

**ASSEMBLIES OF GOD THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY**  
***PTH 626 Conflict Resolution in the Church***  
**September 15-16, 2006**  
Springfield, Missouri

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**Fall 2006**

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

Students who take this course will gain a working understanding of the biblical and practical nature of conflict resolution. An examination of the conflict cycle, styles of conflict management, and intervention strategies for resolving conflict will provide you with the foundations for handling conflict in a healthy manner. Special focus will be given to the leader's pivotal role in resolving church conflict.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES**

**Cognitive Outcomes**

*Upon completion of this course you should be able to...*

30936. Demonstrate a clear understanding of the biblical aspects of conflict resolution
2. Identify the phases of the conflict cycle
3. Identify various styles of conflict management, including your own preferred style

**Character/Attitude Outcomes**

*Upon completion of this course you should...*

1. Experience decreased fear/stress associated with conflict situations
2. Gain confidence and skills in handling conflict effectively

**Skill Outcomes**

*Through this study, you should be better equipped to...*

1. Integrate healthy conflict resolution skills in your personal and leadership environments
2. Evaluate the effectiveness of various conflict management styles for given conflict settings.
3. Design relevant tools/resources to assist you in the process of teach others within their influence how to manage conflict

**COURSE METHODOLOGY**

The purpose of this course is not to merely present a set of facts, but to equip you with the tools necessary to think critically and learn new skills for personally addressing conflict. To this end, class sessions will combine lecture, discussion, interviews, interactive exercises, case studies, and other instructional techniques. Regular and vigorous participation is expected.

## **COURSE TEXTS**

### ***Required Texts***

Van Yperen, Jim. *Making Peace: A Guide to Overcoming Church Conflict*. Chicago: Moody, 2002. [264 pp.]

Shawchuck, Norman. *How You Can Help Me Manage Conflict More Effectively*. Leith, ND: Spiritual Growth Resources, 1983. [7 page Self-Assessment tool]

### ***Recommended Reading***

Sande, Ken. *The Peace Maker: A Biblical Guide to Resolving Personal Conflict*. 3d ed., Grand Rapids: Baker, 2004. [297 pp.]

Shawchuck, Norman. *How to Manage Conflict in the Church: Understanding & Managing Conflict*. Vol. 1. Leith, ND: Spiritual Growth Resources, 1983. [51 pp.]

## **COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

### **1. Read the textbook in its entirety.**

Read the required text and prepare a two page typewritten "Reading Reflection." In this report you are to state whether or not you have completed the reading in its entirety, then, discuss three concepts from the book that were meaningful to you, and why. (This is not a review or summary outline of the book's main points, but a personal reflection on specific insights that were significant/helpful for you personally, and why.) Note: It is a violation of academic policy to claim credit for books read previously for credit. If student has already read the textbook in another class, please substitute another book(s) from the recommended reading or bibliography (250 page minimum). *Due December 1, 2006.*

### **2. Attend all class sessions**

Regular and vigorous student participation is a key component to a successful academic experience. The class atmosphere is to be personal and collegial. When appropriate, questions, comments, and discussion are both welcome and expected, with the understanding that they are part of the learning process in a group setting. In respect to others, it is assumed that cell phones, pagers, etc. will remain off in the classroom.

### **3. Complete a post-session project**

Each student will design a final project that assists them in integrating materials from the course into their personal context. Each project should be the equivalent of at least 8 pages, and should demonstrate thoughtful and thorough work. The project should be well-written, and free from grammatical error. Style should follow Turabian format. *Due December 1, 2006.*

Project options include:

- *Multimedia project*: Using the course as a starting point, develop a brief multimedia presentation (PowerPoint/Video/Music/Web-based, etc.) designed to effectively and relevantly communicate an aspect of conflict resolution to a specified target audience. A written manuscript should accompany the electronic presentation.
- *Case study*: Analyze a current or past conflict setting in light of course content. Show how different points of the conflict cycle developed, reactions to the conflict, and steps for resolution.
- *Discuss a Postmodern challenge impacting conflict resolution*. Identify a characteristic(s) of Postmodernity that impacts conflict resolution in the church (i.e. tolerance, pluralism, relativism, centrality of the individual, etc.), and provide suggestions for how leaders can effectively address these issues when address conflict with Postmoderns.
- *Critique a conflict situation in a major feature film*. Briefly provide the context of the conflict, then identify the phases of the conflict cycle and the conflict management styles used; finally, evaluate the resulting outcomes. The object of this exercise is to demonstrate the ability to think critically and reflect on elements within society, with the goal of using media in a meaningful and relevant manner for training others in conflict resolution. (Including a video clip of the conflict scene would be helpful, if possible.)
- *Sermons/Lessons*: using insights gained from the course, write at least two manuscript messages designed to clearly communicate conflict resolution skills to others. These messages should be contextualized and relevant to a specified target audience.
- *Research paper*: prepare a well-researched paper on some aspect of conflict resolution pertinent to the course that would be helpful to you.
- *Self-designed project*: You have the option of proposing a customized final project. The proposal must be submitted in written form, and the professor's permission must be secured in advance.

### **GRADING PROCEDURE**

Pre-Session Reading & Report	30%
Class Participation	20%
Final Project	50%

*Late work will be penalized.*

### **OFFICE HOURS**

My desire is to help every student succeed. Should you need assistance outside of normal class hours, I can be reached on Tuesdays and Thursdays at my office at AGTS. My office number is 268-1043. My home number is 889-5123. Please leave a message if necessary.

### **SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY**

Allen, Gary R. "Conflict Management Training for Local Church Leaders in the Illinois District of the Assemblies of God." Seminar conducted at Glad Tidings Assembly of God, Decatur, Illinois, January 2001.

\_\_\_\_\_. "Restitution: Going beyond forgiveness."  
[http://ag.org/pentecostalevangel/Articles2001/4573\\_altar](http://ag.org/pentecostalevangel/Articles2001/4573_altar).

Augsburger, David. *Caring Enough to Confront*. Ventura, CA: Regal, 1981.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Caring Enough to Forgive: True Forgiveness and Caring Enough to Not Forgive: False Forgiveness*. Ventura, CA: Regal, 1981.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Conflict Mediation across Cultures: Pathways and Patterns*. Louisville, KY: Westminster, 1992.

Barna, George. *A Fish Out of Water*. Nashville: Integrity, 2002.

Borisoff, Deborah, and David A. Victor. *Conflict Management: A Communication Skills Approach*. 2d ed. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1998.

Buzzell, Sid, ed. *The Leadership Bible: Leadership Principles from God's Word*, New International Version. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1998.

Carpenter, S.L. and W. Kennedy. *Managing Public Disputes*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1988.

Cosgrove, Charles H. and Dennis D. Hatfield. *Church Conflict: The Hidden Systems Behind the Fights*. Nashville: Abingdon, 1994.

Dobbins, Richard D. "Managing Conflict Creatively."

Dobson, Edward, Speed B. Leas, and Marshall Shelley. *Mastering Conflict and Controversy*. Portland, OR: Multnomah Press, 1992.

Easum, Bill. *Unfreezing Moves: Following Jesus Into the Mission Field*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2001.

Edmiston, John. "A Christian Approach to Conflict Resolution." 1997.

Fenton, Horace L., Jr. *When Christians Clash: How to Prevent and Resolve the Pain of Conflict*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1987.

- Gangel, Kenneth O. and Samuel L. Canine. *Communication and Conflict Management in Churches and Christian Organizations*. Nashville: Broadman Press, 1992.
- Gillmore, Verla. "Kumbaya Won't Help Us Now." In *Reality Check: A Survival Manual for Christians in the Workplace*. Christian Publications, Inc. Reprint posted at
- Gray, John. *Mars and Venus in the Workplace*. New York: HarperCollins, 2002.
- Griffin, E. A. "Conflict." In *Getting Together: A Guide for Good Groups*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1982.
- Haugk, Kenneth C. *Antagonists in the Church: How to Identify and Deal with Destructive Conflict*. Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1988. [189 pp.]
- Huggett, Joyce. *Creative Conflict: How to Confront and Stay Friends*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1984.
- Hultman, Ken. *Making Change Irresistible*. Palo Alto: Davies-Black, 1998.
- Leas, Speed B. *Moving Your Church Through Conflict*. Washington, D.C.: Alban Institute, 1998.
- Mayer, Bernard. *The Dynamics of Conflict Resolution: A Practitioner's Guide*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2000. [248 pp.]
- Newberger, Kenneth C. "Theological Foundations for Resolving Church Conflict." 2002.
- Parrott, Les. *High-Maintenance Relationships: How to Handle Impossible People*. Wheaton: Tyndale House Publishers, 1996.
- Phillips, Bob. *The Delicate Art of Dancing with Porcupines: Learning to Appreciate the Finer Points of Others*. Ventura, CA: Regal, 1989.
- Quinn, Robert. *Deep Change*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1996.
- Rainer, Thom S. *High Expectations: The Remarkable Secret for Keeping People in Your Church*. Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1999.
- Reina, Dennis S., and Michell L. Reina. *Trust and Betrayal in the Workplace: Building Effective Relationships in Your Organization*. San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 1999.
- Rendle, G.R. *Leading Change in the Congregation: Spiritual and Organizational Tools for Leaders*. Bethesda, Md.: Alban Institute, 1998.
- Robbins, Harvey, and Michael Finley. *Why Change Doesn't Work*. Princeton: Peterson's, 1996.

- Shawchuck, Norman. *How to Manage Conflict in the Church: Conflict Interventions & Resources*. Volume 2. Leith, ND: Spiritual Growth Resources, 1983.
- Shawchuck, Norman and Roger Heuser. *Managing the Congregation: Building Effective Systems to Serve People*. Nashville: Abingdon, 1996.
- Shelley, Marshall, ed. *Leading Your Church Through Conflict and Reconciliation*. Minneapolis: Bethany House, 1997. (This is an excellent book. It is out of print, but you can still track it down online.)
- Smedes, Lewis B. *Forgive and Forget: Healing the Hurts We Don't Deserve*. New York: Pocket Books, 1984.
- Susek, Ron. *Firestorm: Preventing and Overcoming Church Conflicts*. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1999.
- Towns, Elmer and Warren Bird. *Into the Future: Turning Today's Church Trends into Tomorrow's Opportunities*. Grand Rapids: Fleming H. Revell, 2000.
- Weaver, Richard G. and John D. Farrell. *Managers as Facilitators: A Practical Guide to Getting Work Done in a Changing Workplace*. San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 1998.
- Whitesel, Bob. *Staying Power: Why People Leave the Church Over Change (And What You Can Do About It!)*. Nashville: Abingdon, 2003.
- Wilkins, James D. "Managing Conflict in the Smaller Church." *Enrichment*, Fall 2001.

### **Web Sites**

[www.empower.org](http://www.empower.org)  
[www.peacemaker.org](http://www.peacemaker.org) or [www.HisPeace.org](http://www.HisPeace.org)  
[www.spiritualgrowthresources.com](http://www.spiritualgrowthresources.com)  
[www.leadershipu.com](http://www.leadershipu.com)  
[www.barna.org](http://www.barna.org)

### **SPECIFIC DATA**

Prepared by Cheryl Taylor, Summer 2006