

'Robert's Rules of Order' on religious conflicts in the Church of Christ in Zimbabwe



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Dates:

Received: 03 Aug. 2022

Accepted: 21 Dec. 2022

Published: 22 Mar. 2023

How to cite this article:

Masengwe, G. & Dube, B., 2023, "'Robert's Rules of Order' on religious conflicts in the Church of Christ in Zimbabwe", *Verbum et Ecclesia* 44(1), a2666. <https://doi.org/10.4102/ve.v44i1.2666>

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Church conflicts arise due to poor ethics, hermeneutics or doctrine. Unending conflicts may be historical and conflict resolution may not have been done. This article identifies fissures in the history of conflict in the Church of Christ in Zimbabwe (COCZ). It proposes to use 'Robert's Rules of Order' (RONR) to redirect deliberants' energies towards comprehensive solutions (Robert 2020). This can eradicate collegial competition, litigious animosity, divided loyalties, mutual hatred, and violent tendencies in negative energy to increase growth tendencies in the organisation. Trust was lost due to highly adversarial contact where legal battles and acrimonious criticisms have not been addressed. The COCZ has tactical, technical and strategic management principles inherited from the restoration history, which can apply in conflict resolution. Using scientific methods of handling conflicts like RONR, and the COCZ principles can hopefully lead to better results in that church.

Contribution: The paper contributes to alternatives to conflict resolutions which have been tested within the Church of Christ. The Robert's Rules can be used in different religious organisations to resolve conflict through peaceful resolutions of difference.

Keywords: history of conflicts; social causes of conflict; Somabhula-Devure splits; Somabhula conference centre; Robert's Rules of Order; Church of Christ in Zimbabwe; constitution.

Introduction

Zimbabwe is a populous Christian nation at more than three-quarters of the population as professed Christians. This means most conflicts in the country are between Christians. This calls Christians to be responsible towards social conflict in the country. This however should begin in individual denominations. It needs to be stated that the histories of church conflicts, their causes, concepts and commissions are clearly elaborated in literature.¹ Church conflicts are intricately intertwined with the history of conflict; violence and division, but have sometimes positively forced institutions to transform for the better, as it eradicates "stagnation, docility, inefficiency and ineffectiveness" (Chivasa & Machingura 2018:73). This means the history of conflict in the Church of Christ in Zimbabwe (COCZ) is intertwined with the history of colonial distortions on church identities (Mushayamunda 2022). This leads our discussion to the models and options that can be adopted in the study. From our knowledge of the COCZ, the study reviewed minutes of missionaries, and notes from writings by local students and clergy. Interviews were done with those individuals who interacted with missionaries; understood missionary boards; stayed at mission stations; engaged in leadership succession processes; knew missionaries' relationships with the colonial government; and the missionary preparedness to work with locals. The use of 'Robert's Rules of Order' (RONR) in the COCZ takes great regard for the place of scripture in that church. This situates the study within the context of sustainable framework towards conflict resolution in Zimbabwe.

Genesis of Conflict in the Church of Christ in Zimbabwe

The Church of Christ in Zimbabwe (COCZ) is a product of the Restoration Movement [also the Stone-Campbell Movement], which itself was a rebellious movement to the Protestant Churches like the Presbyterian, Baptist and Methodist denominations. The Restoration Movement arose in the United States during the Second Great Awakening, with intent on restoring the church to its pristine forms (Randall 1983:360). It was brought to Zimbabwe by New Zealand missionaries in 1898, and later own supported by American missionaries (Masengwe 2020a:35). The Movement

1.(Chivasa & Machingura 2018; Mafa 2018; Mafohla 2017; Mckay 2016; Harris 2007; Fisher 2005; Galtung 2004; 1996; Mayer 2000; Brand-Jacobsen & Jacobsen 2000; Tillett 1999; Blackburn & Brubaker 1999; Schrock-Shenk, et al., 1999; Halverstadt 1991; Deutsch 1991; Rex 1981).

rebelled against divisions caused by Protestantism. It, itself began as two rebel movements that later attempted to merger² in 1832 but furthered the rebellion (Campbell 1995; McLoughlin 2013) as emphasis on conservatism and liberalism gripped the movement thereby creating new identities and divisions as Disciples of Christ, Christian Churches and/or Churches of Christ or United Churches of Christ (Masengwe & Magwidi 2020). Sarcastically, they condemned divisions as 'anti-Christian, anti-scriptural, unnatural and to be abhorred' as they believed that 'The Church of Jesus Christ on earth is essentially, intentionally, and constitutionally one' (Allen & Hughes 1988:688). The influence of Calvinism led them to uphold the centrality of the sediment of the Will of God (in scripture). Unfortunately, some of the declarations appear to be subjective and preferential. They recommended essentiality of the restoration of the New Testament Church with two ordinances for Christian unity. Though 'the movement subscribed to a theory of unity of believers based upon the teaching that the original church that Christ founded was one' (Bhebhe, 2013:110-111), the movement was itself riddled with conflict. It condemned clerical hierarchies, sectarian divisions, human creeds and teachings, and yet still the same problems led to the emergence of three major streams at its inception. Its rationale to plead for unity (Kershner, 1965:7-8) could not remove conflicting goals and interests between interdependent entities. This led to historical fissures in the life of the COCZ that continue to fuel conflict and division in the contemporary church.

Conflicts in the early days of the COCZ are captured in a booklet on African ministers and white missionaries' relationships, by Pastor Enock Jirrie, *How to Uproot Church Problems* (1972); and a dissertation reflecting upon clergy-lay relations in the post-missionary era (Mafohla 2017). Church leaders are blamed for failing to empower members with vital spiritual skills towards Christian maturity, as they fought to acquire power over church properties, rather than use their power 'to empower ordinary Christians and redress the past imbalances in Church's policies, politics and practices' (Masengwe & Dube 2021a:8). This caused some Christians to back-track into their African culture when existential challenges arose (Bhebhe 2016; 2013). Unfortunately, even leaders who depended upon overseas support became gullible (Bhebhe 2013:159). They attempted to enforce an ideology favourable to their condition, hence interpreted missionary ideology as meaning the COCZ was planted into 'the Zimbabwean soils without purification or re-interpretation assuming to get similar results' (Bhebhe 2013:159). However, 'Christianity [in a new setting] should adapt itself and not be dependent exclusively on imported goods' (McGavran 1972:147). Implantation of a foreign church in Africa has led to huge challenges with women inclusion in church leadership (Masengwe, et al. 2019; Machingura & Nyakuhwa 2015). To avoid solving problems, leaders glossed historical conflicts with Biblical, Theological or Religious differences without considering the COCZ's

2. The two rebel movements were led by Barton Stone group (1804 *Last Will and Testament of the Springfield Presbytery*); and Alexander Campbell's group (1807 *Declaration and Address of the Christian Association of Washington*).

historical fissures (Jirrie 1972) and correct use of scripture to resolve contemporary challenges (Mafa 2019).

The History of Missionary Divisions in the Church of Christ in Zimbabwe

The COCZ inherited the Restoration Movement (RM)'s [also the Stone-Campbell Movement (SCM)]'s history of divisions that date back to its formation, and itself being a merger of two separatist movements. The COCZ suffered an early conflict with the missionary groups at Colenbrander Avenue church in Bulawayo between instrumental and non-instrumental American missionaries (CBCOC 1948-1965). The conservative group (non-instrumental) eventually went to Mashonaland East where they established Nhowe Mission (Chimhungwe 2012), while the instrumental groups remained in Midlands and Masvingo (Masengwe & Dube 2021a:2). This means the COCZ is more conflicted than reforming. Internal issues concerning doctrine, resources and personality led the COCZ to become a victim of a socio-historical conflict fueled by historical fissures with tendencies for splits. American missionaries cleanly divided against New Zealand missionaries, even though the latter invited the former. It can safely be stated that the contemporary division in the COCZ is a fissure that began with missionary boards³. In contemporary circles, the constitution and Somabhula Conference Centre are blamed, yet they are used as fuel to existing fissures.

Missionary Groupings and Affinities for Divisions

Divisions in the COCZ began at Colenbrander Avenue Church of Christ, Bulawayo, the first home and mission station of missionaries to Southern, Central and Eastern Africa (Minutes of the Colenbrander Avenue Church of Christ [CBCOC] 1948-1965). The stricter missionaries, who came as visitors and sojourners from the United Kingdom and the United States of America caused the split. They took advantage of 'our people who have an insatiable appetite to consult foreigners on indigenous issues' (CBCOC 1948-1965) stated one leader during discussions in Bible study at Colenbrander. Missionaries had affinities and groupings from home countries as stated:

During the recent stay in Bulawayo of some of our friends from the strictest group of our American churches, and especially towards the latter portion of their sojourn, feelings among the members of the church at Colenbrander Ave, Bulawayo, grew markedly strained, finally reaching such a pitch that a division occurred (Hadfield & Hadfield, 1950).

3. New Zealanders came under the New Zealand Missionary Society while Americans were free-lancers who created the Central Africa Mission when they came. Americans chose to domicile in Masvingo Province, firstly at Mashoko Mission Station, while New Zealanders retained Dadaya in the Midlands Province. On leadership approach and succession processes, Americans emphasized autonomy and were not keen to entrust capable Africans, whereas the New Zealanders believed in empowering locals to assist in the work (heteronomy). When the government changed during the Unilateral Declaration of Independence of 1965-1980, the New Zealanders could not live under a head of state who was not the queen, while Americans had no problem with democracy could live under an independent government. Sir Steven Reginald Garfield Todd supported black nationalists, yet Americans supported white imperialists – Todd provided hide out in his farm to the guerrilla fighters, while the Americans are believed to have worked with the Rhodesia forces. In all, most missionaries were lay, hence they did not promote the clergy.

The stricter missionaries stuck together and strained relations, 'finally reaching such a pitch that a division occurred' (Hadfield & Hadfield, 1950). Unfortunately:

The underlying cause of the conflict was the difference in the interpretation of the scriptures on one or two points, the strict American group taking the one view and the bulk of the remainder the other. Most of those who remained with us were more nearly allied to and in sympathy with the Australasian group of the churches of Christ, and the great majority of our churches in Britain, the Union of South Africa, and America (Hadfield & Hadfield, 1950).

The COCZ has been divided by visitors, firstly in the 1950s (Hadfield & Hadfield, 1950) and secondly in the 2010s (Hart 2016; Altmann 2014). Earlier on, Mr Foy Short naturally upheld views and doctrines put forward by 'our American visitors and by the American group to which they belonged' as opposed to the general populace that held views of the Australasian group (Hadfield & Hadfield, 1950). He split the Colenbrander Avenue Church of Christ, taking two prominent church officers, Mr J.W. Claassen, brother-in-law to the church chairperson, Mr Hadfield; and Mr J. Bailey. The report on the withdrawal stated: 'We received a copy of an American Church paper dated 08 March telling his brotherhood of his withdrawal, his reasons for doing so, and announcing the approval of the church supporting him' (Hadfield & Hadfield, 1950). The conflict reached Dadaya mission from where they received continued comforts on church affairs. News went to Mutare and Johannesburg from where Christian brothers like Mr Basil Thomas Park and Mr Holt respectively aired out their deep interests, support and sympathy with which Bulawayo had been hit with problems. The conflict impacted all Christians in the region.

However Christians at Colenbrander sat down to reflect upon their challenges, and to write down their statement: 'Church of Christ, Bulawayo: Division and how it arose'. They refused to abuse their opponents as Maurice Wiles, *In Defense of Arius* said 'abuse of one's opponents is frequently a sign of weakness of the case that one is making out against them' (1976:28). This conflict had its own precedents with one groups viewed as myopic (Hadfield & Hadfield 1950). The statement was shared among concerned Christians in southern Africa, and these are the fissures that continued to influence conflicts in the COCZ.

Missionaries, mission stations and mission Jurisdictions

Missionary legacy on mission stations remains critical in the COCZ. The New Zealanders and the Americans had different missionary boards such as Foreign and later Overseas Mission Board that raised money from individual churches of the Associated Churches of Christ in New Zealand, and the American, Central Africa Mission (CAM) Articles of Incorporation and bylaws (24 July 1956) (Bhebhe 2013:122). New Zealanders incorporated Africans onto their boards, and sent them for further ministerial formation abroad. CAM was formed to supervise how American missionaries fulfilled

mission work in Central Africa; 'so that people would not just come over without having government recognition and oversight by C.A.M. leaders here and in the States' (Altman 2014). Mission stations were created in regions of the country as required by the colonial regime. New Zealanders under the Associated Churches of Christ in Zimbabwe (ACCZ) were in Midlands, while Americans under the Churches of Christ and/or Christian Churches where in Masvingo. The Printing Press, Central Africa Mission Evangelistic Literature Service (CAMELS), was transferred from Gweru to Masvingo to reinforce missionary divisions. The COCZ has serious information gaps that are being filled by contemporary court processes (Nyoni 2021). New Zealanders at least created a Trust for Dadaya Mission, the Dadaya Mission Trust (DMT) (Nyoni 2021) critical for 'mission station ownership and administration in the COCZ' (Masengwe & Dube 2021a:8). Americans did not have constitutions, which led the Lowveldt region to be the first to write a protest constitution (LCCC 2010) after the Greater Harare's Church Council's constitution (GHCC 2007). This made the refusal of the national constitution unreasonable, especially causing the split (COCZ 2015). Entitlements rather caused the split (Masengwe & Dube 2021a).

Missionary divisions along regions, mission stations, and institutional funding used the constitution and conference centre as excuses, hence the argument: 'We are two different churches' (Bungu 2014). Mr. Mupambadzire Manikidza Nyoni (popularly M.M. Nyoni), former mayor of Gweru had suggested building a conference centre in 1988 at his farm that failed because of missionary divisions. Zimbabwe Christian College (ZCC) students were incited to shoot down the proposal at the 1988 national conference as unchristian and denominational (Masengwe 2020a). Similar tensions by Hippo Valley Christian Mission arose in 2014 when Somabhula conference centre in Midlands was underway (Masengwe 2020a). Divisions thus did not arise from contemporary challenges but historical fissures between stricter and liberal Christian views.

Missionary relations with African clergy

New Zealanders were different with Africans compared to Americans because most of the missionaries were lay [teachers, nurses, doctors, agriculturalists, builders and engineers] who did not promote trained black clergy (Jirrie 1972). Mr. Dave Altmann, former ZCC principal indicated he trusted African teachers rather than African ministers (Altman 2014). Early American missionaries under CAM had diverse skills to survive in Africa such as Mr. Max Ward Randall, Dr. Dennis Pruett, Mr. John & Mrs. Marg Pemberton, Mr. Jack and Mrs. Peggy Pennington among many. Lay ministers however 'hindered rather than enabled missionary work in the country' (Masengwe 2020a). 'Despite the fact that CAM built hospitals, clinics, schools and colleges, they became instigators of infighting, rather than missionary work' (Masengwe 2020a:39). Their sentiments against organization in an African church such as having central

offices, and paid church officers, is because they felt missionary roles would soon be replaced by African ministers (Altman 2014). Unfortunately he admitted that the country needed African leaders and African resources as churches in the USA have limited funds to support local activities. In the COCZ becoming organised he stated: 'if the churches of America think you are becoming a denomination, they will become quickly disappointed (may cease sending funds to Zimbabwe)' (Altman 2014). American funding is another unnamed fissure that fuelled splits in the COCZ.

Missionaries and African church leadership

New Zealanders believed in partnering with Africans (heteronomy) as opposed to American independency (autonomy). Sir Garfield Todd seemed to have changed in his older age to embrace an attitude congruent with that of Americans (Nyoni 2021) even though he remains indispensable in COCZ history (Masengwe & Dube 2021b). He made African ministers participate in mission committees to run the churches and schools under Dadaya mission. This differed with Americans who 'handpicked Mr Kenneth Makusha to run schools, Dr Z.J. Bungu to run health centres and Mr Watson Mabona to run churches' (Chikwanda 2018). This led to a post-missionary crisis as leadership vacuum erupted and self-appointed leaders among American churches led to conflict, which did not happen from among New Zealand churches. Emphasis on autonomy by the CAM group of missionaries led to weak coordination and cooperation among local churches (Altman 2014; Masengwe 2020b). Autonomy was useful in dissuading locals from demanding missionary accountability on their foreign funding. This ideology kept Africans gullible and ignorant of missionary affairs (Masengwe 2020b). American visitors to Somabhula conference centre however disputed missionaries who forced African churches to use leadership ideologies they don't understand (Masengwe & Magwidi 2020; Masengwe 2020b; Hart 2016).

Missionaries on European colonisation and African liberation

Sir Garfield Todd, 'a radical paternalist' supported African education and emancipation (Masengwe & Dube 2021b). He donated his New Zealand income to another missionary after becoming a parliamentarian. When he bought his own farm, he donated land to build Dadaya Mission (Masengwe & Dube 2021b). At independence, Todd started farming projects to support detainees from the liberation struggle, which led to his appointment into the Mugabe-led cabinet and subsequent [1986] knighting. Study interviewees indicated that New Zealanders opposed the Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) and supported nationalists. They actively sponsored fighters with food, medicines and a hideout on Todd's farm (Masengwe & Dube 2021b). Some Americans were enrolled into the Rhodesian army as informers and helicopter pilots because they were imperialists. Former army person Mr John C. Pemberton was believed to have cooperated with the Rhodesia army.

Americans could live under Smith's UDI because they came from a democratic government. Mr John Mark Pemberton, son to Mr John C. Pemberton, criticized Sir Garfield Todd as a bad Christian who cooperated with African nationalists instead of sticking together with European imperialists.

The Somabhula-Lancashire splits in the Church of Christ in Zimbabwe

The split in the COCZ is between formerly New Zealand and American mission stations caused by contemporary elites rather than genuine Christian failures. Somabhula (Midlands) symbolically represents New Zealand triumph in contra to American failure with Lancashire efforts (Masvingo). However, 'Church conflicts present us simultaneously with danger of divisiveness and disintegration and an opportunity for wholeness and reconciliation' (Halverstadt 1991:4). The Lancashire-led group accused 'the incumbent national executive that flouted rules and procedures for constitution adoption in the COCZ'. The Somabhula-led group also questioned that 'The COCZ has no central administration or clear supervision of its church's mainstream activities, at mission stations and in independent ministries? Which rules and procedures are being referred to?' The groups also blame black elites standing in as proxies of missionaries who instigated conflicts to justify their grabbing of mission stations and related institutions (Masengwe & Dube 2021a; Masengwe & Magwidi 2020). Those who advanced constitution-making and conference centre construction have also been accused of planning to grab mission properties. Groups counter-accuse each other unhelpfully failing to address the conflict.

Intermittently, there is a significant numerical growth of academics among pastors undergoing further ministerial development with implications for financial independence. This threatens lay leaders (Mafohla 2018). Also a growing challenge from women has posed significant interest on church leadership (Machingura & Nykuwa 2015). Note worthily, COCZ conflicts have not been publicized, relating to clerical drunkenness, sexual immorality, misappropriation of church funds, leadership positions squabbles, confiscation of church properties and violent behaviours as was among Apostolic Faith Mission (AFM) churches (Chivasa & Machingura 2018). Lawsuits however by pastors who felt unjustly treated at work have ensued due to unclear procedures found in the COCZ. So this study also asks, 'Which procedures should be followed?'

The Somabhula- Lancashire split led COCZ members to face anguish, confusion and despair (Noble 2008:171). This split left more losses rather than benefits to this body of believers (Mushayamunda 2022:66). The Restoration Movement (RM) [also Stone-Campbell Movement (SCM)]'s doctrine and teaching is Calvinistic, which upholds the centrality of Scripture (1 Corinthians 6:1-8). It believes that law-making began there in at the Garden of Eden to regulate Adam and Eve's behaviour (Gen. 2). Conflict arises everywhere where

there are more than two people. Every conflict depends upon organisational circumstances and human interactions (Deutsch 1991:28). Conflict due to exclusive human interests, perceptions, ideas, ideologies, tendencies and orientations historically led to new civilizations and developments (Afolabi 2011:1-2; Deutsch 1999:22). For Christians, fighting militates against their Christian personality (Halverstadt 1991:3). Unfortunately where the temporal is elevated beyond the spiritual, conflicts cannot be avoided (Sibanda 2016). This requires the COCZ to develop a grievance handling system (GHS) as leaders have wider views and therefore options lacked by members (Sheffield, et al., 1987:21-24). The COCZ has an estimated number of about 20, 000 members (Masengwe 2020a:9) without any ideas or agreement on how to handle conflicts around ownership and management of church properties as well as ability to distribute church incomes and investments (Masengwe & Dube 2021a). The grievance handling system (GHS) thus incorporates new ideas, new methods and new approaches towards church growth patterns in the COCZ. Churches, like families, are susceptible to sinful attitudes and desires that interfere with processes (James 4:1-2), requiring win-win approaches where the Bible takes a centre-stage to restore sinners (Afolabi 2011:41-42; Covey 1997; 1 Corinthians 6:1-8).

Transforming church conflicts using 'Robert's Rules of Order'

Somabhula-Lancashire splits showed that the COCZ has neither internal conflict resolution models; nor codes of conduct to handle conflicts (Masengwe & Magwidi 2020). The Somabhula-Lancashire splits remain unresolved because proper guidelines and procedures (standard rules) to promote harmony and discipline are lacking. This study suggests Robert's Rules of Order (RONR), produced for American secular governance systems; and written by an army officer, Lieutenant Colonel, Henry Martin Robert in 1876, to be adapted in COCZ congresses. RONR is to-date in its twelfth edition (1st September 2020) and received major revisions in 1915 and 1970. The book's copyright is owned by the Robert's Rules Association, which contracts a team of authors to carry out major manual revisions for parliamentary procedure in institutional meetings. RONR is a 'compendium of parliamentary law that is based upon the rules and practices of congresses' (Robert 2020). It outlines rules of decorum, parliamentary motions, officers, required committees, voting and quorum, and parliamentary authority. It provides a 'simple explanation of methods of organizing and conducting business for societies, Conventions, and deliberative assemblies' (Robert 2020). RONR can be useful in developing church parliamentary-governance system materials, which can help the COCZ to professionally handle its grievances after reflecting upon objectives of its Christian faith. The RONR thus can help the COCZ develop its own transparent and progressive GHS that currently does not exist (Tillett 1999).

RONR concerns conference procedures, disciplinary actions, decision-making processes and leadership identification

responsible for dealing with conflicts. Rev Dr Roy Motsi, Principal of the Theological College of Zimbabwe (TCZ) in Bulawayo suggests in an informal discussion on 10th February 2021 that 'the COCZ needs a multifaceted approach that ensamples uptight Christian leaders with other professions such as Christian Lawyers, Christian Accountants, Christian Land Surveyors, Christian Quantity Surveyors and Christian Philanthropists' to deal with its conflicts. By Christian he referred to COCZ members who take their faith convictions seriously because it is oxymoronic to add Christian to any profession other than religious professions. RONR in this conflict provides conflict handling objectives that can be used in the process of developing Church codes of conduct (Robert 2020). RONR can positively impact COCZ groups as it did to US homeowners' associations, state commissions, schools boards, trade unions, professional or academic societies and not-for-profit organisations on how to govern their meetings towards reaching appropriate decisions (Mafa 2018). COCZ missionaries cited SCM statements to dismiss the place of order in churches, saying 'The Bible is our only 'Rule of Faith, Practice and Discipline' (Altman 2014). These misinformed utterances and hearsays are insufficient in real decision-making for there are no specific rules for contemporary offenses in the Bible like constitutional conflicts (1 Corinthians 6:1-8; Mafa 2018; COCZ 2015).

Finally, the Bible applies where the church as clear rules on discipline like the COCZ 2015 Constitution. When church constituencies are not unanimous, it cannot achieve those outcomes. This conflict was caused by regionalism adherences whereby situating the conference in Gweru those from Masvingo felt New Zealanders have won ahead of the Americans. Interestingly, former committees were predominantly from Masvingo, yet in ten years failed to develop viable projects that unite members for the future. They instead censored members who suggested changes with sexual offenses, promoted adversaries at mission stations, and conferences, which chased many young clerics not willing to live under unilateralism and factionalism (Blackburn & Brubaker 1999).

Conflict transformation processes in church

RONR depersonalises issues, verifies facts, removes labels and biases, nurtures relationships, encourages openness and destroys unhealthy alliances (Halverstadt 1991:7). It can integrate and transform opposing energies, using the Bible (Prov. 20:5). Informal religious methods humanise contestants in reaching a voluntary and mutual agreement (Zambara 2014:98, 100; Covey 1997, Zambara 2014:100). These extra-legal and grassroots approaches integrate and incorporate the wider social network that constructively redress attitudes, behaviours and contradictions, to creatively establish the root causes of conflict (Wallenstein 2002:8; Mafa 2018). RONR thus can be useful in transcending hostilities

and upholding positive outcomes (Zambara 2014:102; Lederach 1997). RONR meaningfully begins with contestant-leaders' mindsets (Brand-Jacobsen 2004:14).

Handling social conflict in the Church of Christ in Zimbabwe

Opportunities need to be created to resolve social conflicts among contestants (Jeong 2002:12). Conflicts should not be allowed to degenerate into open violence by maintaining positive peace to allow human flourishing (Jeong 2000:23). Galtung (1996:32) pushes the frontiers of positive peace towards cycles of direct, structural and cultural violence. Care must be taken to address basic needs. Maintaining our link with positive peace attains sustainable justice, fairness and equality (Miall, et al., 1999). Peace building in church requires 'activities [to] be identified with building structural and cultural peace' (Galtung 1996:271), hence remove repressive tendencies, exploitative behaviour and social segmentation, fragmentation and/or marginalization to achieve symbiotic interactions (Zambara 2014:113). The Somabhula-Lancashire manipulations left local COCZ pastors and congregations deprived, divided, insecure, and violated (Zambara 2014:118). RONR can be used to constructively address the root causes of social conflict generated by regionalization (Murithi 2009:3). Regions in which early missionaries operated deeply divide COCZ congregations with their cleavage towards autonomies and interdependencies. RONR can help the COCZ to build internal conflict resolution structures. This can empower members (Mafa 2018) if RONR is contextualised along autonomies and interdependencies in that church (Masengwe & Magwidi 2020; Masengwe 2020b).

The COCZ grievance handling system (GHS) developed from the RONR can use internal arbitrators and mediators in its African restorative models (Chivasa & Machingura 2018). Scripture is useful for win-win solutions (Matthew 18:15-20). Restoration considers dialogical and informal processes of negotiation, mediation and arbitration (Zambara 2014). Negotiation demands voluntary interaction by parties to resolve conflicts without outsiders (Mayer 2000:142). Mediation is when neutral third parties are mutually invited to resolve disputes (Tillett 1999:97; Brand-Jacobsen & Jacobsen 2000:52). If mediators fail to reframe and resolve incompatible positions, court arbitrators are approached. Church conflicts are best done by parties to the conflict to improve membership relations and spiritualities (Harris 2007:4-5). RONR can lead to a constructive capacity-building and a satisfactory model of conflict resolution.

Conclusion

The COCZ conflict began in the history of divisions by missionaries rather than problems in doctrine, hermeneutics or ethical practice. The article identified historical fissures in the COCZ requiring RONR to be used to redirect energies of deliberants towards win-win solutions. The article condemns adversarial strategies caused by collegial competition,

litigious animosity, divided loyalties, mutual hatred, and violent tendencies in negative energy to increase growth tendencies in the organization. RONR is a scientific method of handling conflicts, and promises to restore trust among members. This can lead towards the production of models to administer conferences, institutional properties and Christian relationships.

Acknowledgements

Competing interests

The authors declare that they have no financial or personal relationships that may have inappropriately influenced them in writing this article.

Authors' contributions

All authors made equal contributions to the article.

Ethical considerations

This article followed all ethical standards for research without direct contact with human or animal subjects.

Funding information

This research received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial or not-for-profit sectors.

Data availability

Data sharing is not applicable to this article as no new data were created or analysed in this study.

Disclaimer

The views and opinions expressed in this article are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of any affiliated agency of the authors.

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