers between them to seek genuine forgiveness and reconciliation between the parties. We have to work together with the conflicting parties to build a culture of peace based on biblical principles."

When ethnic minorities join a Sunday morning service for the first time, they feel that worship service at GEC is what heavenly worship would be like because they see people from different nations, tribes and languages gathering together in one place to worship the same Lord. However, sooner or later, they realize that the long-term political conflict is hidden behind the veil of the fervent worship atmosphere. These two conversations reminded me of the church in Corinth where there were four parties (Paul, Apollos, Cephas and Christ). What does Bible say about the solution to overcome the schism and to create unity in the church? Paul asked people in Corinth to pay attention to the cross of Jesus and His gospel (1 Cor. 1). What way can enable people to lay down all their political agendas before the cross and to be truly united by the love of Christ at GEC? How can the ethnic minorities keep the politically neutral position and continually build a culture of peace at GEC? I have mixed feelings at this stage my research journey. I feel vulnerable and limited, even fearful because I do not see the way that I need to take to contribute positively and constructively to the long-term political conflict at GEC clearly. On the other hand, I am excited at the expectation that the results of this research will identify some practical methods to transform the conflict situation into a peaceful congregational life some time in the future.

Key terms: devastating impacts, asymmetric power balance, a dominant and subordinate relationship, offence mechanism, defence mechanism, elimination, retaliation, fragmentation, amplifying hostility and enmity, group based identity, schism, segregation phenomenon, subdivisions, sectarianism, struggles of ethnic minorities, need for forgiveness and reconciliation, building a culture of peace, schism in the church at Corinth, politically neutral position, transforming the conflict situation.

D. Samples of data from the domain of theological conflict

D. 1

134	11/11/07	Self	P / O S / R	2007	Ray and Barbara (pseudonyms)	The Holy Communion and the Laity	T

Ray and Barbara are a couple who joined GEC in 2005. Ray has a Muslim background and Barbara a Hindu background. Both of them are professional accountants. They were saved and baptized at GEC. From my observation, although they were converted to the Christian faith, the religious passion that they had in their former religions remained same in their church life. They believe that to a certain extent their piety can be measured in their commitment to the local church. For example, they have never been absent from Sunday morning service since they began attending GEC. They sacrificially contribute to the church finances. According to what they said to me in a private conversation, one particular thing that they were fascinated by GEC is the evangelical nonconformist theology in terms of providing opportunities in diverse church ministries to lay people. In their former religions, they never imagined this kind of religious egalitarianism with no regard for gender, race and ordination.

At GEC, we have the Holy Communion once a month. Normally, one of the elders is responsible for conducting the Holy Communion. However, on this particular Sunday (11/11/07), Ray and Barbara led the Holy Communion. Several weeks before the Sunday, they made a request to Gordon (pseudonym), the senior pastor, to let them lead the Holy Communion on that Sunday and Gordon permitted them to do so. From my own analysis, there are two reasons why Gordon allowed them to lead the Holy Communion. Firstly, Gordon is from the Brethren, which do not have a formal hierarchical structure or ordained clergy. According to their doctrinal stance, there is no division between clergy and laity, but they regard all believers equal. Secondly, Gordon was pressured by their commitment and contribution to GEC so he could not refuse their request, although he anticipated that some people at GEC would not welcome the decision. As expected, some people from Africa and Asia, where the Holy Communion is generally conducted only by ordained ministers, raised a theological issue after the morning service about whether the laity could conduct the Holy Communion or not.

I was one of those who felt uncomfortable in the Communion on that Sunday. As far as I was aware, all major denominations in Korea prohibited the laity from conducting the Holy Communion. Jesus established the Holy Communion during the Lord's Supper and commanded for it to continue in remembrance of Him (1 Cor. 11:23-26). Afterwards, the Holy Communion became an official sacrament in the church tradition, which was conducted by the chosen few such as apostles, overseers, elders, and so on. Everyone is equal in Christ, but everyone has different involvement and responsibility in church ministries based on their callings. On the other hand, I need to be attentive to the opinion of those who have egalitarian perspectives about the involvement of the laity in almost every area of church ministry. These people have their own theological justification for their assertion. They literally believe that all believers are a royal priesthood since the curtain in the temple was torn from top to bottom. They assert that lay believers do not need ordained priests any more as mediators between God and

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them, but they can go confidently to the throne of God (Hebrews 4:16). They understand the Holy Communion from this perspective.

Why is this kind of theological division observed in church, when we have one God, one Bible, one Baptism, and one faith (Ephesians 4:5)? Some emphasize the hierarchical church structure and liturgical service conducted by ordained ministers. These people feel comfortable and secure in the institutionalized formality and the clergy-centred church governance and ministry. On the other hand, others refuse the ecclesiastical hierarchy or man-made traditions in the church, but emphasize the core of the Gospel which liberates and emancipates people from discrimination on the basis of gender, race and social strata (Galatians 3:28). In their belief, a local church is a place where the social justice and equality among believers is fully practiced. Everyone is on the same level in Christ. These people prefer the unstructured and informal service in which everyone can take part in various forms such as praying, prophesying and sharing a testimony by the prompting from the Holy Spirit.

Why do people have fundamentally different theological stances and how can believers in the local church create unity in theological diversity? GEC has become not only culturally diverse, but also theologically plural. It means that individuals at GEC came from various denominational backgrounds and church traditions so their doctrinal stances and concepts of church governance and of Christian ethics vary. Individuals at GEC hold different theological positions for acquiring knowledge and for reflecting their practices. How people do things is closely related to what they believe and know. In order words, Christian practices are underpinned and guided by Christian epistemology. Viewed in this light, conducting the Holy Communion in different ways is based on their deep-rooted theological inclinations formed in their denominations. Therefore, when mutually exclusive Christian epistemologies are expressed, it often becomes a conflict and hard to promote some degree of unity similar to what happened at GEC. Some held fundamental and traditional views and approaches to ministry, but others held liberal and critical views and approaches to ministry at GEC. Some preferred liturgical services and others preferred non-liturgical services. Individuals interpreted one Bible verse in different ways due to different hermeneutic methods that they use. Individuals make different moral judgments on a person's moral behaviour due to different moral standards that they hold. On the basis of what I have observed in terms of the theological conflict at GEC, there are two fundamental epistemologies, modern positivism and post-modern constructivism, and they clash with each other in different types of church ministry.

Individuals at GEC must learn how to co-exist with others who hold different theological viewpoints and who do things in different ways. Individuals developed their theologizing abilities in their own context (Sitz im Leben) so their social, cultural, economic and political settings are reflected in their Christian practices. For example, people from the social contexts where people are oppressed because of power asymmetry theologize for social liberation and emancipation. It means that individuals have the ability to interpret the meaning of the text in their own context. GEC is a new multicultural and theologically plural congregation in which individuals must learn how to theologize in the new context to dismantle or modify their existing theological frameworks to prevent conflict and to promote unity. It is necessary to decentralize our concerns and interests from different methods or styles of our practices, but to focus on the essential foundation of the Christian faith. In this respect, it is not very important whether the clergy or the laity conduct the Holy Communion. The most important thing

is to know why Jesus commanded us to do it without having any specific theological implications of the sacrament.

Key terms: non-conformist theology, religious egalitarianism, the Holy Communion, different denominational backgrounds, religious hierarchy, different doctrinal stances, discrimination between the clergy and the laity, liturgical and non liturgical service, institutionalized formality, clergy-centred governance, ecclesiastical hierarchy, man-made traditions, theological liberation and emancipation, Christian epistemology, different hermeneutic methods, modern positivism, post-modern constructivism, co-existence in theological diversity, theologizing ability for contextualization, decentralization of theological interests, the essence of the Christian faith.

D. 2

476	1/2/10	Self	P /O	2008	Brian & Irene (pseudonyms)	Cessationism versus continuationism	T

Irene is an old lady in her eighties. She was brought up in the Brethren. She was taught that the holy Trinity was the Father, the Son and the Holy Scripture. The place of the Holy Spirit was replaced with the Holy Scripture in the teaching. This is a theological bias that the role of the Holy Spirit was ignored. This biased view on the Holy Spirit caused her to believe that speaking in tongues was not the work of the Holy Spirit, but was the work of evil spirits.

Irene voluntarily took part in the Alpha course every week. On one occasion, Brian, an elder, presented on the question of 'What does the Holy Spirit do?' and he mentioned about speaking in tongues as one of the gifts of the Holy Spirit. After the presentation, we organized several groups to have a discussion on the topic. Irene intentionally joined Brian's group and I also joined the group because I had personally known her particular theological perspective on the Holy Spirit and it might cause a conflict in the discussion. In front of several new believers, Irene clearly stated that speaking in tongues was not the work of the Holy Spirit. There was tension between Irene and Brian but continued, "The tongues that the early believers in the first century spoke on the day of Pentecost were actual spoken languages and dialects. The Holy Spirit granted the gift to the believers to transcend language barriers for the sake of preaching the Gospel. However, tongues that contemporary Christians speak are unknown and mysterious languages to both speakers and listeners. Therefore, I do not believe that the gift of speaking in tongues is valid at present time. From my point of view, it is the work of the devil."

Most of the people in the group were newcomers and they looked utterly confused by Irene's cessationist perspective on the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Having heard what Irene said, Brian began to explain his continuationist perspective with several references from the Bible in order to controvert Irene's cessationist perspective. He said, "Speaking in tongues is absolutely biblical and it is a spiritual gift. God promised His believers to grant His Spirit with His gifts in the Bible (Luke 11:13). As long as we believe that God still exists, the gifts of the Holy Spirit have not ceased. Secondly, there are two kinds of tongues mentioned in the Bible. When the Holy Spirit came upon people who prayed in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost, they were able to speak in tongues and as you (Irene) mentioned they were native languages of those who came from some parts of Middle Asia, North Africa and the Mediterranean (Acts 2:7-11). It was an extraordinary occasion that God intended to preach the gospel to those whose languages were

different from Aramaic or Hebrew that was supposed to be spoken by the disciples. However, after this special event of the Pentecost, the gift of speaking in tongue was understood in a different way in the early church context. It does not mean that the gift ceased, but the function of the gift was shifted from authenticating the message of the God to communicating with God secretly. The best reference for this can be found in 1 Corinthians 14:2; "Anyone who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God. Indeed, no one understands him; he utters mysteries with his spirit (NIV)."

Although Brian explained it plainly, Irene refuted his argument by saying that the apostle Paul mentioned the exact opposite in the same book that Brian quoted just before as a reference for his argument. She asked Brian to open his Bible to 1 Corinthians 13:8 and read it for everyone in the group. Brian read the verse, "Love never ends. As for prophecies, they will pass away; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will pass away" (NIV). Having read it, Brian became speechless for a while. After reading the chapter (1 Corinthians 13) several times, Brian criticized Irene that she took one particular verse out of its context. From this point in time, the dispute moved from arguing about cessation or continuation of the gifts of the Holy Spirit to different ways of biblical hermeneutics. Brian continued to say that the apostle Paul's main intention in the chapter was to emphasize the importance of love which will last forever, rather than the cessation of tongues, prophecies or knowledge. He also mentioned that the apostle Paul used two different words regarding time in the chapter, 'now' and 'then'. From Brian's point of view, the apostle Paul acknowledged that tongues, prophecies and knowledge existed in his time (now) and continued until the time (then) comes. After saying this, Brian asked Irene this question, "Irene, what do you think 'then' is?" Irene remained silent. Brian continued to explain his own view that 'then' is the time 'when the perfection comes' according to verse ten in the chapter. In that respect, Brian's conclusion was that the gifts of the Holy Spirit has continued and will continue until Jesus comes back. Brian finally advised Irene to study Bible passages within their context. As expected, Irene did not accept his argument, but continued to assert her cessationist view until the discussion session was over.

The discussion session was ruined by the argumentative dispute between Irene and Brian. The newcomers looked so uncomfortable. They observed the negative side of congregational life among believers that night. Unfortunately, two of the newcomers did not attend the rest of the course since the incident happened. They were a couple who were exploring the Christian faith as seekers. The theological conflict not only affected the relationship of the individuals involved, but also affected those observing it. It also affected the congregation as the conflict situation shifted into an intergroup conflict. Irene and a few church members who shared the same view intentionally intervened in the Bible studies to argue their theological viewpoint forcefully. They went so far as to disturb and dominate prayer meetings by praying for a long time to emphasize their viewpoint in the form of a prayer. Eventually, the elders imposed sanctions against them and suspended them from prayer meetings and Bible study for three months because their behaviour affected the peaceful congregation life. Since then, they made intentional objections all the time to any proposals made by the elders. This incident is an example of how a theological conflict shifted into an intergroup political conflict at GEC.

Additional information updated on 3rd August 2010:
Irene did not follow the regulations required and the discipline set by the elders. She continually intervened during Bible study to express her particular view and disturbed the prayer meetings. The elders observed that church members were frustrated with her

behaviour and attendance rates in both meetings decreased. Therefore, the elders made a decision that Irene would be suspended from any meeting including Sunday morning service for six months. Having received this decision, Irene made her own decision to leave GEC. When she left, she persuaded those who shared the same view with her to leave GEC and to move to another church together. Unfortunately, they were persuaded by Irene and moved to King's Community Church (KCC: pseudonym) which is just a mile away from GEC. The elders informed the leadership team of KCC of their theological inclination regarding the Holy Spirit and cessationist view on the gifts of the Holy Spirit and of their behaviours causing conflict in various meetings in confidential manner for the sake of KCC.

Second Additional information updated on 11th April 2012
The senior minister of KCC informed the elders of GEC that Irene and her friends caused the similar sort of conflict at KCC and that they were suspended from the church until the leadership team allowed them to come back. It was very sad news to hear. Eventually, they left KCC and scattered and attended different churches in the locality. Analysing their behaviours, it is clear that a theological conflict can begin because of two different exclusive theological stances. However, it was the immature behaviour of individuals involved which increased the intensity and shifted the scale from an interpersonal to intergroup conflict. During the two years, one important lesson that I have learnt from this particular conflict is that the most common underlying reason for escalation in a conflict situation in a congregation may not be a particular cultural, theological, ethical or political issue itself, but the immature behaviour of individuals and their reactions in a conflict situation.

Key terms: Theological biases, cessationism, continuationism, the gifts of the Holy Spirit, different methods of biblical hermeneutics, shifting the nature and scale of conflict, church discipline, Immature behaviour of individuals in their reactions, the most common underlying reason for escalating conflict situations.

Appendix IV

Samples of data collected by in-depth interview

    A. Interview sample one

Interviewee: Jenny Oliver (pseudonym)
Interview setting: Interview was conducted in Jenny's living room.
                At 10am on Wednesday 8th Sep. 2010.
Purpose of the interview: To collect supplementary data regarding the micro-level political conflict at GEC.

Interviewer: Good morning Jenny. I do appreciate you for your time and willingness to participate in the interview. You are free to answer or not to answer any questions that I ask. Are you ready to start it now?

Interviewee: Yes, I am ready. I will do my best to answer all the questions as much as I remember.

Interviewer: Thanks again. Let's start with an easy question. Could you tell me when you joined GEC?

Interviewee: It was ages ago. The best way to answer is that I began to attend GEC when I was in my mother's womb. My mother came to the Medical Mission as a patient first and then became a Christian through the doctors who shared the gospel to her as well as treated her medically. She was a sincere believer and an active member of the Medical Mission. For example, she used to cook to feed about 100 people once a week at the Mission. She got involved in Sunday school and in diverse women's activities for many years. Therefore, I naturally grew up in the Mission and with the Mission. All the memories of my childhood and youth are related to the activities that I really enjoyed in the Mission.

Interviewer: It seems that you have become part of the furniture at GEC. What does GEC mean to you?

Interviewee: GEC is my spiritual home. I have never been to any other churches in my life except for some special occasions such as weddings and funerals. All the important events in my life happened at GEC. I was baptized at the Mission. I was married at the Mission. My son was dedicated and baptized at GEC. My husband's funeral service took place in GEC. I have a special emotional and spiritual attachment to GEC.

Interviewer: Could you tell me about your involvement at GEC?

Interviewer: My main involvement at GEC was Sunday school ministry. I began as a Sunday school assistant, and then became a teacher in charge of a class for the youngest children. Several years later I was promoted to the Sunday school superintendent. I have been in the position for more than 30 years. I also got involved in the leadership team as a deacon for many years. Except for those, I used to play the piano for Sunday morning service and Sunday evening gospel service. I did flower arrangement for years. I think it is too numerous to mention all the things that I have done for the last 60 years at GEC.

Interviewer: In your memory, when was the most difficult time in the history of GEC?

Interviewee: Well, I cannot say it immediately. Let me think. (She paused to think and about 30 seconds later she began to speak again). I think there are ups and downs in every local church and GEC had several difficult periods in its history. I do not know much about what had happened at the Mission from its very beginning up until the time when the government established the NHS. I think it was 1948. I was born in 1931 and I was too young to understand what was going on in the Mission until a massive change happened in the Mission in the late 1940s and in the early 1950s. At that time, I was in my late teens and early twenties. I remember that the medical superintendent, Dr. Williams (pseudonym), often held meetings to discuss and pray for the future of the Mission. From my personal perspective, it was a challenging period, rather than a difficult time. We were struggling to re-establish our identity and eventually the Medical Mission was turned into a local church. The Medical superintendent resigned from his position and Rev. Peter Jones (pseudonym) was invited to succeed the position. As doctors left the Mission, many members left it too because they simply came to the Mission for medical treatment and there was no medical service at all in the building. It was sad that people did not come to the Sunday morning meeting when the Medical service ceased. On contrary, it served as a catalyst to bind those remaining in the Mission. The Mission was at a turning point at that time and the members overcame the challenging period in faith and in strong unity. We did not doubt that God was with us during the difficult period. The new minister encouraged the members to evangelize our neighbours, friends, and family members to fill the church. We prayed and evangelized to bring people to the church. Amazingly, the church sanctuary began to be full again. Sunday school was full of children. Can you believe that some children had to wait for several months to join Sunday school? It cannot be possible nowadays, but it happened at that time. Therefore, we hired a building in the area and ran two Sunday schools every Sunday. I was so thrilled to see many people who came back to the Lord at that time.

Interviewer: As you said it was not a particularly difficult time, but a challenging time to establish its new identity and to convert the Mission into a local church. And it became a thriving church in terms of saving souls. You have not yet answered my question, "When was the most difficult time in the history of GEC?"

Interviewee: I know that I have not answered it yet. In order to answer the question, I felt that I needed to mention the story that I told you just before. Anyway, let me continue. GEC had its golden age for the three decades from 1960s in terms of numerical growth and expanding its ministry to overseas mission. However, it is very sad that GEC began to experience a decline in the early 1990s. I still do not know what was the main cause of the decline. But, my guess was that, general members were sick of the constant conflict within the leadership team. There was an internal disturbance in the leadership team regarding the matter of inviting a new minister. The leadership team was divided into two groups. When a minister was eventually chosen and invited, one group supported him and the other group did not. The minister did not stay long at GEC because of strong opposition from the party that did not support him. We invited another minister but unfortunately he also did not stay long. He was kicked out in the same way. Believe it or not, we had four ministers in six years. People left GEC one by one and it was shrunk to less than thirty people. It was a terrible period. The thing that broke my heart most is that people called GEC 'Ichabod' (Its meaning in Hebrew is that the glory of God has departed from Israel). (She leaned back in her armchair and uttered a deep sigh. Within seconds, her eyes were moist with tears. She became speechless for

a while and broke the silence and started talking again). I was one of the deacons at the time and I never knew that being in the church leadership was that painful. (She became speechless again).

Interviewer: Jenny, I really appreciate you for telling me this painful story. I did not intend to bring back your bitter memories.

Interviewee: I know. Do not worry. Whenever I recollect my memories of that time, I always feel guilty. It does not matter who was right and who was wrong. We all spoiled the church like that (She wiped away tears with her hand and uttered another sigh).

Interviewer: (Waiting for about 30 seconds). I am so sorry that you feel so pained by this interview. Do you want me to come back to you another day? Or do you want to carry on now?

Interviewee: It is ok with me to continue. I am sorry that I have become emotional today. I do not want to spoil your interview.

Interviewer: No. No. Don't say that. It is quite important to know the interviewee's emotional expressions during the interview to catch more comprehensive meanings.

Interviewee: Ok then.

Interviewer: Can I ask you some further questions about the situation?

Interviewee: Yes, of course. Go ahead.

Interviewer: How did the church manage the difficult situation after the last minister left?

Interviewee: We did not have a minister for about three years. The most difficult thing during the period was that there was no preacher in the church so that we needed to arrange a guest speaker almost every Sunday. We had several regular guest speakers and one of them was Gordon Wilkinson (pseudonym) who was leading a congregation called Lighthouse Church. He was invited on a regular basis and became a member of trustee. He began to know the church situation well and eventually suggested a merger between GEC and LC.

Interviewer: What was your initial reaction to the suggestion for merging the two churches?

Interviewee: Well. On the one hand, I welcomed it because I expected that the merger would resolve many practical problems that we had at that time. On the other hand, I was a little bit scared of it because it was like moving into an unknown world. Of course, we were all Christians believing in one God. But, somehow I felt that GEC was different from LC in many aspects.

Interviewer: Do you know how other members at GEC felt about it?

Interviewee: We had several meetings to discuss the merger. And people expressed their expectations and concerns in the meetings. Eventually, we voted to make a decision. We were amazed that majority of the members, about 23 or 24 members out of 25 members as far as I remember, agreed to go for the merger. It means that the majority of members

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thought that the merger was the only breakthrough to overcome the difficult situation at GEC at that time.

Interviewer: Do you think the merger worked as the majority members expected?

Interviewee: Everybody seemed to be happy in the initial period. It was like a honeymoon period between the two congregations. The merger brought several good points: the congregation doubled in size; its financial situation improved; there was no concern about the preacher; but most of all, the church recovered its vitality. Because of young families from LC, we had children and youth again in the church.

Interviewer: How long did this honeymoon period last and when did you begin to realize that something was going wrong?

Interviewee: Unfortunately, not long after the merger we began to realize that we were different in many ways. I will put it in this way- we were conservative and they were progressive and reformative. After a certain period, they tried to drive the church in their desired direction. From my point of view, people from LC began to treat us in a bad way. They began to criticize us and say that we were obsessed by our traditions. I still remember what they said to me; "GEC people live in the past". I felt really bad when I heard it. As you know, we are products of our history and tradition. I do not think that we lived in the past, but we simply loved our traditions. We were proud of our long and glorious history. They tried to remove picture frames on the walls and some old furniture on which memorial plaques were attached to commemorate those who sincerely served the Mission. In the meantime, a crucial incident happened. Gordon Wilkinson (pseudonym) and James Martin (pseudonym) came to church at night with an axe and smashed the wooden pulpit that had been made and dedicated by a church member of GEC. It triggered the full-scale power game between GEC and LC. I think that incident was shocking enough to cause GEC members to become very angry. I was so annoyed too because I realized their real intention in doing it.

Interviewer: I am sorry to interrupt you. What do you think was their hidden intention in doing all those things?

Interviewee: That was what I was intending to say just before. When they proposed several things to us in terms of running the church, we refused them because we were not familiar to their ways of doing ministry. I do not remember what they were. Anyway, they were probably disappointed, even frustrated, with our uncooperative manner. Therefore, from my point of view, they were seeking power to change things by themselves. They tried to have more people from their side in the leadership team to get more votes in the decision-making process. They began to remove us from different ministry positions to replace them with their people. Whew! It was terrible. I mean I was one of the victims. One Sunday morning I went to church to play the piano as usual and I found that one man from LC was sitting on the piano stool. I immediately felt something was wrong. I asked him why he was sitting on it. He told me that he had been asked by his leaders to play the piano from that Sunday. I was not informed by anyone in the church that I was going to be replaced by the man. I was angry. And then I felt powerless in my body so that I came back home before the service started. I could not stay in the service because I could not understand the happening. I was ill for several days. I felt I was abandoned. People might have thought that I was too old to play the piano. Others might have regarded it as a small issue. But it was a serious matter to me. I had been playing the piano at GEC for more than forty years. Can you

imagine the sense of pain and loss that I felt at that time? You probably cannot. (She paused for a while and drank her tea). I did not attend church for about three months since the incident. During the period, some of my church friends came to my house after Sunday morning services to basically tell me about what was going on at the church. One Sunday afternoon they told me that I was removed from the Sunday school superintendent position. Apparently, the reason for removing me from the position was my absence for several months. But, I viewed it in a different way. They eliminated me to appoint a person from LC in the position. They eliminated several other people from their long-term involvements during that period.

Interviewer: What was your reaction to their decision? And how did people from GEC react in the situation?

Interviewee: First of all, let me say that a few of those who were eliminated left GEC. They were so upset and did not want to see any more conflict in the church. One of my closest friends, Chris and Brenda (pseudonyms), left GEC. They were a couple that had got involved in diverse ministries at GEC for years and years. But, sadly they could not stand the pain and shock when they were removed from their positions without any discussion in advance. My reaction was different. I did not want to leave GEC. At that time I thought that I would go back to GEC to fight against the unjust and unfair treatment we received.

Interviewer: Did your plan work in terms of fighting against people from LC in order to recover justice and fairness in the church?

Interviewee: Not at all. The situation was worse than what I had anticipated when I returned. The balance of power between the two congregations was upset. People from LC already dominated all the ministries at GEC. We inevitably became subordinate. It was tragedy to see it, but that was the reality. We became too powerless to fight. But, one positive thing was that we were united and encouraged one another to endure the difficult time. We promised to endure together till the end to win back our church.

Interviewer: Did you ever think of any possibility for reconciliation between the two congregations? The Bible says that we need to forgive to be forgiven by God. What kind of effort did you make to resolve the conflict situation?

Interviewee: I personally think that the ideal is different from reality. If you were victimized, you would not easily think that you could forgive the assailant. We knew that we needed to forgive them and to reconcile for a peaceful church life. However, in reality, nothing worked according to what we knew and learnt. To be honest with you, we tended to use all possible means to defeat them, rather than to resolve the conflict situation through forgiveness and reconciliation. Frankly speaking, I preferred a bloody victory rather than a counterfeit peace at that time. But, of course we were the weaker party so that we could not do much to find the balance of power. Instead, we held out against anything that people from LC planned to do. They attempted vigorously to obliterate the tradition, culture, symbols and artefacts of GEC. They turned one of the vestries in front of the main sanctuary into a storage space. It used to be used for deacons to have meetings to pray and discuss issues. For example, they put old furniture, photo-frames and artefacts outside the church building. Next day, we brought them back to their original places. It happened several times. I think both parties were so stubborn, even foolish. Eventually, they gave up doing it so that we could keep them in the church.

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It was the first small victory that we achieved. However, the victory did not last long. Do you know what happened after it?

Interviewer: Probably, you are going to speak about the fire. Is that right?

Interviewee: Yes, exactly. One evening, I had a phone call from Jeff (Pseudonym). I was surprised at the urgency in his voice. He said, "Jenny, the church is on fire". I said, "what?" He repeated the same sentence, "Jenny, the church is on fire". I asked him again, "Do you mean an actual fire?" He said, "Yes, you are right. Someone set fire to the church". The immediate thought in my mind was "who did it?" And I naturally began to connect the naughty behaviour of people from LC trying to remove all the important stuff of GEC as the cause of fire. This was my immediate thought, but I could not find any concrete evidence for it. I went to church to see how much it was damaged. When I got there, the fire was already extinguished. The site was full of water and local people were still crowded there. Thankfully, the building structure remained, but everything in the main sanctuary was completely burnt and some parts of the ceiling collapsed. The police started an investigation, but they could not identify the arsonist. What the police reported to us after their investigation was that the arsonist broke the middle window by the car park and poured petrol into the building and set it alight. Fortunately, the insurance company compensated us for the fire and we could refurbish the building. It took almost eight months to complete it and we only had Sunday morning service and it was in the school hall of St. Peter's college (pseudonym) during the period. The fire caused the division between the two parties to be more serious. I was hurt because we lost all the precious legacy of GEC. The fire was a disaster to us. Although it was refurbished well and there was brand new stuff in it, the sanctuary was not the same as the one that I used to worship in. However, people from LC said that the fire was a gift from God. How on earth could they say that? It was ridiculous to hear that. We lost everything, but they said God took everything from us because we were too obsessed by them. I mean they threw gas on the fire. I was more hurt by what they said than by what the fire did. I still remember one of the things that they said to mock us; "We sang a song called 'Send fire today' last Sunday and God sent a real fire. Then we sang another song 'Blessed insurance' (the actual song is called 'Blessed assurance') on the following Sunday". I felt we were humiliated by what they said. I was terribly upset. I thought that they were the means of the devil to destroy us. This was the level of hatred we had towards each other in the conflict.

Interviewer: Having heard all the history of conflict between the two parties, I wonder whether you have ever thought of any possible solution to end the conflict.

Interviewee: Of course, I did when there was less conflict. One particular thing that I thought about was to ask a third party to mediate between the parties. But I could not find any person who was experienced in dealing with conflict or organization to go to and ask to ease the situation. As time went by, I was more convinced that the conflict would be ended when one party was removed by the other or spontaneously moved out. But, as you know, neither of these things was possible. That's why we still have the conflict in the church. It is really sad (She sighed again).

Interviewer: Although a serious conflict was going on in the church, strangely the church was growing in number since the merger. How do you think this happen?

Interviewee: It was an ironic phenomenon. Well, I do not really know the answer. Probably, the newcomers were not aware of the conflict in the church. It was obvious

that both parties tried to help the newcomers to settle down in the church in order to get them on their sides. Isn't it bad? I mean the motive for helping them was not good, although it brought fruitful results. Oh…(She paused and was thinking for a while). Yes, the college. What was the name of it?

Interviewer: Do you mean Kingdom Mission College (KMC)?

Interviewee: Yes. That's right. KMC contributed in a positive way in terms of church growth. Suddenly, we had about 30 young people from Korea and Brazil. Somehow, the conflict situation was alleviated through the lively atmosphere of young people. Certainly Sunday morning worship became more lively and powerful. Their voluntary involvements in different ministries in the church resolved the problem of lack of workers. Most of all, they were involved in evangelism so that some other local residents began to attend the church. Certainly the young students of KMC were an unexpected blessing from the Lord at that time. To be honest with you, I did not support the idea that GEC would run a Christian college. I was concerned that they (people from LC) might use it as a means to gain more power. But, it did not happen in the initial period. We began to have more people from diverse countries. GEC was being transformed into a multicultural church. There were some people who were worried about the church becoming multicultural. But, from my point of view, it was much better than the conflict situation between the two parties.

Interviewer: It seems that KMC brought a positive result in terms of mitigating the conflict situation. However, I think the conflict was not completely resolved. Hatred and hostility toward each other still remained unresolved. As far as I know, the conflict situation had a latent period for a while but it manifested again. What was the cause of it? And how did each party (including the ethnic minority groups) react to it?

Interviewee: As I mentioned just before, there were some people who were afraid that GEC was becoming more and more multicultural. They were from old GEC. However, people from LC were culturally more open than us. They invited the young students to their houses after morning service almost every Sunday. In this way, the young students and ethnic minorities began to work closely with them. I do not think that they intended it. I honestly acknowledge that it happened naturally. However, it became the main factor which brought the latent conflict situation to the fore. They could do whatever they wanted to do through the support from the young people and ethnic minorities. Of course, they did not do anything bad to us, but we had feeling of crisis. The situation was serious enough to think that they became bigger and we became smaller. They became more powerful and we became more vulnerable. To make the matters worse, there was a rumour going round in the church. Do you know what it was?

Interviewer: No. I do not have any idea about what you are talking about. Could you tell me about it?

Interviewee: Well. If you do not mind, I will let you know about it.

Interviewer: I do not mind at all. I need to get as much information from you as I can.

Interviewee: Ok then. The reason why I hesitated is that it is about you. Are you still ok? Do you want me to carry on?

Interviewer: Yes, go ahead. I am prepared to listen to it.

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Interviewee: Ok, I will carry on then. People from both parties began to see you as the right-hand man of Gordon (pseudonym). It is not a criticism, by the way. I know that you are a man of integrity and a hard-working man. You just did what you needed to do. You have played your role in an excellent way in doing everything. I have not heard any single criticism about you in the church. But, people began to look at you in a different way when you worked closely with Gordon. I know that you did not have any intention to do so, but people began to anticipate that you would replace Gordon. The fear that we (people from GEC) had was that Gordon was going to operate his power continually through you after his retirement. Do not be offended by what I am saying, please. Honestly speaking, we did not mind that you would become the senior pastor at GEC. But we did not want Gordon to be continually influential in the church ministry after his retirement. I am sorry to tell you about this kind of stuff which is directly related to you. But, I feel I need to because it is an important issue that we are facing at the moment in the conflict situation. I hope you do not get offended.

Interviewer: Thank you for sharing what must have been difficult to say. I am here today to gather information about the political conflict at GEC. I heard everything that you shared as a researcher. Do you think there is anything that you have not mentioned yet?

Interviewee: Probably not. I have just tried to answer your questions as much as I could remember.

Interviewer: Then can I ask you one final question before we finish this interview?

Interviewee: Yes of course. What is it?

Interviewer: I just want to ask your personal opinion on this question: "What is the best way to resolve this long-term conflict?"

Interviewee: If I knew it, I would have already ended it. To be honest, I do not know the answer. All I want to say is that a long-term conflict must be handled appropriately through a long-term process. The conflict situation is not an easy matter that can be resolved overnight. We need time for healing and for developing our willingness to forgive and reconcile with each other. Both parties must think about why we have fought each other and what we have achieved. From my point of view, none of us is a winner - both of us are losers. None of us is a victor - both of us are victims. We need to seek wisdom from the Lord to deal with it in a proper manner. Frankly speaking, I am not yet prepared to forgive them. I do not have the willingness to be reconciled with them either. However, I know that I need to do it before it is too late. It was hard and now it has become harder to say, "I am sorry" to them. But, I know that I will not be forgiven if I do not forgive those who trespass against me (Tears were suddenly welling up in her eyes. We spent few minutes in prayer before we finished the interview).

Interviewer: I really do appreciate you for your time and answering the questions honestly. This information will become useful data to analyse and interpret the conflict situation at GEC.

Interviewee: I am not sure that I answered all the questions well but I certainly did my best to provide accurate information. I hope that the interview will be useful for your research and God will use your research to make peace at GEC.

B. Interview sample two

Interviewee: James Martin (pseudonym)
Interview setting: Interview was conducted in James Martin's church office.
At 1:30am on Thursday 7th October 2010.
Purpose of the interview: To collect supplementary data regarding the micro-level political conflict at GEC.

Interviewer: Good afternoon. Thank you so much for your time and willingness to give an interview. You do not need to answer all the questions if you feel uncomfortable or find it unnecessary to answer. The first question is easy and simple: when did you join GEC?

Interviewee: I joined GEC when GEC and LC were merged in 1998. I was one of the elders in LC. Actually, Gordon (pseudonym) and I had planted LC as a house church and we had been together for many years in the leadership. LC was growing slowly, but steadily. Gordon became a trustee of GEC several years before the merger and through that relationship with GEC, he developed the idea of merging the two churches.

Interviewer: What was your view on the merger, when did you hear about it?

Interviewee: I was quite negative. As I said just before, LC was a growing church at that time. We were not able to accommodate all the people in Gordon's living room on Sundays. His living room was big enough to have about 35 or 40 people, but suddenly it became small so we hired a school hall. We needed to carry all the stuff with us every Sunday. Setting up chairs and clearing them up was a hard work, but we enjoyed it. As a growing church with an effective ministry, I thought that there was no point in merging with GEC. To put it more plainly, I had two main concerns about the merger. Firstly, we started LC in Bisley (pseudonym) after a quite long period of time in prayer. We were convinced that God had a specific vision for the area. But, the merger meant that we needed to give up the vision and move to the area GEC was located. Somehow, I thought at that time that we should not abandon the vision that we received from God for the area. Secondly, I personally knew GEC very well and its history because my mother used to go to the Medical Mission for medical treatment and she became a Christian through their ministry. But, she did not stay in the church long as she moved to another area. One thing I was anxious from their history was that they were notorious for kicking their pastors out so often. I was truly concerned for Gordon who was supposed to be the new lead pastor of the church after the merger.

Interviewer: Although you had a negative viewpoint on the merger, you eventually join the merged church. What caused you to join it?

Interviewee: Strangely enough, the majority of people in LC welcomed the suggestion. One of the long-term wishes of some people in LC was to have a proper church building to worship on Sunday without advance preparation and tidying up the place afterwards. From my analysis, they thought that the merger would fulfil their desire. My wife and I needed to make a decision on whether or not we would join the merged church. It was a tough decision to make because I could not see any merit in it. While I was seriously considering it, Gordon persuaded me to continually work together in the merged church. After having several meeting with him, I decided to be with him in the merged church to support Gordon and to continue what I had done in LC.

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Interviewer: Do you think the preparation process for the merger was well planned and executed?

Interviewee: No, I do not think so. We needed to do it in a more careful way than we did. We were likely to accept the suggestion only from the perspective that our needs would be met through the merger. We should have considered it through more diverse perspectives to anticipate some potential risks. We took an overly optimistic view on the merger because we did not have any prior knowledge or experience of a merger. From a personal standpoint, we should have utilized an external expert in the process of the merger, who had rich experience and practical skills in church merger.

Interviewer: From your viewpoint, what should have been included in the discussion or in the process of the merger?

Interviewee: I think we were not interested in knowing how much we differed in terms of some practical matters in church ministry as well as theology and doctrines. Before the merger, we had several meetings for worship and Bible study. However, I personally could not identify any difference between us and them through only these gatherings. We should have spent more time to get to know each other, but just leapt into a hasty conclusion that everything would be fine. Unfortunately, not long after the merger, this proved to be a false assumption. Both parties were too optimistic to see any kind of potential risks.

Interviewer: From your perspective what was the biggest difference between GEC and LC?

Interviewee: It is hard to single out one particular thing. Do you know a book called "Men are from Mars, Women are from Venus"? The situation was like that. We were different as men are different from women. We clashed in almost every single matter from church polity to day-to-day operations of the church. One serious mistake we made was to agree that GEC would be responsible for church maintenance and administration and that LC would be responsible for spiritual ministry. From my perspective, this decision prevented the two congregations from being united in becoming one. We should have mixed people from both congregations in all ministry areas and allocated jobs and roles according to their gifts and talents. But, the dualistic allocation of church ministries created a competitive atmosphere between the two congregations. Both parties did not support each other. For example, they (GEC) did not give us church keys for several months. The treasurer delayed in giving us money when we claimed our expenses. These are small examples but we began to be frustrated. Another frustration was that they did not allow us to touch anything on the wall or to move any furniture. From our viewpoint, the church building was messy with a lot of old and unnecessary stuff, but they insisted on keeping them. We thought that there would be no future if we could not sort out the messiness of the church. We decided to turn the vestry into a storage area to put all the stuff there, because the vestry was not used at all. But, we suddenly faced a strong opposition for two reasons. One was that they regarded the room as a holy place. They told us that the room was used as a prayer room by the doctors of the Mission and later by the deacons of GEC. God healed several people in the room. From my point of view, they were obsessed by their past. The other reason was that they did not allow us to remove anything related to their history. It was ridiculous. From my perspective, they worshipped idols. What they did was an act of idolatry. I am sorry to say that, but it was true. Let me tell you one funny

incident. We did not like a big red couch in the small hall. Its surface was dirty and ripped. We threw it out of the church. But, we could see it again in the hall next day. We did the same thing again. It came back to the hall next day. They deliberately brought it back to the hall. I do not think that they needed it, but they did not want to lose their battle in that small matter. They were so stubborn.

Interviewer: Do you remember any particular critical incident, which elevated that tension and competitive atmosphere into a conflict phase?

Interviewee: Gordon and I thought that we needed a strategy for transforming the church. Otherwise, the merger would result in a failure. One day while we shared our frustrations in the merged church, a sudden idea hit Gordon. He thought about Gideon in the Bible, who destroyed all the idols in his father's house. Gordon suggested me to destroy the huge pulpit in the church, which was regarded as one of the important symbols of GEC from our observation. One night he and I went to church with an axe to smash it. We simply thought that there would be no serious problem, if we ordered a crystal lectern to replace it. However, they took serious offence at our behaviour. I mean they were greatly enraged when they saw the broken pieces of the pulpit in the backyard. Gordon and I did not expect that sort of level of anger from them at all. We thought that it was a necessary act of reformation to move forward from the stagnant situation after the merger. However, they regarded it as an act of violation destroying their tradition and spiritual legacy. We did not know that it had been made and dedicated by Alan (pseudonym), who had been a long-term member of GEC. Gordon and I went to see him to apologize for our mistake, which was regarded as an offensive behaviour to him. Unfortunately, we could not see him because he did not open the door to us. Alan did not come to church for several months since the incident. It took him some time to recover from the emotional hurt and to forgive Gordon and myself. However, this particular incident escalated the tension between the two parties into a serious conflict. People from GEC began to use the incident for their political purpose. Gordon and I never intended it, but it went in the wrong direction. It was the biggest mistake that I ever made in my life. I felt a tremendous amount of guilt at that time. I do not think that it has been completely dealt with in my heart.

Interviewer: Thanks James for honestly sharing about the incident and your emotional feelings. From my perspective as a researcher, what you mentioned just before is vital in understanding how the long-term political conflict was triggered and developed in the merged church. If you do not mind, I would like to ask you one more question regarding the incident.

Interviewee: No, I do not mind. I want to give you as much information as I can, if what I say to you is important to your research.

Interviewer: Thanks James. As I explained several times, this research is not only to generate a theory about conflict in a congregational setting, but also to apply it to GEC in order to make peace in the church. Therefore, your interview can play a vital role in achieving the latter. Anyway, the question that I would like to ask is this: Could you further explain how this particular incident developed as a political conflict between the two parties? You mentioned it a little bit just before, but could you be a little more specific, please?

Interviewee: As I said, we were different in many ways, but unfortunately, this incident caused us to grow apart. The level of hatred toward each other escalated. Some of them

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did not attend the main Sunday morning service if Gordon or I led the service or preached. Instead, they went to the youth Bible study in the small hall. Some of them ignored me when my eyes met theirs in the church. And later, their hostility towards Gordon and me spread towards everyone from LC. In a church meeting, one person from GEC bluntly told us that we came to GEC to rob them of their church. From that day on, there were arguments and accusations in meetings. In the service they sat down on the right side and we inevitably sat on the left side. Do you know why they began to sit on the right side? When I heard the reason, I laughed a lot. You know that Jesus separates the sheep from the goats in Matthew 25. Jesus places the sheep at his right hand and the goats at his left hand. Their action had a symbolic meaning that they were right and righteous and we were sinful and evil. Having heard about it, we also began to get angry about their wicked attitude and behaviour towards us. This is why the conflict situation shifted into an intergroup conflict from individual struggles due to difference. Its nature became more political and both parties began to fight to gain power to subdue the other party. It was just awful.

Interviewer: In your observation and analysis, what was the main difference in people's behaviour and attitude between when the conflict was struggles among individuals and when it became a political conflict?

Interviewee: I think this is a really good question. When the conflict shifted from the interpersonal level to the intergroup level, the most distinctive phenomenon was a clear division between the two groups. Of course, from the beginning of the merger, there was no strong sense of unity in the merged church. However, I do not deny that people made effort to overcome the sense of difference in the beginning. When the conflict was on an interpersonal level, people assisted those who were involved in conflicts to resolve them morally and biblically in the hope to make the merger successful. But, when the conflict shifted into the intergroup level, people's group identity became more important than the unity of the church. Winning in the battle became more important than making the merger successful. Individuals' reactions in the intergroup conflict became more aggressive and even irrational. Of course, I was not aware of this at all when I was in the middle of the conflict. I began to reflect on it when I left GEC. When I looked at the situation objectively from outside, I began to realize that I made many mistakes.

Interviewer: What do you mean by saying that people's group identity became more important than creating unity in the merged church?

Interviewee: I mean that as the conflict phase shifted into the intergroup level, it seemed to me that people began to regard their sense of belonging to their party more important than unity of the church. In other words, there were obviously two churches under one roof and people in each party had a fear of the potential consequence of losing their battle in the conflict. You may not know this song 'The winner takes it all' sung by ABBA. The lyrics say that the winner takes it all, but the loser has to fall. People in both parties analysed the conflict situation in the same way so that they sought power to dominate the other party. Looking back to that period, we were not interested in restoring our relationship or in making peace through forgiveness and reconciliation, but we were interested in tactics and methods to win the battle. One of the methods was to increase the level of unity among us and the level of hatred toward the other party through emphasizing our group identity. I think they did the same thing. They often had parties for themselves to cement the unity among themselves.

Interviewer: You mentioned a little bit about aggressive or irrational behaviour of people as the conflict situation shifted into the intergroup level. Could you tell me of any particular incident as an example?

Interviewee: Honestly speaking, people including myself became irrational in terms of behaving toward the other party. To my shame, I used rough language and behaved badly to hurt them. I thought that that was a way to assist my group. Now that I come to think of it, we were desperate to seize power for securing our political hegemony. We were believers, but we behaved as if we were not believers. We did not follow either our conscience or the moral principles from the Bible. We quenched the fire of the Holy Spirit within us by our irrational behaviours. Let me give you a particular example of people's aggressive behaviour. There was a lot of tension between the two parties in a church meeting in the matter of electing new deacons. There were six deacons in total and the period of office was three years. Two deacons had to resign after their three years of service was over and two new deacons were supposed to be elected into the diaconal team. Having one more deacon from our side meant we could have more power in the diaconal team. Therefore, each party did their best to produce candidates who met the all the requirements to be a qualified candidate. On the day of the election, there was an argument between two candidates from both parties because one candidate accused the other candidate of not meeting the qualifications to become a candidate. I think it was about the insufficient length of time as a member of GEC to become a qualified candidate. This argument eventually led to physical violence towards the person who accused him. It was not a serious act of violence. He just pushed the other person. He fell over, but was not injured. Although it was a mild form of violence, the incident was serious enough to say that the conflict situation between the two parties heightened to the max.

Interviewer: Did that incident bring any kind of changes to both parties in terms of their behaviour or tactics?

Interviewee: Well, I could not see any noticeable changes in both parties after the incident, apart from the decision by the elders that deacons would not be elected, but appointed by elders. This decision played a role to avert a direct clash of the parties in the matter of electing deacons, but a smaller scale of clash was still expected in the eldership team in the process of recommending candidates from each party and approving them without fear or showing favour. I will rather share how the incident affected me rather than how it affected the parties. I was absolutely fed up with what was going on in the church. It did not matter whether I was deeply involved in the conflict or not. I did not have any confidence to carry on with my role as an elder in the church. The incident reminded me of the negative anticipation that I had had before the merger. I greatly regretted having joined the merged church. I was ashamed that I did not set a good example as an elder, but made many mistakes. I became angry when I analysed my behaviour in the conflict that was not based on the moral principles of the Bible but based on my emotions and for the benefit of my group. I felt that I was exhausted and defeated. I could not continue because I knew that people lost their trust in me. Therefore, I made a decision to leave GEC and I left it in 2003. People from LC were upset with my decision, but I did not have any other option to choose at that time. The greatest lesson that I learnt from the period of conflict at GEC is that things that we sincerely do for God and His church can be a source of conflict, if people have different viewpoints on it. Making peace and creating unity in the church is more important than doing something for the church in disagreement.

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Interviewer: It has been about 7 years since you left GEC so you do not know whether the conflict situation has progressed in a positive or negative way. However, it seems that you have been introspective on the conflict situation and retrospective on your behaviour since you left GEC. My last question in this interview is "On the basis of your reflection in the years since you left GEC, what is the most ideal solution to bring peace again to GEC?"

Interviewee: How can I answer this? To be honest, I cannot answer the question. All I can say is that I truly want to see forgiveness and reconciliation among individuals as well as between the two parties. This is my honest prayer and hope for GEC.

Interviewer: Have you ever thought about any kind of practical way to improve the conflict situation, apart from the spiritual approach that you mentioned just before?

Interviewee: Well, from my humble opinion, the leadership needs to change. The church needs an infusion of new blood in the leadership team. It has been about 12 years since the merger took place. But the leaders have not changed during the period. For better communication and unification between the parties, GEC needs a good senior leader who belongs to neither party, but is instead from outside. New wine should be put into new wineskin. I think a leader from outside will be able to objectively stand in the middle without any bias between the parties. Anyway, this is just my opinion. It may not be relevant to your research.

Interviewer: No, No. Everything that you have said today will become useful data for my research. James, thank you so much for your time and honestly sharing your story and thoughts regarding the conflict at GEC. I will keep you informed of the research progress and of the research outcomes in the future.

Appendix V

Samples of codes, variables and factors in the domain of political conflict

Code Labels	Items (Descriptive codes)	Variables (Subcategories)	Factors (Categories)
P-49	Being bound by customs	**Resistance to change**	**'FEAR'** is the first factor triggering the initial political conflict between the merged congregations. 1) Fear of change 2) Fear of loss 3) Fear of failure 4) Fear of uncertainty
P-111	Sticking to traditional stereotypes		
P-39	Identifying artefacts with their group identity		
P-88-1	Unfamiliarity to different styles of worship and preaching		
P-102	Being sceptical about the new leadership structure		
P-26	Maintenance of vested rights	**Apprehension of any possible loss**	
P-47	Rejecting support from others		
P-113	Keeping the status quo in their ministries		
P-132	Isolating themselves to reinforce their existing relationship		
P-116	Negative opinions on the merger	**Anticipation of negative outcomes of the merger**	
P-118	The merger was executed by inexperienced people		
P-120	Negative opinions on the opposing congregation		
P-119	A strong sense of complete failure		
P-121	Chaos and confusion caused by disorderly manner in using the facilities	**Uncertainty about the future of the merged church**	
P-124	Ambiguity in ministry direction		
P-88-4	Insecurity about the new leadership		
P-91	Frequently changing the maintenance policy		
P-2	Making efforts to have more deacons from their sides for the initial dominance	**Competition** (The fear of both congregations pressurised their leaders to choose competition instead of cooperation)	
P-29	A candidate was disqualified for an unfair reason		
P-30	Changing the regulations to tip the balance in their favour		
P-130	Trying to secure limited resources		
P-1	Non-cooperative atmosphere to take an early lead		
P-27	Causing inconvenience when the opponents used the facilities		
P-131	Church keys were not given to the opponents		

P-4	Arbitrary decisions without accepting opinions from the other party		
P-129	Unequal distribution of works		
P-35	Excluding the opposite congregation in pastoral care		**'Initiative'** is the second factor. The sense of anxiety that the both congregation could not exist in peace caused the leaders of both parties to use some minor forms of tactical plans and actions to take the initiative.
P-5	Unequal discipline / Double standards		
P-46	Ulterior motive of prayer for accusation		
P-8	Accusing someone while preaching		
P-65	Unilateral announcement to criticise someone during the service		
P-60	Spreading unconfirmed rumours		
P-85	Slandering the opposite leaders		
P-126	Unequal opportunities to access the information		
P-64	Distorted information was given		
P-127	Imprecise information was spread	**Manipulation**	
P-128	Being forced to make decisions without providing full information	(Both parties used some minor forms of cover and deceptive plans and actions to frustrate the other party)	
P-45	Constantly accusing one particular person of different issues to make the person vulnerable		
P-41	Persistently finding faults with the opposite leaders over trivial matters		
P-54	Intimidating the opposite leaders		
P-86	Diverting people's attention to another matter		
P-109	Causing division in the opposite party		
P-58	Flattering some people in the opposite party to get temporary support from them		
P-91	Asymmetrical power relationship between the parties	**Power imbalance**	
P-91-1	Trying to hold a dominant position	(Both parties tried to break the power symmetry to take the early lead and to subdue the other party)	
P-91-2	New relationship between the dominant group and sub-ordinate group		
P-91-3	Numerical preponderance		
P-133	Different view of church governance based on their identities	**Incompatibility in identities** (Different group identity caused deep-seated enmity and developed scepticism in co-existence and out-group hatred)	**Animosity'** is the third factor. The realisation of incompatibility in identity and values between the two congregations intensified the animosity and increased the level of
P-134	Different perspectives on the concept of a local congregation		
P-21	Realisation of discrepancy in the goal of church ministry		
P-3	Standpattism to keep their legacy and tradition (GEC)		

			hostility
P-114	Destroying articles and artefacts in the name of reformation (LC)		
P-36	Sceptical response toward genuine suggestions for constructive change (GEC)		
P-18	Equating their group identity with their traditions, spiritual legacy and long-term history (GEC)		
P-14	Value pluralism that causes clashes between the two fundamental value systems	**Incompatibility in values** (This realisation of value difference between the congregation shifted the conflict phase from taking the initiative to holding the hegemony)	
P-14-1	No willingness and sense of necessity for value negotiation		
P-14-2	Accepting the other party's values means submitting themselves toward the party		
P-7	A local church is a Christian charity existing and working for public benefit (GEC)		
P135	A local church is like a salvage boat for saving souls (LC)		
P-136	A local church is a bridge between God and its community (GEC)		
P-96	No social events or programmes, but only spiritual activities (LC)		
P-40	Damaging the emotional, cultural and historical foundation of the other party by spreading untrue statement	**Offence-oriented behaviour of the dominant** (LC used sabotage and elimination as methods of maintaining their power for continual dominance over GEC)	
P-40-1	Damaging traditional and historical artefacts which provides the meaning of existence to the group		
P-40-2	Damaging the other party's reputation by criticising that they are dwelling in the past		
P-6	Self-centred interpretation on a fire to justify their reformative and aggressive behaviour		
P-42	Deliberate and strategic hindrance		
P-94	Incapacitating the opponents from various ministry opportunities		
P-62	Preventing the opposite party from nominating a candidate for the position of new deacons		
P-11	Removing opponents from their positions		

P-66	Eliminating political rivals from the church		
P-78	Forcing opponents to resign from their roles and positions		
P-103	Spreading rumours about their rivals to disqualify them as leaders		
P-107	Constant criticism toward a particular leader with trivial reasons		
P-71	Exaggerating and over-analysing a small mistake to pressurise a leader to resign		
P-59	Suspending a person from his involvement over a small mistake		
P-43	Intimidating a rival to be frustrated		**Power Struggle'** is the fourth factor. The initial power asymmetry stimulated both parties to use more heavy tactics to seize power. LC sought power to reinforce their control over GEC. On the contrary, GEC sought power not to be victimised.
P-89	False prophecy as a method of pressurising a political rival to leave the church		
P-10	Dividing the opposite party through spreading untruthful story about their leaders		
P-9	Suddenly replacing a person with another person from their party without notice		
P-70	Describing themselves as rebels		
P-22	Rebels refuse to attend any official meetings		
P-13	Defying the authority of elders		
P-140	Forming various group meetings outside the church		
P-141	Not submitting any reports about the structure, purpose and finance of the unauthorised meetings outside the church	**Defence-oriented behaviour of the weaker party** (GEC used rebellion and retaliation as methods of resisting the dominant party and taking revenge not only to defend themselves, but also to eventually regain the power balance)	
P-141-1	Those who are eliminated from the church join the rebellious groups		
P-142	Slandering the candidate of the opposite party		
P-95	Neglecting responsibility for pastoral care of those from the other party		
P-75	Unilateral announcement about resignation of the dominant elder as retributive action		
P-100	Taking revenge as a survival mechanism		

P-144	Treating the opponent party in the same or similar way that they were treated		
P-145	Reversion to the original status as a symbolic meaning of victory		
P-145-1	The weaker party's final goal was not to restore the power balance, but to remove the dominant party		
P-94	The weaker party brings all those who were eliminated by the dominant party		
P-61	Those who return have regained their position by removing those who were appointed by the dominant party		
P-83	Pursuing a bloody triumph rather than a peaceful compromise		
P-143	Rejecting the dominant elder's return		
P-63	Perceiving everything as being politicised	**Distrust** (The long-term political power struggle aggravated distrust among members, which eventually led the congregation to be more fractionalised)	The fifth factor is **"Schism"**. The power struggle gradually intensified the political conflict and the fractionalisation between the congregations became more severe. This phenomenon of schism revealed the inequality and injustice within the congregation and eventually both parties exhibited a victim mentality.
P-108	Scepticism over appointment of deacons, seen as action to increase political influence		
P-52	Leaders were not trustworthy		
P-53	Doubt about the integrity of a particular preacher		
P-105	Increasing the level of distrust by providing distorted information		
P-55	Rumours to divide the other party		
P-90	Gossiping about opposite leaders		
P-57	Increased awareness of difference		
P-56	Discriminating others / excluding them from various meetings		
P-84	Distrust results in apathetic behaviours		
P-17	Two different meetings on Sunday	**Divisiveness** (The increased incompatibility in identities and values, and impossibility of co-existence triggered both parties to have separated meetings within the same building each Sunday)	
P-67	Invalidating the merger		
P-87	Blanket opposition to the messages preached by the opposition leaders		
P-20	Two churches each Sunday in the same building		
P-76	Difference in social and economic strata between the conflicting parties		
P-115	Regarding themselves superior due to their abilities and achievements (LC)		
P-24	Mistreating socially lower people and excluding them from ministry opportunities (LC)		

P-48	Disrespecting a particular elder due to his occupation (LC)		
P-51	Refusing advice and discipline from the leadership team; lawlessness (LC)		
P-146	Being obsessed by their history and tradition; idolisation (GEC)		
P-37	No room to accept any constructive suggestions (GEC)		
P-147	Strong stubbornness refusing any assistance and practical help (GEC)		
P-25	Opportunities are not equally given	**Injustice** (People were treated unequally and unfairly in ministry opportunities as well as church discipline due to their group identities. This phenomena caused the schism worsen)	
P-80	Intentionally neglecting some people from pastoral care		
P-69	Favouritism based on their group identity		
P-106	Biased judgment and investigation		
P-72	Unfair treatment in discipline and punishment		
P-81	Overstepping the boundaries of others' responsibility and roles		
P-82	Controlling behaviour causing bitterness and resentment		
P-16	Interfering in the works of others		
P-92-1	Both parties feel that they are victims	**Victim Mentality** (Both parties perceived themselves as victims in the long-term political conflict, which affected individuals and the parties to feel helpless and pessimistic for the future of the merged congregation)	
P-148-1	LC destroyed our traditions and reputations (GEC)		
P-148-2	GEC exploited us to serve their purpose through the merger (LC)		
P-98	The sense of anger caused misinterpretation of the real motives of the other party		
P-104	The sense of pessimism and defeatism reinforcing the schism		
P-149	A vague hope that the ethnic minorities would become a political buffer zone	**Inexperience** (Both the congregation and the ethnic minorities had lack of multicultural experience and skills to handle the multiculturalization effectively to decrease the level of schism)	
P-149-1	Lack of experience and knowledge about multicultural ministry		
P-23	Inevitable pressure from both parties on the ethnic minorities to be on their side		
P-150	Ignorance of the history of political conflict		
P-77	Sudden growth in the population of the ethnic minorities	**Three-cornered relationship** (Sudden influx of the ethnic minorities established the three cornered relationship	
P-88-3	The ethnic minorities became the third force in the political conflict		

P-88-2	Dispersing power temporarily	which brought temporary political stabilisation)	The final factor is **"Multiculturalisation"**. The expectation that the ethnic minorities would play a role as a political buffer zone was temporarily accomplished when the three-cornered relationship was established. However, the temporary stabilisation did not last long as the ethnic minorities allied themselves with LC and the political conflict further deteriorated until the two core leaders of the coalition resigned.
P-88-6	Influx of the ethnic minorities hindered opportunity of reconciliation		
P-88-5	Unintentional cooperation between the ethnic minorities and LC	**Coalition** (An unplanned alliance between the ethnic minorities and LC shifted the political conflict situation to a more volatile situation. However, the volatile situation did not last long as the leaders of the ethnic minorities and LC resigned, although the fundamental cause of the political conflict still remained.	
P-68	Close relationship between ethnic minorities and LC due to their openness to diverse cultures		
P-152	Meeting the needs of ethnic minorities (LC)		
P-151	Providing ministry opportunities (LC)		
P-74	Cultural intolerance (GEC)		
P-79	Xenophobic attitudes of a few people (GEC)		
P-73	Recentralising political power to LC through breaking the temporary power dispersion		
P-92-4	Exercising power through the ethnic minorities (LC)		
P-153	Resignation of the leader of the ethnic minorities by a strong criticism from GEC		
P-153-1	A politically neutral leader is needed for a long-term peace-building process		
P-154	Resignation of the leader of LC		
P-155	GEC regaining power, but political instability continued		

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