Internal Conflicts within the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church and its Resolutions: The case of two Churches in Addis Ababa Diocese

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አጠቃሎ

የተለያዩ ሐሳቦች፣ ስጋቶች፣ አመለካከቶችና ግቦች በመኖራቸው ምክንያት ግጭቶች ተፈጥረዋዊና የማይቀሩ ናቸው። ሰዎች ተግባራቸውን ለመወጣት አብረው እስከሆኑ ድረስ ግጭቶች ቢፈጠሩ አያስደንቅም። የዚህ ጽሑፍ ዋና ዓላማ በአጥቢያ አብየተ ክርስቲያናት ውስጥና መካከል የሚፈጠሩ ግጭቶችንና ለነዚህ ግጭቶች በኢትዮጵያ ኦርቶዶክስ ተዋሕዶ ቤተ ክርስቲያን የተሰጡ የመፍትሔና የውሳኔ ሓሳቦችን አጉልቶ ማሳየት ነው። በጥናቱ ውስጥ ያሉትን ዓላማዎች ለማሳካት የተለያዩ መረጃዎችን ከተለያዩ ምንጮት በማሰባሰብ ለጥናቱ ግብአት እንዲሆኑ ተደርጓል። የዚህ ጥናት ቀልፍ የመረጃ ጥልቅ ቃለ ምልልስ ነው። በጥናቱ መረጃ ዘዴ መሠረት ከአጥቢያ ቤተ ክርስቲያን እስከ መንበረ ፓትርያርክ ጠቅላይ ቤተ ክህነት ጽ/ቤት ያሉ የቤተ ክርስቲያን መሪዎች፣ አገልጋይና ካህናትና ምእመናን ተገቢውን መረጃ በመስጠት ተሳትፈዋል። ጸሐፊው በአዲስ አበባ ሀገረ ስብከት የሚገኙ አጥቢያ አብየተ ክርስቲያናት በድንገረ 1983 ግጭት የተካሄደባቸውን ለምሳሌ እንደ ገነተ ኢየሱስ እና አንቀጸ ምሕረተ ቅዱስ ሚካኤል ቤተ ክርስቲያን እንዲሁም የማኀደረ ስብሐት ቅድስት ልደታ አብየተ ክርስቲያናትን እንደማሳያ ተጠቅሟል። በተጨማሪም ከእነዚህ አብየተ ክርስቲያናት ጋር አብረው የሚሄዱ ሌሎችንም አጥቢያ አብየተ ክርስቲያናት በጽሑፉ ተመላክተዋል። የገነተ ኢየሱስና የአንቀጸ ምሕረት ቅዱስ ሚካኤል አብየተ ክርስቲያናት ሲተዳደሩ የነበሩት በአንድ የሰበካ አስተዳደር ጉባኤ ቢሆንም በ1993 ዓ.ም. ሁለቱ አብየተ ክርስቲያናት በግጭት ምክንያት ተለያይተዋል። በሌላ በኩል የማኀደረ ስብሐት ቅድስት ልደታ ለማርያምና የመድኀኔዓለም አብየተ ክርስቲያናት ሁለት ቢሆኑም ከ1978 ዓ.ም. ጀምሮ በአንድ የሰበካ ጉባኤ አስተዳደር ሥር ተጠቃለው ይገኛሉ። በከላይ የጠቅስናቸውና ሌሎቹም ግጭት የተከሰተባቸው አብየተ ክርስቲያናት የኢትዮጵያ ኦርቶዶክስ ተዋሕዶ ቤተ ክርስቲያንን የውስጥ ግጭቶች ለማሳየት እንደአብነት ሊጠቀሱ ይችላሉ።

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Introduction

This research paper is about conflicts and their resolutions that prevailed in the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church over the appropriations and control of resources in the context of social and private lives of those who provide religious services. The investigation has been undertaken to bring to light the conflict situations and the methods applied in resolving them in the period under study. Considerations have also been made concerning issues related to the internal changes that took place by way of providing two case studies as has been demonstrated by two churches in Addis Ababa namely: *Gännätä Iyyäsus* and *St. Lïdäta* churches.

The Churches have been administered under the Ethiopian Orthodox Church central administration. It is the researcher's conviction that the findings may unravel knowledge helpful to an understanding of the emergence, management, and resolution of conflicts in the religious establishment to give the feel of what it is like when interests of resource are involved in the services.

1.1 Background of the Study Area

The Ethiopian Orthodox *Tewahedo* Church has established an organizational and operational structure that goes down to the neighborhood church level. The church has its organizational structure (Kefyalew, 1997).

As one of the ancient churches, the EOTC is a founding member of the World Council of Churches (WCC), the All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC) and, has good relations with other faith-based organizations and various humanitarian institutions (EOC-DICAC, 2005).

At present, the EOTC has sixty dioceses, each of them headed by an archbishop. As of the establishment of the Addis Ababa Diocese, the number of churches has risen to more than 260 parish churches. After 1991 the Ethiopian Orthodox

Tewahedo Church recovered its nationalized property. The Addis Ababa Parish Churches constructed modern and traditional church schools around the churchyards. This trend sparked a feeling of competition and was followed by conflicts among a group of churches in the neighborhood and solitary churches.

The diocese was established in line with the government structure of the zonal system. Before the establishment of the Federal Government, it was called the Diocese of *Šäwa* but, in 1989 it was renamed as the Addis Ababa Diocese. Since the government structural system is divided into different zones, the church also divided its administration into thirty-three zones. Among these, Addis Ababa Diocese was the most developed and prosperous diocese. The recent data shows that there are 260 churches under the Addis Ababa Diocese. Among these are *St. Lïdäta*, *Gännätä Ïyyäsus* , and *Anqäs'ä Mïhrät St. Michael* churches whose cases are the mainstay of this research.

This research focused mainly on two Orthodox Churches which are found in the Addis Ababa region. The first church is '*Mahïdärä Sïbïhat St. Lïdäta* Church situated in the *Lïdäta* area. The church was established in 1926 by *Ïč'äge Gäbrä Mänfäs Q'ïddus*. The second church is '*Gännätä Ïyyäsus* situated in *Wäräda* 22, *Qäbäle* 07 City Administration. It was constructed by *Ras Kasa* in 1924. The two churches were administered by the Addis Ababa Diocese.

I have chosen these two churches for two reasons:

- ☐ The conflicts that occurred in the two local churches were very big and the root causes are assumed to represent the root causes of the conflicts between other local churches.

- ☐ The problems of these two churches are largely assumed to represent the conflicts in most of the churches in the Addis Ababa Diocese in particular and that of Ethiopian Orthodox *Tewahedo* Churches in general.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The founder of the Christian faith is Jesus Christ. The first Christian church was established at a place called Antioch. After the establishment of the Church as an institution, two theological schools emerged and they were called the School of Antioch and the School of Alexandria (Bayru, 1967).

Because of the doctrinal difference between the two schools, conflicts started to take place between their followers. The main causes of the dispute were the differences in ideas and interpretations about Christ's Humanity and Divinity. Because of these doctrinal differences, there were several disputes in the past, which resulted in violent conflicts and bloodshed among the adherents of the two schools of thought (Taddesse, 1997, p. 29).

Until the Ethiopian revolution of 1974, the Church and the State were close to each other. The nobility used to promote the status of the church and the church reciprocated by promoting its traditional support and disseminating it among its followers. The nobility built most of the churches. This started to change after 1974 (Johnson, 1974, p. 100).

Immediately after the 1974 political change, the Ethiopian Orthodox Church started to undergo radical changes. Among the most important changes were the nationalization of land and landed property of the church. The then government allotted a nominal sum of money by way of a budget allocation in return for what has been nationalized (Taddesse, 1972).

When another change took place in 1991 that nominal sum was taken away altogether. This forced the administration of the church to abide by the *K'alä Awadi* (Parish Church Regulation) in which all the parish churches were financed by the donations made by its adherents (Parish Regulation, 1991).

Relations between the EOTC and the *Därg* regime can be characterized as being at odds with each other. Following the overthrow of the *Därg* regime in 1991 the EOTC started to undergo transformations. It regained its nationalized property including two theological colleges and 13 training centers. Moreover, the churches constructed several modern and traditional church schools and colleges in and around their churchyards. This radical change within the church resulted in the regain of interest and resumption of dogmatic competition and disputes among the clergy administrative officials and between neighbourhood churches.

Nevertheless, the church as an institution is contributing its share of religious manpower like other organizations are the suppliers of manpower armed with the necessary skills and knowledge of various trades to the country. Being a spiritual organization, what goes wrong in the church causes problems in the community and the nation as well. Any conflict in such types of spiritual organizations must be identified promptly and resolved. The effect of any conflict in such a spiritual (religious) institution is very sensitive as the principal resources are the faithful. In addition, whenever there is a group of faithful working together in the church, there arises a conflict.

Yet, this important issue has not been researched and explained to date. This study will attempt to investigate the inter-connection of change and conflict and throw light on the mechanisms of conflict mitigation used by the Ethiopian Orthodox *Tewahedo* Church.

As far as my knowledge is concerned, no researcher has ever touched anything concerning the Ethiopian Orthodox *Tewahedo* Church internal conflict and conflict resolution that have occurred after 1991. Moreover, no research had so far been undertaken to cover the post 1991 period: as to how conflicts occur in the EOTC, how the EOTC went about in explaining the conflict, identifying the conflict actors, and the ways applied in resolving the conflicts. This study is therefore believed to bridge the gap that existed in this regard since then. The dispute between the parish Churches of *Gännätä Ïyyäsus* and St. *Lïdäta* can be divided into

two parts. One is within them and the other is the conflict with the Addis Ababa Diocese. In the Church of the St. *Lïdäta*, there was an administrative conflict between the parish council and the Addis Ababa Diocese. In *Gännätä Ïyyäsus*, there is a dispute between the parish Church of *Gännätä Ïyyäsus* and St. Michael's Church.

1.3 Objective of the Study

The general objective of this study is to identify the internal conflicts between the parish churches within the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church and indicate their resolutions. The specific objectives of the study are:

a) To examine the emerging conflicts and how the church resolves conflicts using its mechanisms.

b) To investigate the lessons to be learned and the roles policy makers have to play in dealing with or resolving similar types of conflicts elsewhere in the country.

c) To encourage the church administrations to establish new institutions that cater for inter and intra- church disputes in the future.

1.4   Methodology

The two parish churches, namely the *Gännätä Ïyyäsus* and St. *Lïdäta* churches were selected purposefully as the conflict that occurred between these two churches was well known and could be taken as a representative case for other conflicts between parish churches within the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church.

Two methods of data collection were employed for this study: in-depth interview and focused group discussion. These two methods were selected due to the nature of the data being sought. Data on conflicts need to be sought from various sources and need to be as accurate as possible. The researcher believed that in-depth interview and focused group discussion would result in refined data that is sought after.

Clergymen and the faithful whom the researcher believed have kept earliest with the entire development in the parish churches under consideration were deliberately selected for this study. The researcher's intents have guided him to identify those clergymen and the faithful, who eventually happened to provide information very relevant and worthy of being historical records that may at a later time spark further research.

There were 180 clergymen at St . Lïdäta Church and there were 40 and 70 clergymen serving at *Anqäts'ä Mïhïrät* St. Michael Church and *Gännätä Ïyyäsus* churches, respectively. Of these 10 clergymen were selected based on their acquaintance and possession of relevant information regarding the conflict. The conflicts that arose between these parish churches were not restricted to the churches themselves. Their cases got the government's attention in the search for solutions. The Addis Ababa Diocese and the central church administration have had their roles in the conflict resolution process. Therefore 5 clergymen from the Addis Ababa Dioces and 5 clergymen from the Patriarchate's office were also selected for the interview. A total of 10 people among the faithful from the two parish churches were selected to get the view of the faithful on the conflict. In sum, a total of 30 people were selected for the in-depth interviews that were conducted to collect the relevant information.

Two focused-group discussions, with 8 participants from each of St. *Lïdäta Gännätä Ïyyäsus parish crutches,* were conducted in the course of this study. The participants of these discussions were purposefully selected church scholars who had a considerable amount of relevant information regarding general trends of conflicts in the churches.

The necessary precaution was taken not to use the names of those who participated in the interview and group discussion to maintain anonymity as exposing their names expose them to any possible danger. The participants, therefore, were given codes as presented in Table 1, which summarizes the data sources and tools.

Table 1: Number of Respondents and Methods

Methods of securing information	No. Of Clergymen from parish churches	No. Of Clergymen from Dioceses	No. Of Clergymen from patriarchate head office	No. of faithful from the churches	Total
Interviews	10	5	5	10	30
Letters representing by Code	P	D	H	F	
Group focused discussion				Number of FGD participants	
	Gännätä Iyyäsus Church			8	
	St. Lïdäta Church			8	
					16

Source: Researchers Field Notes, *2015*.

1.5 Method of Data Analysis

The data collected through in-depth interview, focus group discussions and live case studies of conflicting parish churches. As a qualitative study, the analysis followed a thematic approach that focused on the different types and causes of the conflicts as per the emerging themes from the data. The findings were also compared with relevant literature and relevant discussion was provided.

2. Literature Review

The human needs theory helps people address conflicts by examining motivations and behaviours. It includes desires for control, security, acceptance, and fulfilling

basic needs such as self-actualization, belongingness, and safety. Maslow's theory proposes a hierarchy of needs, suggesting that unmet basic needs can lead to conflicts as individuals seek to fulfill them (Maslow, 1987).

Conflict is an interaction between individuals and groups in which each one attempts to defeat, destroy, or inflict damage upon the other because of mutually exclusive goals or values (Cherington (1989). Conflict is an inevitable and all-pervasive element in our society and the world. Although conflicts may end up in destruction and even death, conflicts may also result in increased effectiveness, enhanced relationships, and further goal attainment (Tjosvold, 1990).

2.1 Previous Studies about the EOTC Internal Conflicts

In the past, Emperors have been dethroned in Ethiopia because of conflicts within the church. The church had played a role in alienating Emperor *Tewodros* II in the latter part of the nineteenth century by urging Ethiopians to fight against the Emperors that left him without a popular support. Priests were angry because *Tewodros* had confiscated church lands, which were a very critical issue at that time. In order to avert the conflicts that were likely to occur in 1974 Emperor *Haylä Sïllase* had backtracked by excluding the church from payment of land taxes (Schwab, 1972, p.59).

There had been a power conflict among parish churches in Addis Ababa Churches. For example, Emperor *Haylä Sïllase* had assigned the status of Holy Trinity Cathedral and *Bä'ïta* churches. The status of Holy Trinity is *Liqä Sïlt'anat,* while that of the *Bä'ïta* Church is *Liqä Liqawunt*. These two statuses make conflicts: one being greater than the other (Asgadom, 1998, p.56).

The other factor behind the Church's involvement in conflict emanates from the mismanagement of the use of land and church properties. For instance, some administrators of the church of *Gännätä Ïyyäsus* (1979-1986) stole the money of the churches, and deposited it in their personal accounts without the knowledge

of the church. Such maladministration of the churches created conflicts among the followers (Hailemariam, 1991).

Conflicts in the churches have started to take new dimensions. According to Essubalew (1972), the new type of conflict that has surfaced today is the need to modernize the church by employing the youth and modern church scholars. Besides, the parish churches' attitudes, unwillingness to transfer the allocated money to the central administration of the church was another source of conflict in the curuch (Ayele, 1991, p.56).

Churches had been involved in conflicts over vow money (*sïlät).* For instance, there were more than 11 *tabots* stationed at *Janmeda* during the celebration of Epiphany (t'ïmqät). Many people both from outside and inside Addis Ababa came with a tremendous amount of vow money (*sïlät*). During the Epiphany of 1989, the clergies of *Anqäṣ'ä Mïhrät St. Michael* and Yäkka Michael churches at *Janmeda* had a fight over the appropriation of vow money (*sïlät*) (Hailmaram, 1991, p. 74).

2.2 The Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church Conflicts

Historical sources indicate that the EOTC has experienced internal as well as external conflicts since its establishment. These conflicts were triggered by three major factors: power conflict, doctrinal, and resource conflict.

Power Conflict

The EOTC has undergone power conflict from its foundation up to now. In fact, up to the time of the fall of Emperor *Haylä Sïllase*, the church and state acted hand in glove. The EOTC was powerful in many aspects all over the country. As it was the state religion, the Ethiopian Orthodox *Tewahedo* Church was the established church of the Empire. The Empire of Ethiopia amended Constitution ,1955). Whenever any conflicts occur, the church and the state act in unison to be-

come victorious. In its spiritual service, the church was not independent as it was subordinated to the Coptic Church of Egypt. The church was not autocephalous. It did not have a bishop or a patriarch of its own to preside over the church and its affairs for more than 1600 years. The bishops came from Egypt or the Coptic Church.

The EOTC asked the Coptic Church several times to be allowed to organize independently and choose its bishops and a patriarch, which the Egyptians did not accept. After so many years of discussion, they ordained several Ethiopian bishops. The EOTC continued to struggle for its independence. Through the wise negotiation of Emperor *Haylä Sïllase* in 1959, the church became autocephalous and was made to choose its patriarch resolving the question of power struggle. The EOTC has elected 6 patriarchs since then.

Doctrinal Conflict

The EOTC had a doctrinal conflict within the church in the teachings of *Qï-bat* and *S'ägga*. These heretical teachings were the legacies of the council of Chalcedon in 451 AD. The church kept her teachings in line with Christology, that holds Christ is the Incarnate Son of God (Taddesse, 1997). Because of this Christological difference, the Catholics and the Protestants had taught their doctrines to the effect of winning the hearts of some followers and converting them to Catholicism and Protestantism. The church however went on with the teachings of Christology and expanded church tradition throughout the country. There were times when the EOTC had entered into confrontations with these religious organizations because they proselyted its members through different meanses. Though EOTC has still the largest number of church followers, the proportion of population following it decreasing since 1991 with the rapid expansion of Islam and Protestantism.

The Ethiopian constitution now in force recognizes the equal right for all religions and permits the promotion of their faith freely and presents the state as

secular (. This has eroded the established upper hand that the EOTC had over the rest. The dominance of the EOTC has given way to competition in religious services that left the EOTC in a conflicting situation with some conflicts serious enough to have caused the loss of human lives. Although the period may be different, similar situations have taken place in the past. For instance, at the time of Emperor *Susnïyo*s, Catholic missionaries, due to doctrinal differences, massacred several clergymen in Gondar (Tadesse, 1997, p. 29). It has also been noted that at the time of Emperor *Yïkunno Amlak* there were two religious groups in the country that went into conflicts on the idea of the celebration of two Sabbaths (Saturday and Sunday) (Lule, 2005).

Resource Conflict

Bossart (1980, p. 38) stated that conflict is not only unavoidable; it is a normal and even helpful part of normal small group functioning. Delia (2002) also stated that in the current situation, conflict is no longer on an ideological level but an economic level namely resources.

The EOTC had an economic interest over land during the imperial period. Its source of income was based on land which was given by the government. During the popular revolution, the church transformed its administration to be administered by *Qalä Awadi* (the *Parish council regulation)*. Each follower of the church was compelled to contribute money for the administration of the church (Parish council regulation, 1999). After the change of government in 1991, the property that had been nationalized was returned to the church as a result of the policy of privatization. EOTC's supremacy over other religions became something of the past. Now, the church is forced to compete with others to satisfy the need for resources. This situation has left the church to run into conflicts both within the church and outside.

2.3 Establishment of the EOTC Parish Churches in the Country

Before the one set of the popular revolution and the close association that exist-ed between the Ethiopian Orthodox *Tewahedo* Church and the government, the emperors and their families or the nobility often assumed a self-imposed respon-sibility to help the EOTC and founded churches in the vicinity of their living quarters and the neighborhood. Now that things are changing, certain individuals and the laity are taking the initiative to construct churches.

2.3.1 Churches Built on the Initiative of the Kings and the Aristocracy

In the period before 1974, the kings built churches in the expectation of higher values of life after death and discerned the building of churches with deep veneration in the kingdom of heavens on the part of the aristocracy. For example, Prince *Ras Kassa Hailu* has built 30 churches other than *Gännätä Ïyyäsus* church. The *Gännätä Ïyyäsus* Church came into being in its present form as a result of the unreserved effort of *Ras Kassa*. The prince was a very ardent religious person in the Ethiopian aristocracy of the 20th century. Ever since his childhood *Kassa* was inclined towards ecclesiastics than worldly life. *Ras Kassa's* deep religious dedication made him build a church where three altar slabs were contained therein, which has very much contributed to the current conflict between the two parish administrations. The initiative that took off the ground in the spirit of divine providence with love towards God and the people eventually ended up in division and separation of the two churches with the conspiracy and manipulation of the clergy. With this situation prevailing, there existed a parish administration where there were two churches in the same compound. To mention but a few; *Ta'ïka Nägäst Ba'ïta Mariyam* Church and the Churche of *Kidanä Mïhïrät, Qäč'äne Mädhane'aläm and St. Gabriel churches, and Mahïdärä Sïbhat Lïdäta and Mädhane'alem* churches are paired churches with one parish administrator and one head of the church. The following table shows some of the churches that kings and nobilities constructed.

Table 2: Churches Built in Addis Ababa by the kings and the Aristocracy (1826*-1953)

No	Name of churches	Founder of the church	Year of Establishment
1	Mänbärä S'ähay Rï'sä Adbarat Ent'ot't'o Mariyam	Emperor Mïnilik II	1882
2	S'ïrha Mariyam Rufa'el	Fitawrari Habtä Giyorgis	1910
3	Mis Miskaye Hïzunan Mädhane'aläm	Emperor Haylä Sïllase	1943
4	Mahïdärä Sïbïhat St.Lïdäta	Eč'äge Gäbrä Mänfäs Qïddus	1924

Source: A questionnaire prepared to study the Addis Ababa Churches by Alemayhu Moges (1981 E. C.)

2.3.2 Churches Built on the Initiative of the Believers

The meaning of church implies that when believers gather together and as their number grows they seek to establish a place of worship and a place where their remains rest in peace. This attitude of the people led to the building of churches. Churches very commonly were built with the money contributed by believers. The majority of churches that were built around the country have come into being in this way. This type of establishment of churches had a common character for all believers but conflicts among them were inevitable. The following table indicates the churches that believers built.

Table 3: Churches built by the Faithful in Addis Ababa (After 1943)

No	Name of Churches	Sub-City is given by the Church as per the Church segmented
1	*Qäbbänna Mädhane'aläm*	East sub city
2	*Gullälle Kidanä Mihrät*	North sub city
3	*Hamärä Worq Mariyam*	South sub city
4	*Aqaqi Mädhane'aläm*	Akaki sub city

Source: Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahido Church program for the 2003 Epiphany, (Timket) Celebrations, Addis Ababa, 2003

2.3.3 Churches Built on the Initiative of the Central Administration of the Church

All Orthodox Churches around the country are administered by the Ethiopian Orthodox Church central administration and all administrative guidance and regulation emanate from this central organ. Particularly, those multitudes of churches and monasteries that are found within the Addis Ababa area can make direct work relations with the central church administration since the Addis Ababa Diocese falls under the direct control of the patriarch.

It is unusual to find churches that have been built by the central church administration, but after the changes in 1991 and the growth of income of the church that followed, the central church administration built churches at places where believers were newly settled as a result of natural calamities or disasters or displacements befallen them. Hence, the Holy Synod in its meeting held on October 13, 2005, approved Birr 540,000 in a donation for the construction of parish churches and the money was sent to 15 settlement areas all over the country through the respective diocese and 54 parish churches. The parish churches were constructed as a result of the decision passed and also Holy items for liturgical

services were sent (decision of the Holy Synod in 2002). Besides the three ways under which churches were built the task of building churches undertaken by individuals and kings were the major cause of conflicts that gave rise to disputes in the churches. Even though churches contributed to the spiritual enhancement of the society, there was seemingly an intended deviation towards worldly affairs in that they created fertile ground for the members of their family and kinsmen to take charge of the churches' affairs. There were instances where churches were seen as if they were owned by individuals and have gone to the extent where they were called *Ras Kasa's* Church and *Däjjač X's* Church …etc and this attitude has created problems as regards the belief and ways of thinking. This is why the church of *Anqäṣ'ä Mïhrät St. Michael* was separated from *Gännätä Ïyyäsus* and *Gännätä Mariyam* Churches with the pretext of the will left behind by *Ras Kasa* that later on happened to be the cause of a serious conflict.

3. Discussion

3.1 Conflicts and Conflict Resolution efforts in the churches undertaken and their outcomes

Parish churches got involved in conflicts over vow money (*Silet).* There were more than 11 *Tabot* stationed at *Janmeda* during the celebration of Epiphany (*Timket*). Many people both from outside and inside Addis Ababa came with a tremendous amount of vow money (*Silet*).

As has been indicated above, I have attempted to disclose that the conflict that prevailed between the two churches is a good representative conflict of all churches in the Addis Ababa Diocese. Therefore, the cases that are brought forward in the study are those that exit between the two churches as well as all churches.

The four churches under consideration are *Anqäs'ä Mïhïrät St.Michel, Gännätä Iyyäsus , St. Lïdäta,* and *Medhanealem* churches.

As a point of departure, I asked intending to know the main causes of conflict in the church.

My key informants **P1, P2, P3, P6, P9, D2, D5, H4, H5, F2, and F9** responded with very close similarity by telling that;

> *There were many causes of conflict in the churches. They were initiated by church conflict actors. These conflicts had the characteristics of styles for control over resources and structural orientation. However, resource-based conflicts were the main cause of conflict in the church.*

Resource Based Conflicts

The data from the respondents had unswervingly pointed towards conflicts over resources. It would therefore be appropriate to reveal such a conflict in a case demonstration in the churches under investigation.

Resource-based conflicts in the parish churches were many and varied and had been the cause of conflicts all the time. The sources of income had created conflict in the parish churches. This is an indication that resources were the main causes of conflict in every parish church.

To show the resource-based conflicts, indicative cases have been selected and presented below. As resources like income were the causes of conflict, it is worthwhile to see how the conflict is manifested in the church's understudy.

Case 1: *Gännätä Iyyäsus vs. Anqäs'ä Mïhïrät* St.Michael *Churches*

These two churches have a distance of 200 meters between them. A single parish administration council unitedly administered the churches up to 1993, after which time, they were separated to manage their affairs individually.

The *Gännätä Iyyäsus* **Parish** Church was claiming that the two churches should unitedly be administered as one like before; while the *Anqäs'ä Mïhïrät St.Mi-*

*chel Parish C*hurch on the contrary wanted to be separate and administered in-dependently.

Priests, **P1, P2, P4, P5, and p8** in their responses to the causes of separation maintain that:

> *The clergy, laities, and parish administration council of the two churches were treated as one. However, the main cause for the conflict to arise was the church services. They did not want to get to serve the church of St. Michael because of its distance from their living quarters. St Michael was served by one priest only for seventeen years. The reason forwarded by the priests was that they wanted to serve the church of Gännätä Iyyäsus* in *the interest of getting a higher salary and food services but, there was nothing of such supplies in the church of Anqäs'ä Mïhïrät church at all. Having observed such an unacceptable attitude of the priests, the local inhabitant believers of St. Michael church, claimed that the church was not confirming to the norms of a church suggested that, and was acquiring the behavior of that of an ordinary shop and its Bethlehem (literary store of bread) had taken the look of dog's house. Therefore, this church should be separated from Gännätä Iyyäsus* church *and manage its affairs with honour and veneration. Such instances led their claims to be referred to the Addis Ababa Diocese for investigation and resolution.*

Faithful F1, F2andF3 stated as regards conflict resolution:

> *Initially, the dioceses decided that the two churches be administered separately. The dioceses of Addis Ababa appointed an administrator to St. Michael church and 11 committee members to serve based on a temporary parish council administration to protect the property of the church from embezzlement. The Gännätä Iyyäsus churchmen took to the streets on a demonstration objecting to the decision of the diocese*

and appealing to the Patriarchate head office which was concluded with an order that the two churches should be administered unitedly as before until the Holy Synod passed a final decision. Eventually, the Holy Synod decided that the two churches should be administered unitedly. Nevertheless, the St. Michael church resented and separated itself on its own accord ignoring the decision passed by the Holy Synod.

As the action taken by the *Anqäs'ä Mihïrät St.Michel* church was unacceptable, the Holy Synod reversed their decision. On the following session passed an order that the two churches be administrated separately. After five, years of severe strife the St. Michael church achieved its autonomy by the decision of the Holy Synod in its favor. The *Gännätä Iyyäsus* church again disagreed with the decision of the Holy Synod for another five years. After a lapse of five years of separation the church accepted the decision of the Holy Synod bringing the clergymen, the laities, and the youth in the Sunday schools of the churches together and resumed participating in the church services peacefully.

On the other hand, as these two churches were located in very close proximity to each other, their followers were also very close to each other in their places of residence. The clergy in the two churches ignited a conflict over the contribution of money made by the laities. As the informants repeatedly maintained, it has been observed on many occasions that the laity venerated St. *Michel* Church more than the Church of *Gännätä Iyyäsus* for *St. Michel tabot* was perceived as quick-acting in addressing entreaties made by the laities and donated money as a way of thankfulness in return. With this situation in hard, money received as a donation by the believers on the very day of the celebration of the *Gännätä Iyyäsus tabot* was so small that it re-ignited the conflict among the clergy servants of the churches as priest P5 stated later.

Autonomy Conflict

Autonomy is a generally accepted notion implying the discretion of an entity in an organization to made decisions without referring to or consulting anyone in the organization. Autonomy among others may have such objectives as inculcating a feeling of accomplishment, bestowing upon the concerned the control over resources and the manure of allocation, and also that of developing relationships among those who work together.

The resource conflict that lingered for some time between the two parish churches which wanted to achieve their autonomy through changes in the patterns of their performance and their relationship with the diocese, the laities, and people who work together. The conflict, however, has been resolved by the decision given by the Holy Synod. The case is summarized in the following table

Table 4: Autonomy Conflict

Name of Conflicting Organs	Issue of Conflict	Resolving Body
Gännätä Iyyäsus vs**.** *Anqäs'ä Mïhïrät St.Michel* church	The Question of Autonomy	Holy Synod

Source: Researcher's field notes, 2015.

This was a good indicator of conflicts that had their roots in resource and structural claims for power which provided the discretion to mobilize resources in their interest. The final decision was passed by the Holy Synod, which recognized the right of each church over the use of the resource allocated to them by the decision.

Administrative Conflicts

The following cases portray the intra- church conflicts that took place in one church. The cases appear to be beyond inter-church conflict because a variety of problems are embraced within the church. The administrative conflict was

so much attached with employment, employer-employee relations, promotion, transfer, and recruitment and selection.

Case 2: St. *Lïdäta* Parish Administration Council vs. the Addis Ababa Diocese

The data collected shows that there were discrepancies in the way things were done and the way the statutory are written. When mismanagement occurs it lends itself to running into conflict. The following could be a good example.

The informants, P6, P7and P8 told explained that:

> *The parish administration council suspended certain employees from work, on the allegation of robbing the church's money. The suspended employees appealed to the Addis Ababa Diocese. The diocese, after investigating the case, transferred the employee and suspended the parish administration council members including the administrator (Aläqa). This created the ground for the church's administration and the diocese to go into conflict*

Another informant D3, H2, and F10 stated that:

> *The case was supposed to be handled by any one the church's organ such as the Addis Ababa Dioceses Main Committee, the Patriarchate Head Office, the Standing Synod, or the Holy Synod. Nevertheless, the entire church judicial organs decided that the Parish Administrative Council of the Church of St. Lïdäta be guilty and be removed from its position and a new council was elected in its place. The case had gone up and down along the hierarchy of courts and all but one lower court decided that the council had committed a fault. It was difficult for the loser to accept the verdict and the dispute reached an impasse only to be resolved on the intervention of a police force. Everything looked peaceful afterwards.*

The table below summarizes the whole story.

Table 5: Administrative Conflicts

Name of Conflict Actors	Issues of Conflict	Resolution Mechanism
St. Lïdäta Parish Administration Council vs. The Addis Ababa Diocese	The suspension of the parish council from work and pay	Secular court and Police intervention.

Source: Researcher's field notes, 2015.

There is a similar case. Informant D1 explains:

> *The administrator and the members of the parish administration council make the main decision-making organ of the parish church. However, the administrator did not agree with the decisions passed by vote. He opted for discussion and reflection before voting. But, the members of the parish council objected to his suggestion and passed a decision to suspend the administrator from his position. The administrator appealed to the dioceses and was transferred as a result. The diocese resolved the dispute by transferring the administrator*

Although the church is a spiritual organization, it has employees who render spiritual as well as other services. In the church, conflicts arise for very many reasons. The prominent ones among the various causes are lack of good governance, improper assignments of jobs and employees, shortage of facilities, lack of clarity regarding duties and responsibilities and actions taken in cases of mismanagement. Tackling these problems is of paramount importance to bring peace back to the church and keep the conflicting parties reconciled.

Power Conflict

It is worthwhile here to reflect in brief the concept of power so that the reader grasps the notion relevant to the case in hand. Power is the ability to affect the behavior of others (Griffin, 1990, p. 476). There are several kinds of power: legitimate power which is granted through the organizational hierarchy accorded to those who occupy a particular position, reward power which is the power to give or withhold rewards, coercive power which is the power to force compliance. A dubious application of any of the power is believed to lead to a disagreement. When it comes to the church, it is a type of conflict where one group claims superiority over the other. This type of conflict was related to the status, authority, dignity, expertise, professional outlook approach, etc., in power conflict where intense competition rather than slight cooperation is demonstrated.

The entire presentation of the cases of conflicts that have found their way into this study could be grouped into three, namely: Conflict of resources, Conflict of administration and Conflict of doctrine.

As Joseph Byrd explained that most church conflicts of today are not theological, but have deep relational and organizational dimensions (Byrd, 2007). As people of the church come from a wide range of experiences, color, race, background, etc., there is a largely possible tendency for these people to compete over resources. So, intra- and inter-church conflict study has indicated that resource-based conflicts have occurred most of the time. Administrative conflicts and doctrinal (dogmatic) conflicts stand second and third respectively.

When we look into the forms of conflict that prevail in the parish churches of the Addis Ababa Diocese, both inter- and intra-church conflicts are common. As could be understood from the summary of the cases, interpersonal conflicts are very common in parish churches. Besides the doctrinal and administrational conflicts of the parish churches, resource conflict is very common. As has been indicated in the previous chapters. Administrative conflicts arose out of a lack of

good governance in the church. This took the form of improper assignment of employees to job positions, shortage of appropriate facilities and equipment for the job, the ambiguity of responsibility, and serious abuse of power and corruption in the two parish churches and among the clergies, laities, and members of the parish administration councils. The key informants confirmed that the clergies were the most prominent conflict actors in the parish churches. Clergies and father confessors (*yänäfs abbat*) were responsible for most religious activities of their soul sons and daughters. Their primary duties were supposed to solve conflicts, but on the contrary, were found to exacerbate conflicts.

After the resolution of the conflict, however, there had been a considerable increase in income and the number of people that frequented the churches. According to the information gathered from the key informants and case 5 summary, the increase in the collection of large income was attributable to the conflict situation between the two churches. After the separation *Gännätä Ïyyäsus* and *Anqäs'ä Mïhïrät* St.Michael churches, they directed their efforts into the launching of different projects and succeeded in raising a large amount of income. Here one can claim that conflicts had positively assisted the way to development.

One interesting feature of these two churches is that both of them had co-existing churches in their respective compounds. The inter-church conflict study area which was *Gännätä Ïyyäsus* church had one other church in its compound called *Gännätä Mariyam*. In the intra-church conflict study area, *St. Lïdäta* Church has one church in its compound called *Mädhane'aläm* Church. Gännätä Iyyäsus and *Anqäs'ä Mïhïrät* St.Michael churches are administered separately. On the other hand, St. *Lïdäta* and *Mädhane'aläm* churches were administered unitedly.

In both situations where the churches were co-existing in the same compound and had one administrative unit no significant problem had been detected. There was rather a sense of cooperation between them many donated by the believers on the laities' favorite saints' day had been complimenting reach other's days without collection and therefore the income in both cases had demonstrated

increasing trend from time. The co-existence of two churches in a compound had maintained no rivalry competition or conflict over resources a co- owned. There had been a good working relationship during the period under investigation.

When we look into the organization of churches according to which church establishment in Addis Ababa, (Table 2, and 3) had been undertaken indicated the type of organization of the church that enhanced conflict directly or indirectly. The data analyzed together with the key respondents' information has made it certain that those churches that were built by the kings and the nobilities were the main sources of conflict in the church. According to the key informants, the conflicts between Gännätä Iyyäsus and *Anqäs'ä Mïhïrät* St.Michael churches were the result of such deficient organization. Sparks of conflict were the hidden agenda of *Rass Kasa's* family. They wanted to administer the co-existing churches unitedly so that they would eventually take over the land occupied by *Anqäs'ä Mïhïrät* Church. The conflict actors were not only the two churches but as indicated in Table 2 some minor conflicts had been triggered in these churches at the time when they were built by the nobilities.

3.2 Process of Conflict and Conflict Resolution Principles within the Church

Since the two churches were administered under the Addis Ababa Diocese, they use available resources from the same source and therefore conflicts arise from different perspectives. The main spring of the conflicts in the church is the need for discrete use of available resources, money, and material. The Addis Ababa Diocese has more than 135 parish churches. Among these are found the churches of Gännätä Iyyäsus and St. *Anqäs'ä Mïhïrät* Michael. The church of Gännätä Iyyäsus has over seventy servants who render spiritual services and over 10,000 followers. In the same manner, the churches of *Anqäs'ä Mïhïrät* St. Michael and that of *Mahïdärä Sïbïhat Qïddïst Lïdäta* has over 40 servants and over 2000 followers and 180 servants and 15000 followers respectively. All the Churches

are financed by the contributions made by the laities (Christine, 2002). Each Church in Addis Ababa has a considerable wealth in terms of money and other material resources that can be attributed to a direct and indirect contribution made by a large number of followers. Because of the wealth amassed and the perceived feeling of self-sufficiency that followed, many churches sought independence from the central church administration, and hence run into conflict while pursuing the notion of establishing self-rule, constructing new churches and other religious institutions.

Churches are religious (spiritual) organizations that are a rich source of peace services like other religious institutions. They are believed to function as a powerful warrant for social tolerance contribute to democratic pluralism and assist constructive conflict-management. They are perceived to be peace-builders and peacemakers (Reychler, 1979).

According to the Christian point of view conflict is inevitable for three reasons:

a) Human knowledge is limited and imperfect that even sinless people in a perfect world will perceive the same situation differently through their knowledge and perspectives.

b) Satan engineers conflict whenever and wherever it finds it possible to intervene especially amongst Christians. Satan strives to set us in conflict with God one another and ourselves.

c) Human beings knowingly enter into and initiate conflict with evil whenever they proclaim the gospel, preach holiness, protest against sin in the society teach against cults, or testify to Christ amid a world that does not want to change. So, in every parish church if there is communication, interaction, competition, and an incompatible gap over scarce resources there will always be conflict.

Though conflict is a normal phenomenon in society, organizations or individuals, it is not left to haunt indefinitely. In most cases there will be a process of conflict resolution when the right time comes or with the intervention of other parties. When we come to the conflicts of churches in the EOTC, the parish churches use different mechanisms and institutions to resolve inter and intra- church conflicts. Among these mechanisms, *Shimiglena* (elderly arbitration) is one to be mentioned.

> **Shimiglena**: is the most prominent institution of resolving conflict in the parish churches. *Shimiglena* in the church is activated when the cases are severe and the parties refuse to reconcile when the cases are of the nature of homicide and have no evidence, churchmen, priests, and father confessors play highly prominent roles to resolve such conflicts by *Shimiglena* (Yohannes, 1999, p. 77). Here we can discern the conflict that prevails between the churches of *Gännätä Iyyäsus* and *Anqäs'ä Mihirät* St. Michael. No solution has come out of the meetings that were called at the levels of the Addis Ababa Diocese and later on the Holy Synod general meeting. Nevertheless, with the intervention of the local *iddïr* associations, the invitation of well-known elderly people and of the followers of the two churches and of the clergymen who render services to play roles in the reconciliation process, peace and tranquility were restored and healthy church services resumed.

When the parties to a conflict are of the Christian faith, they are confined in churches as institutions with the capacity to resolve conflicts. According to them, they are places where peace and reconciliation take place because the church is built by the peacemaker Jesus Christ. The conflicting parties come forward and make an oath before the church and a father confessor to explain their minds when cases have no evidence to present. In such instances, both the plaintiff and the defendant are brought to the church. The defendant enters into oath at the gate of the church while at the same time putting his right hand on the cross. Whatever is said while under oath is taken for grant to be true.

This type of conflict resolution identifies the wrongdoer and enables to bring the litigants to reconcile after dropping the charges.

Mechanisms within the Church: These types of conflict resolution methods are very crucial in that they avert unnecessary debates in the church conflict resolution methods. The church as a spiritual organization has its own body of conflict resolution administrational structure that extends from grass root up to the higher level within the church's hierarchy. These are:

Parish Administrative Council: this is the decision-maker of the parish church organ. It is the executive board consisting of at least five and not more than seven members elected by the parish council. If there emerges a dispute between the clergy and the laity decision will be taken to settle the dispute administratively upon investigating the crux of the dispute.

Wäräda (district) Administrative Council: it is the executive organ of the *Woreda* parishes to decide the matter that falls within their jurisdiction administrative-wise.

The Diocesan Administrative Council: it is the individual church executive organ within the diocesan jurisdiction. Much effort has been put in the resolutions of the conflict that existed between *Gännätä Iyyäsus* and *Anqäs'ä Mïhïrät* Michael churches by the Addis Ababa Diocese but, it was to no avail for the fact that the churches could not come any closer to an agreement. A similar effort was put into the resolution of the conflict in the church of *St. Lïdäta* by the Addis Ababa Dioceses and later by the central church's administration that failed in both cases. Because the attempts made on both levels failed, the case was taken to the Holy Synod, which passed a decision where the church declined to exercise. Therefore, the case was brought to the court and the ***court order brought the long-awaited solution.***

The Patriarchate Administrative Council: this is the assembly of the department heads of the Ethiopian Orthodox *Tewahedo* Church in which all dispute of appeal cases is decided.

The Ecclesiastical Courts: Article 10 of Decree 2 of 1942 provides that the church has a private jurisdiction which is called Ecclesiastical Court. It has the power of order over the clergy who are members of its household to keep the peace by the spiritual advisory institution. The court administers justice in four different areas: Conflicts arising out of maladministration, conflicts arising out of cases of promotions and recruitments, conflicts arising out of misconduct by an ordained priest, and conflicts arising out of marriage matters. The court used to have been composed of five hierarchical structures. These were *Wäräda* Ecclesiastical Court, *Awrajja* Ecclesiastical Court, *T'äqlay Gïzat* Ecclesiastical Court, the Court of Appeal of the Patriarchate's Office, and *Zufan čïlot.* The judges are appointed by the Government. This court is not operational for many reasons indicated at various points in the study. The current Structure of the EOTC Ecclesiastical Court *has started from Woreda, Diocese and The Appeal of Patriarchate Head office. If the parties have not satisfied by the decision they can also apply to the Holy Synod.*

The Standing Synod: is the highest body representing the Holy Synod and interprets the church's laws and regulations. It is the transitional and temporarily decision making of the church body in the EOTC

The Holy Synod: is an assembly of the bishops. The Holy Synod session is held twice a year. It is the highest church decision-maker in the church. It issues laws directives and regulations for the church. Here the disagreement between *Gännätä Iyyäsus* and *Anqäs'ä Mïhïrät* St. Michael Churches was resolved by the efforts of traditional elderly arbitration through the Holy Synod on July 3, 1998.

Secular Courts: Currently, most of the issues related to employment in the church are solved by secular courts. This is because litigants have shown atti-

tudes indicative that they cannot rest their trust in the church's institutions. They claim that the ecclesiastical courts are easily biased and don't solve the disputes that are efficiently brought before them.

Generally, for the Holy Synod to pass a decision on cases investigated, every case has to be studied through the following church judicial process. These are the Disciplinary Council, Ecclesiastical Court, Administrative Council, and finally the Holy Synod. If the party to the dispute is not satisfied with such a decision it can take the case to secular court for settlement (Constitution of EOTC, 1991). The conflict that prevailed within the *St. Lïdäta* Church was much more serious than the one between *Gännätä Iyyäsus* and *Anqäs'ä Mïhïrät St. Michael* Churches. It was for this reason that the conflict came to calm as a result of the order of the regular court rather than that of the church's mechanism of resolutions.

4. Conclusion and recommendations

4.1 Conclusion

It has been the dogma of the Ethiopian Orthodox *Tewahedo* Church that peace and stability, love and harmony benevolence and forgiveness are the hallmark of the spiritual work of the church for several centuries. The doctrine of the church confirms to the teachings of Jesus Christ, the original builder of the church. Nevertheless, a lot of conflicts occurred in the church.

The conflicts in the church were that of resource, administrative, and doctrine in nature with the conflict actors being the members of the parish administration council, the clergy, and the laities. Inter-church and intra- church conflicts had been lingering in the Ethiopian Orthodox *Tewahedo* Church for some time to an extent to be called the inherent nature of the church conflict. However, conflict is also perceived as an instrument of change and development.

The study of the period under investigation has witnessed that conflicts had affected societies, organizations groups, and individuals in a variety of profound and reaching ways.The conflicts had deterred growth, restricted forward movement to stability, and generally affected the spiritual life of the society and the church self-performed dismally.

On the other hand, some parish churches used conflict to improve the service of the church. The church has the ability and access to us the teaching of the Bible as an instrument mint of handling church conflict.

The Holy Bible warns that servants of the church may have difficulties with conflict and advises the observation of Biblical steps in resolving conflict, which include among others.

➢ Developing the proper heart attitude – meek (Galatians 6:1), humble (James 4;10) forgiving (Ephesians 4:31-32) patience (James 1:19-20)

➢ Evaluation of one's part in the conflict (Mathew 7: 15) removing the log from one's eye first necessarily before helping others.

➢ Going to individuals in trouble, not others to voice one's own concern (Matthew 18: 15). This is best done in love (Ephesians 4; 15).

It is found out during the study that the spiritual leaders in the church strongly maintain that the restoration and maintenance of peace were indispensable in the resolution of conflicts in the churches. They further went out to emphasize peace as God's legacy for sin has been defeated and joy has flooded the lives of Christians. Respondents in the in-depth interview had repeatedly maintained that peace is the soundness of being in every way peace between persons meant a relationship of trust, openness and caring that enabled wholeness, in a group and a society, peace meant one that involved social justice so that no sectional interest was oppressed or exploited another. The high priest that has been involved in the depth-interview stated that the peace that is em-

braced in the teachings of the Bible encompasses all reality, structural as well as personal and is said to speak of the state of affairs where everything works and works together as God originally designed it. They affirmed that peace was not a human achievement but a gift of God.

In summing up their views concerning peace they hold on to their opinions that the Biblical teaching of peace was the best way to conflict resolutions.

4.2 Recommendation

After dwelling over the cases thoroughly the following is recommended

➢ It is advisable that the central administration of the church addresses the roots of conflict through rules and directives that similar conflicts do not arise in the future.

➢ The church needs to put a considerable effort into the training of church leaders and those adherents who closely work with the church in leadership for conflict resolution and bringing about harmony between the church, the clergy, and the laities.

➢ The finding of the research has indicated that there is a wide-ranging prevalence of inter-personal conflicts in the churches it is, therefore, for the church to be aware of this fact and work hard to devise mechanisms to effectively deal with and resolve interpersonal conflicts.

➢ One of the main causes of conflict in the church has been indicated to be resource conflict. Resources are not always found in abundance. Scarcity demands allocation. Therefore, the church sees to it that resources be allocated wisely through regular directives and supervision.

➢ There are indications that one aspect of conflict resolution in the church could be affected by the use of the churches' judicial organ. It's high time

that the church re-activated this organ for an effective judicial process.

➢ The EOTC as a religious institution had several administrative instruments such as the *Fetha nägäst*, *Qalä Awadi* and Church law. It would be in the interest of the church if it reviewed and reactivated them for the servant of the church can easily adhere to the provision of these instruments. Standards that have fallen in disuse have to be re-established and put to operation.

➢ It is the nature of humans to be resistant to change. Some internal changes happen to trigger conflicts. Where any changes within EOTC is planned to be effected, the necessary preparations have to made, including, but not limited to communicating the changes to those concerned and how one is required to adjust to that situation.

➢ The church claims to have been acting with spirituality to resolve conflicts that surface in the church. As God created man with free will, most parables in the Bible indicate and present God as a father image, a master, a shepherded and therefore, the clergy in their capacity of spiritual leadership must act according to the perceived standards and live to that name. The clergy have to help others live and learn to live and love in conformity with the laws and ordinances of Christianity.

➢ There is a tendency of the parish churches to stand individually and manage their affairs separately. The church should devise ways and means of handling such questions of organizational structure through directives and regulations that can deal with different situations of the parish churches.

➢ The EOTC has rules and regulations that work under intermittent conditions. The EOTC should issue practicable law and secure respect and acceptance and serve with honor and dignity.

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