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ABSTRACT

DEVELOPMENT, IMPLEMENTATION, AND EVALUATION OF A
SEMINAR ON POSITIVE RESOLUTION OF INTERPERSONAL
AND SUBSTANTIVE CONFLICT IN THE HAZELTON,
BRITISH COLUMBIA, SEVENTH-DAY
ADVENTIST CHURCH

by

Bruce B. Boyd

Adviser: Benjamin D. Schoun

ABSTRACT OF GRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH

Project Report

Andrews University

Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

Title: DEVELOPMENT, IMPLEMENTATION, AND EVALUATION OF A SEMINAR ON POSITIVE RESOLUTION OF INTERPERSONAL AND SUBSTANTIVE CONFLICT IN THE HAZELTON, BRITISH COLUMBIA, SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH

Name of researcher: Bruce B. Boyd

Name and degree of faculty adviser: Benjamin D. Schoun, D.Min.

Date completed: June 1995

Problem

Some form of conflict is associated with virtually every human relationship, including relationships involving Christians. Negative conflict situations frequently injure Christians, and sometimes conflicts are severe enough to cripple churches. The purpose of this project was to study whether the teaching of concepts and skills that are, first, related to the management and resolution of interpersonal and substantive conflict, and second, congruent with biblical principles will have a positive impact upon how parishioners understand conflict and, as a result, upon how they behave in conflict situations so that the negative results of conflict are reduced and the positive results increased.

Method

A seminar designed to teach the concepts and skills that are, first, related to the management and resolution of interpersonal and substantive conflict, and second, congruent with biblical principles, was developed for the Hazelton Seventh-day Adventist Church. The seventeen participants in the project were volunteers

from the congregation who met for ninety minutes on five consecutive Thursday nights beginning on February 24 and ending on March 24, 1994. The participants were tested before the seminar and again at its conclusion. The question addressed by the testing instrument was: "Will a seminar on conflict change the participants' attitude and feelings about conflict?" For comparison purposes, the same testing instrument was administered to a control group just before and after the seminar was presented.

Results

A study of the treatment group test results compared with the control group test results indicated a significant modification in the attitude of the treatment group toward conflict. Based upon the test results, it seems clear that as a consequence of attending the seminar on how to deal with conflict, participants believed that they were better equipped to handle conflict situations and that they had a greater tolerance for conflict situations.

Conclusions

A training program utilizing a seminar designed to teach concepts and skills that are, first, related to the positive management and resolution of interpersonal and substantive conflict, and second, congruent with biblical principles, would likely be effectual in helping participating church members learn to relate during conflict situations with others in more caring, tolerant, and effective ways.

Andrews University
Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

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SEMINAR ON POSITIVE RESOLUTION OF INTERPERSONAL
AND SUBSTANTIVE CONFLICT IN THE HAZELTON,
BRITISH COLUMBIA, SEVENTH-DAY
ADVENTIST CHURCH

A Project Report
Presented in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Ministry

by
Bruce B. Boyd

June 1995

Intergenerational Support and Well-Being of Older Adults

Barbara A. Hanrahan, PhD, and Robert A. Kane, PhD

Department of Health, Behavior, and Society, Johns Hopkins University

Abstract: This study examined the relationship between intergenerational support and well-being of older adults.

Methods: Data were drawn from the Baltimore Longitudinal Study, a nationally representative, longitudinal study of older adults.

Results: Findings indicate that intergenerational support is associated with better well-being.

Conclusions: The findings suggest that intergenerational support is an important factor in the well-being of older adults.

Keywords: intergenerational support, well-being, older adults

Older adults are a growing segment of the population, and their well-being is a major public health concern.

One of the most important factors in the well-being of older adults is their social support.

Intergenerational support, or support from family members of different generations, is a key component of social support.

This study examined the relationship between intergenerational support and well-being of older adults.

The study used data from the Baltimore Longitudinal Study, a nationally representative, longitudinal study of older adults.

The findings indicate that intergenerational support is associated with better well-being.

The findings suggest that intergenerational support is an important factor in the well-being of older adults.

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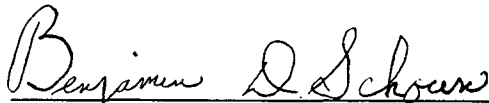
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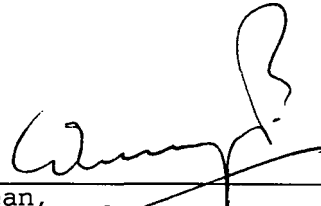
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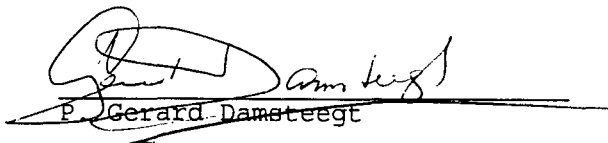
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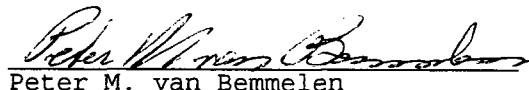
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May 10, 1995

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My parents, Elwood and Doris Boyd, have provided consistent encouragement throughout my lifelong educational experience. Their quiet, yet high regard for Christian education is a foundational reason for the existence of this study.

My most grateful acknowledgment goes to the Source of all true learning. It is to the glory of His cause that I dedicate myself and this project.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Justification for the Project

It seems that some form of conflict is associated with virtually every human relationship. Christians are not immune. Negative conflict situations frequently injure Christians and sometimes conflicts are severe enough to cripple churches.

However, conflicts need not lead to negative results. Conflicts can be viewed as occasions for change. Whether a particular conflict results in change that is negative or positive depends to a significant degree upon how the involved people relate to the situation and to each other.

It is God's will that His people learn to deal with conflict situations in a constructive and righteous manner. Written messages given through God's prophets contain a great deal of significant information about how people can best relate to each other during confrontations. Other sources offer an extensive range of material on the same topic. While not all of this material is compatible with the inspired writings, much it supports what inspired writings reveal and gives added practical detail.

Information and illustrations from divinely inspired sources, along with compatible material from other sources, could be used to fashion a genuinely spiritual seminar aimed at helping Christians acquire the knowledge and skills needed to deal positively with conflicts. This seminar would benefit Christians in general and members of the Hazelton Seventh-day Adventist Church in particular.

Foundational Considerations

This project is founded upon three basic assumptions. The first is that it is possible to educate individuals to deal more positively with conflict.¹ The second is that Christians are in need of this education.² A third assumption is that, for maximum success, an educational seminar on the topic of conflict and how to deal with it needs to be based firmly upon biblical/theological principles.

While this project and the seminar that is prepared includes biblical principles, the choice for the research focuses on the writings of Ellen White.³ From these writings come basic themes and concepts relating to conflict. It needs to be understood that it is inappropriate for her counsels to be utilized as a substitute for biblical authority. However, Ellen White is an important source in the Seventh-day Adventist Church for theological reflection on the Bible.

¹Virtually all authorities cited in this project agree that it is beneficial to provide training in conflict management.

²Being a Christian does not make a person competent in the area of conflict resolution. K. Huttenlocker underscores this fact as he remembers his own experience: "We were enlightened by no other book except the Bible, and tragically our interpretation of it made us no more than witch doctors in the science of conflict resolution." Keith Huttenlocker, Conflict and Caring (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan Publishing House, 1988), 14.

³Ellen White, who died in 1915, was a founder of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Though the church holds the Bible to be its only source of doctrine, the very large body of writings by Ellen White has had a large influence on its thought and practice.

Seventh-day Adventists believe that the Holy Spirit bestowed upon Ellen White the spiritual gift of prophecy in order to draw attention to the Bible and to help prepare people for Jesus' second coming to this earth.

According to Roger W. Coon in Sourcebook of Documents and Study Outlines of Selected Issues in Prophetic Guidance (Silver Spring, Md.: Ellen G. White Estate, 1992), A-219, Ellen White wrote 24 books and over 5,000 periodical articles during her life. Today, including compilations from her approximately 100,000 pages of handwritten manuscript, more than 100 titles are available in English. Ellen White wrote on a wide range of topics including theology, relationships, education, nutrition, and health.

The goal of this project was to produce, present, test, and report on an effective, Bible-based seminar that teaches conflict management and resolution skills. While this seminar may be helpful to others, it was designed specifically for people who attend the Hazelton Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Definition of Conflict

What is conflict? Numerous definitions of conflict have been recorded in dictionaries, in psychological and counselling literature, and elsewhere. Some experts define conflict in terms of behavior.¹ Others define conflict in terms of behavior and perception.² Finally, there are those who define conflict solely in terms of perception.³

For purposes of this project, conflict is the state of relationship between two or more individuals who perceive an idea,

¹In Ben Patterson, "A Small Pump at the Edge of the Swamp?" Leadership 1 (Spring 1980): 42, quoted in Jan Gary Johnson, "A Design for Learning and Developing Skills for Handling Interpersonal and Substantive Conflict in the Ardmore, Oklahoma, Seventh-day Adventist Church" (D.Min. project report, Andrews University, 1986), 143, conflict is defined as a "protracted struggle, clash, fight, opposition between personalities, ideas, and interests." In G. Douglas Lewis, Resolving Church Conflicts (San Francisco: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1981), 5, conflict is defined as "two or more objects trying to occupy the same space at the same time."

²In Winston A. Richards, "A Study of Creative Conflict Management and Christian Reconciliation with a Proposed Seminar for Seventh-day Adventist Ministers in the Caribbean and West Indies Unions" (D.Min. project report, Andrews University, 1987), 12, conflict is defined as "any perceptual and/or behavioral situation within a person, or between people, or groups which identifies incompatible aims, values, methods, or goals and may or may not be antagonistic in nature."

³In Ross Stagner, ed., The Dimensions of Human Conflict (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1967), 136, quoted in Larry L. McSwain and William C. Treadwell, Jr., Conflict Ministry in the Church (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1981), 25, conflict is defined as "a situation in which two or more human beings desire goals which they perceive as being attainable by one or the other but not by both."

situation, and/or event differently.¹ This difference in perceptions may not lead to any apparent interaction, or it may lead to negative and/or positive interaction. In other words, conflict begins in the mind and then may or may not result in related behavior.²

Types of Conflict Addressed

There are three basic categories of conflict: intrapersonal, interpersonal, and substantive.³ This project report directly addresses the two latter types of conflict.

1. Intrapersonal conflict refers to the contention people have within themselves. It is the result of clashing desires, values, and beliefs, etc., within a person's own mind.

The resolution of intrapersonal conflict is not directly addressed by this project report. People suffering from serious intrapersonal conflict need the assistance of a skilled counselor.⁴

2. Interpersonal conflict is contention between two or more individuals that arises from the negative feelings they have for each

¹Since this project addresses conflict between people, the definition used here excludes the inner controversy known as intrapersonal conflict that occurs solely within a person's mind.

²Many other definitions that explain conflict in terms of perception focus mainly upon goals that are perceived to be mutually exclusive by the individuals who hold them. The definition upon which this project report is based is somewhat more general, but would include the perception of seemingly incompatible goals.

This conflict definition is influenced by and is very similar to that utilized by Jan Gary Johnson in his D.Min. project report. On p. 6 Johnson states his definition: "For the purpose of this project, the word 'conflict' is viewed as a neutral term that expresses the presence of perceptual differences between people. These differences may or may not be acted upon or they may or may not be acted upon in a negative or disruptive fashion. According to this definition, conflict is first perceived in the mind before it is exhibited in behaviour."

³Donald G. Reynolds, Problem Solving and Conflict Resolution (Berrien Springs, Mich.: Andrews University Center of Continuing Education for Ministry, 1988), 9-11.

⁴Ibid.

other.¹ When interpersonal conflict flares up, substantive issues are often blamed as the cause. However, the real roots of interpersonal conflict are emotional, not substantive.² Examples of negative emotions underlying interpersonal conflict are feelings of annoyance, anger, or fear, which are prompted by irritating or threatening differences in the antagonists' personalities or temperaments.³

The resolution of interpersonal conflict is addressed directly by this project report.

3. Substantive conflict centers on real issues and arises from contention between people over matters that are of particular significance to them. These might be facts, methods, goals, or values.⁴ Strands of interpersonal conflict may also be involved, but the real roots of substantive conflict are not emotional in nature.

The resolution of substantive conflict is directly addressed by this project report.

Levels of Conflict Addressed

The approaches and skills communicated in this document are not designed for the higher degrees of conflict. Speed B. Leas's

¹Some people are prone to dislike others who are unlike them. They view various divergences in others as repulsive, improper, or threatening. On the other hand, people sometimes dislike others who are very much like themselves. Perhaps they see a reflection of traits they dislike in their own lives. Huttenlocker, 83-84.

²It must be recognized that some conflict-management authorities use the term "interpersonal conflict" to refer to the site of the conflict instead of the nature of the conflict. This usage of "interpersonal conflict" means that the site of conflict is between individuals, not within an individual, not between an individual and a group of individuals, and not between groups of individuals. Thus, in McSwain and Treadwell, 83-90, "interpersonal conflict" includes all contentions between individuals, including those stemming from negative emotions and those arising from substantive differences.

³Huttenlocker, 83-84; Reynolds, 10.

⁴Reynolds, 10-11.

definition of the five levels of conflict makes it possible to pinpoint which classes of conflict this report addresses. To differentiate each level of conflict, Leas uses two key factors: the participants' objectives and their use of language.¹

Level I: Problems to Solve

The objective of people at Level I of conflict is to define and fix the problem in a rational way. There may be short-lived anger, some discomfort, or even denial of negative feelings, but participants are problem-centered, not person-centered at this level.

The language is most often clear, specific, and focused on the present. It is not loaded with accusation or hidden negative meanings.

Level II: Disagreement

The objective of people at Level II of conflict moves away from problem-solving toward self-protection. In other words, it becomes more important for participants to keep from getting hurt. Consequently a higher level of strategy and cunning is present.

The language moves from focusing on particulars, and deals more in cautious generalizations. Barbed humor, putting others down along with their beliefs or positions, is common at this level of conflict.

Level III: Contest

The objective of people at Level III of conflict shifts primarily to winning. Since the objective is to change the opponent or the situation, the level of conflict moves considerably higher.

The language is no longer straightforward and the resulting distortion becomes a significant problem. Arguments become more

¹Speed B. Leas, "Conflict in the Parish: How Bad Is It?" Word & World 4, no. 2 (1984): 185-190.

emotional and less rational, while personal attacks grow common.

Level IV: Fight, Flight

The objective moves at Level IV from simply triumphing over to hurting and/or expelling the opponent. Within churches or other organized groups, factions solidify, strong leaders emerge, and the health of the faction becomes more important to combatants than the well-being of the whole organization.

The language usually focuses on basic principles such as freedom, truth, and justice instead of on specific issues. An attempt is made to appeal to these principles in order to sanctify the combatants and so enable them to ignore the fundamental Christian ethics governing relationships. Combatants separate from each other and will only speak together in hostility. They exhibit a chilling self-righteousness along with an unforgiving attitude. Being right and punishment of the other faction become significant themes.

Level V: Intractable

At Level V, the objective is to destroy the opponent. At this level, the conflict is out of control.

Higher Levels Not Addressed

The principles and strategies discussed in this project report are primarily applicable to the first two levels, but may also apply to moderate manifestations of Level III. When conflicts at levels higher than this are encountered, many of the principles and methods as presented in this document are at best of limited value. Beginning at Level III, the services of a skilled outside consultant can prove to be of great benefit.¹

At the highest levels of conflict, it is often true that

¹Ibid.

chronically antagonistic individuals are involved. These people are usually experiencing a significant level of intrapersonal conflict in their lives. They seem driven to initiate destructive conflicts, and in a perverse way, they may enjoy controversy.

Since "antagonists," as clinical psychologist Kenneth Haugk calls them, are not really interested in healthy resolution; they must be dealt with on entirely different terms.¹ In the words of psychiatrist Scott Peck, they cannot "be rapidly influenced by any means other than raw power. They do not respond, at least in the short run, to either gentle kindness or any form of spiritual persuasion with which I am familiar."²

Direction and Methodology

Chapter 2

Chapter 2 lays the theological base for this report. While theological chapters in Doctor of Ministry project reports normally use the Bible as the main source, the major source for this chapter is the body of published writings by Ellen G. White.³

This direction was chosen partly because at least one Doctor of Ministry project report has already provided a Bible-based theological chapter on conflict and its resolution.⁴ A second reason is that the writings of Ellen White are of special interest to me, as a pastor, and to my denomination, the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

¹Kenneth C. Haugk, Antagonists in the Church (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1988), 31-32. This excellent book was written exclusively to deal with antagonists who so often create high-level conflict.

²M. Scott Peck, People of the Lie: The Hope for Healing Human Evil (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1983), 63, quoted in Haugk, 36.

³It should be noted that most if not all that Ellen G. White wrote was based on her understanding of Bible teaching.

⁴See Johnson's, "A Design for Learning and Developing Skills."

A third reason is that Jan Johnson, whose Doctor of Ministry project also centers on a conflict-resolution seminar, recommended that Ellen White material relating to conflict be utilized as an authoritative source in future conflict-management seminars which are designed for Seventh-day Adventists.¹

While extensive, the study in chapter 2 is not based upon an exhaustive research of all that Ellen White says relating to conflict and its resolution.² Its purpose is to discover, interpret, and communicate basic themes and principles in Ellen White's writings that relate to the positive resolution of conflict.

Chapter 3

In chapter 3, a sampling of current literature on conflict resolution is taken in order to discover helpful information and approaches being offered by authorities in the field. Since this project is Christian in orientation, most of the works considered are Christian in perspective.

Chapter 3 does not contain a comprehensive survey of the literature available on conflict--Christian or otherwise. Useful concepts, congruent with the theological outlines of chapter 2 and gleaned from a reasonably balanced sampling of the literature, are organized and discussed in it. Many of these concepts are incorporated into the seminar described in chapter 4.

Chapter 4

Chapter 4 explains the seminar and its design. This includes

¹Johnson, 139.

²The Published Ellen G. White Writings on Compact Disc, ver. 1.11, ed. Tim Poirier (Silver Spring, Md.: Ellen G. White Estate, 1991) for IBM computer systems with a CD-ROM disc drive proved to be an especially helpful tool for this study. Most of the material selected for chapter 2 was located through the use of the computer search formula "(controversy or differences or discord or dissension or diversity or envy or jealousy or strife or variance) and unity."

descriptions of the Hazelton Seventh-day Adventist Church and its setting, a description of the seminar participants, a description of the organization of the seminar, and a description of the events which led up to the presentation of the seminar.

Chapter 5

Chapter 5 contains an evaluation of the seminar. This evaluation includes analyses of the Conflict Attitude Test and the evaluation sheets filled in by the participants. It also includes my observations, conclusions, and recommendations.

CHAPTER TWO

CONFLICT AND HOW TO RELATE TO IT ACCORDING TO ELLEN G. WHITE

Direction of Chapter 2

In her writings Ellen White uses the word "conflict" differently than it is defined and used in this project. Generally speaking, she associates "conflict" with the results of sin. While Ellen White's definition of the word "conflict" is different, the basic themes and concepts in her writings on how to relate to conflict situations inform those presented in this project.

The direction of this chapter is to discover Ellen G. White's answers to the following questions: Why is it that people perceive ideas, situations, and/or events differently and so become engaged in conflict? When people become engaged in conflict, why are the results of that conflict so commonly negative and destructive? What damage does conflict cause to the church? What benefits does conflict bring to the church? How may Christians respond to conflict in ways that bless them, strengthen the church, and glorify God?¹

God's Design

Why is it that people perceive ideas, situations, and/or events differently and so become engaged in conflict? God created humanity so that no two people have exactly the same thought processes or abilities. In other words, people were created and now

¹Since Ellen G. White is quoted so extensively in this chapter, all references to her works omit the author's name. Other author's works will be clearly designated.

are born with the God-ordained tendency to sense and interpret life differently and to make decisions differently. It seems that God's original creative design included the positive benefits of diversity.¹

Ellen White writes that God's "creative power does not give to all minds the same likeness."² She notes that just as God created the flowers to be wonderfully diverse, so He designed that there be interesting and stimulating variety in the way people perceive and think.³ Ellen White emphasizes that diversity is an important part of God's design, not just in human thought processes, but in a multitude of other areas as well. She points out that widespread diversity can be observed on our planet and throughout the universe.⁴

How does the understanding that God especially designed people to perceive ideas, situations, and events differently compare with the fact that He invites His people to complete oneness and unity?⁵ Ellen White sees no contradiction here. Though she calls for "perfect unity" among God's people,⁶ she states that this unity does not imply a kind of uniformity where everyone senses and thinks in the same

¹It must be noted here that when conflict yields negative and destructive results, sin is the causative factor. This point is discussed in detail below.

²Mind, Character, and Personality (Nashville, Tenn.: Southern Publishing Association, 1977), 2:426.

³"God's Design for His People," Advent Review and Sabbath Herald, July 4, 1899, 241.

⁴Selections from the Testimonies (Oakland, Calif.: n.p., 1898), 20-21; "Ellen G. White Comments." The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1970), 5:1143.

⁵Jesus' prayer in John 17 is a good example of God's desire that his people come together in unity. Ellen White repeatedly refers to this prayer in her call for unity in the church.

⁶Selected Messages, 3 vols. (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1958, 1980), 3:352.

way.⁷ On the contrary, each believer is to remain a distinctly unique individual.² The following is an example of Ellen White's balanced position:

Christ prayed that His disciples might be one. . . . That oneness does not consist in everyone having the same disposition, the very same temperament, that makes all run in the same channel. . . . In a church there are different gifts and varied experiences. In temporal matters there is a great variety of ways of management, and yet none of these variations in manner of labor, in exercise of gifts, need to create dissension and discord and disunion.³

Ellen White often used the key phrase "unity in diversity" to describe this concept.⁴ She powerfully taught that God designed and intends that the vast diversity He created among human beings be guided and controlled by their trusting unity with Him and by their caring unity with each other.⁵ God's will is that diversity enhance the lives of all people. His design is that diversity enrich the witness of Christians who are bound together in their love for Him and each other.⁶

¹Selected Messages, 1:21; "Ellen G. White Comments," 5:1143; Manuscript Releases (Silver Spring, Md.: Ellen G. White Estate, 1981, 1987, 1990), 6:104.

²Manuscript Releases, 6:104; 18:4.

³Ibid., 15:149.

⁴Our High Calling (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1961), 169; "Ellen G. White Comments," 5:1148; In Heavenly Places (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1967), 287.

It should be noted that many of the references given in this section on "God's Design" contain the phrase "unity in diversity."

⁵"Dear Brethren," The General Conference Bulletin, February 27, 1895, 373; "Christ: Man's Example," Advent Review and Sabbath Herald, July 5, 1887, 417; "Home Missions," Advent Review and Sabbath Herald, January 6, 1891, 2; "Ellen G. White Comments," 5:1148; 6:1083, 1090.

⁶"That They May Be One," The Signs of the Times, April 13, 1891, 117.

Satan's Ingredient

Another factor--selfishness--when recognized, explains why the results of conflict are so commonly negative and harmful. Since selfishness was first introduced into God's perfect creation by Satan, the results of most conflicts have been destructive. Commonly seen in pride, self-exaltation, envy, and a host of other sinful symptoms, selfishness powerfully turns human conflict situations toward negative results.¹

When selfishness is fastened to the amazing diversity in perception, thought, and ability which God created to enrich humanity, the richness God intended is depleted to emotional and spiritual poverty. This happens because selfishness destroys people's trusting unity with God and their caring unity with each other. Diversity becomes extremely divisive, and destructive conflict results.

In the first and last volumes of the "Conflict of the Ages" Series,² and elsewhere in her writings, Ellen White describes in some detail the intrusion of sin and selfishness into God's creation. She

¹Ellen White writes that "all sin is selfishness" in Letter 165, 1901, found in The Ellen G. White 1888 Materials (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1987), 1987. In a similar statement in Testimonies to the Church (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1948), 4:384, she explains that in the books of heaven every other sin comes under the general heading of "selfishness."

It needs to be noted, however, that Ellen White also uses "selfishness" in a more narrow sense, listing it as one of many sins such as in Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1962), 146, and in Testimonies for the Church, 3:417.

In this chapter when the word "selfishness" is used, the broad meaning encompassing all sin is to be understood.

²"The Conflict of the Ages Series" is a set of 5 books by Ellen White that tells the history and future of the struggle between Christ and Satan. This struggle was caused by Satan's proud rebellion and his introduction of sinful selfishness into God's perfect creation. The books of "The Conflict of the Ages Series" in order are: Patriarchs and Prophets, Prophets and Kings, The Desire of Ages, The Acts of the Apostles, and The Great Controversy.

states that sin first began when Lucifer, the highest created being in heaven, gradually "came to indulge a desire for self-exaltation."¹ As it grew, this earliest selfishness was seen in pride and then covetousness and jealousy.²

Lucifer became the rebel, Satan, and subtly spread his selfishness and rebellion to many other angels. The unity and harmony of heaven were shattered. Eventually, amid great discord and controversy, Satan and his numerous angelic converts were expelled from heaven, and unity there was once again restored.³

But selfishness and its results did not come to an end with Satan's exit from heaven. Satan traveled elsewhere in the universe and eventually tempted Adam and Eve, newly created stewards of this earth, to become involved in his rebellious selfishness. Unfortunately they chose to respond to Satan and distrust God.⁴ As a result, even though Adam and Eve soon repented, their natures became selfishly "depraved" and Satan gained great power and influence over them and over their descendants to this day.⁵

Since that time, because of the human tendency toward selfishness and sin, the results of most conflicts on earth have been negative and destructive. However it should be noted again, based on God's creation of diversity before selfishness and sin, that the results of conflict need not be destructive or sinful. More is said about this possibility below.

¹Patriarchs and Prophets (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1958), 35; The Great Controversy (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1950), 494.

²Patriarchs and Prophets, 33-43; The Great Controversy, 492-504.

³Ibid.

⁴Patriarchs and Prophets, 52-62.

⁵Ibid., 61.

Damage from Conflict

What damage do conflict situations bring to people and especially to God's church? No attempt is made here to detail all the destructive results of negative conflict. Many, if not most, are well known. This section focuses mainly on how negative conflict situations impact Christians and God's church.

Destruction of Trust

Conflict situations that are rooted in selfishness destroy trust between people and ruin Christian fellowship. Ellen White points out that "a spirit of wanting to be first" translates into feelings of envy and then suspicion. These and related negative feelings naturally lead to unjust criticism that too easily slides into malicious lying.¹ When Satan is successful in leading people to harbor jealous thoughts, he uses this process to damage or even to destroy the closest of relationships, including those between Christians.²

Criticism

Ellen White has much to say about destructive criticism. According to her, numerous criticisms have no real basis but are merely products of selfish, suspicious minds.³ Words are twisted, actions are reinterpreted, "trifling" incidents "are repeated and exaggerated until a man is made an offender for a word."⁴

Some people become chronic faultfinders who discover a

¹"Our Duties and Obligations," Advent Review and Sabbath Herald, December 18, 1888, 794.

²"Ellen G. White Comments," The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1970), 3:1162.

³"Our Duties and Obligations," 794.

⁴Testimonies to Ministers, 504.

twisted kind of pleasure in producing conflicts with their cutting criticisms. Ellen White refers to this ruinous habit as a "foolish, selfish perversity," in which such people find a warped "satisfaction, a kind of rest, without pardon."¹

Truly, some criticism is based in fact. But when this is the case, God calls Christian brothers and sisters to speak and act in ways that bring healing instead of needless hurt to the erring.² This is discussed in more detail later in this chapter.

Control

Another area related to harmful criticism is the tendency to seek control over others. When people perceive things differently and lack trust for each other, many who criticize also attempt to manipulate and control.³ As has been noted above, God's way is "unity in diversity." The creation of an appearance of unity through controlled uniformity is a destructive product of negative conflict.⁴ When Christian leaders use this strategy, the result is that the growth of God's cause is hindered.⁵

Destruction of Witness

Negative conflict situations among Christians bring great dishonor to God and His cause.⁶ Ellen White points out that one of

¹"Ministry, No. 2," The Signs of the Times, May 23, 1900, 322.

²Testimonies to Ministers, 504; "Disunion the Result of Unbelief," The Signs of the Times, January 10, 1895, 19.

³Testimonies for the Church, 9:259.

⁴Manuscript Releases, 11:178; 1888 Materials, 1156.

⁵Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1913), 531; Testimonies to the Church, 9:259.

⁶"Our Duties and Obligations," 794; Manuscript Releases, 11:306.

Satan's major objective is to introduce discord and dissension among Christians,¹ and she agonizes that he is so disruptively successful.²

In large part, this is Satan's aim because effective evangelism is almost impossible in churches where major negative conflict exists. Peace and caring unity among church members is vitally important for a positive witness.³

Underscoring the seriousness of negative conflict and disunity within the church, Ellen White often refers to unity as being the "credentials" which verify that the church's message is valid and truly from God.⁴ God's evangelistic message, which Christians teach is rooted in the highest form of unifying love, has little positive influence where unbelievers observe professing Christians involved in destructive conflict and selfish disunity. Harmony among Christians, who differ a great deal in many areas (unity in diversity), is "the convincing argument" for God's truth and "the evidence that the world cannot withstand and controvert."⁵ Without it, the Christian witness is greatly weakened.

Benefits from Conflict

What benefits do conflict situations bring to people and especially to God's church? It has already been established that God created the human mind so that people are born with the natural tendency to perceive ideas, situations, and/or events differently.

¹Testimonies for the Church, 5:619; Selected Messages, 2:159.

²"Disunion the Result of Unbelief," 19; "Our Duties and Obligations," 794; Testimonies to Ministers, 504.

³Manuscript Releases, 2:342; Testimonies for the Church, 4:19.

⁴Selected Messages, 1:385; Manuscript Releases, 5:366, 371; "Christ the Center of the Message," Advent Review and Sabbath Herald, March 20, 1894, 177.

⁵The Upward Look (Washington D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1982), 63.

God's plan was and is that humankind benefit from the differences that naturally result from the diversity He created.

But experiencing and profiting from conflict situations is only fully possible where people, who are so widely diverse, choose to live in an environment of caring, God-centered unity. With the prevailing condition of selfish sinfulness that saturates the thinking of most people in this world, this condition of unity is not easy to achieve in any group, family, or church. As a consequence, although there are definite benefits available from conflict situations, they are far from automatic and can only fully be experienced through God's direct blessing.

Ellen White fully supports the concept that there are benefits to be gained from conflict situations.¹

On Relations between Leaders and Workers

Ellen White cautions leaders not to criticize gospel workers who devise new and unique methods of doing things.² She points out that God stimulates the minds of workers in different ways to develop a wide diversity of plans, ideas, and methods.³ When conflict differences occur in this area among dedicated leaders and workers who are united in Christ, these differences can be doorways to added vitality for God's church.

On Spiritual Gifts

Closely related is the fact that God, through the Holy Spirit, purposely supplies different spiritual gifts to individual

¹This is not an exhaustive study of what Ellen White says about the benefits resulting from positive conflict situations.

²Testimonies for the Church, 9:259.

³Counsels to Parents, 531.

Christians.¹ Ellen White often refers to the phenomenon of differently gifted Christians and to God's direction in joining them together for united, effective ministry.² She explains that the "blending of diverse elements" in Christian service is "God's plan."³ It is important that Christians recognize and appreciate the wide assortment of ways in which God has designed them to think and serve. Instead of experiencing negative conflict as a result of these differences, a united church will find greater vigor in the resulting interaction.⁴

On Biblical Differences

Ellen White counsels that it should not be surprising when committed Christians differ somewhat, even in their Bible interpretations. She states, "We cannot then take a position that the unity of the church consists in viewing every text of Scripture in the very same shade of light."⁵

Bible interpretation can be a very sensitive area. Numerous negative conflicts have arisen from differing understandings of biblical material. But because of natural differences in human thinking, conflict over Bible interpretation is to be expected.

¹The spiritual gifts distributed to believers by the Holy Spirit are combinations of skills, mental abilities, and at times miraculous powers that equip them to serve God with success, joy, and fulfillment. Gifted Christians are called to join together, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, in united service with their widely diverse gifts. When this happens, the results of their joint ministry are wonderful and victorious!

²Manuscript Releases, 11:274-280. This section of letter and manuscript releases entitled "Gifts of the Spirit" gives a good example of Ellen White's teaching on spiritual gifts.

³Our High Calling, 169.

⁴Manuscript Releases, 11:275.

⁵Ibid., 15:149, 150.

Happily, that conflict need not be negative. In a continuation of the statement just cited, Ellen White makes it clear that this sort of conflict need not destroy Christian unity and cause dissension.¹

It is important to recognize that when Ellen White calls for tolerance, she is not asking for tolerance of major differences in the understanding of basic and central Bible doctrines. Referring to these doctrines, she firmly states that opposing views cannot be allowed to coexist in the church.²

On Unity and Diversity

Clearly Ellen White teaches the importance of valuing others and their varying perceptions of ideas, situations, and events. In other words, she recognizes the positive results available through conflict.

The problem is that many, in their haste to eliminate the negative results of conflict, also smother positive benefits of conflict. They consider all conflict to be a result of selfishness and sin and so see it as something to be avoided and condemned. At best this attitude is unproductive, and at worst it is devastating. Because it denies God's wonderful gift of diversity, the belief that all conflict is sinful actually blocks the much-needed balance of "unity in diversity" which Ellen White pictures God calling His people to experience.

¹Ibid., 150. An almost identical statement found in Manuscript Releases, 11:266 says: "But if a man makes a mistake in his interpretation of some portion of the Scripture, shall this cause diversity and disunion? God forbid. We cannot then take a position that the unity of the church consists in viewing every text of Scripture in the very same light. The church may pass resolution upon resolution to put down all disagreement of opinions, but we cannot force the mind and will, and thus root out disagreement. These resolutions may conceal the discord, but they cannot quench it and establish perfect agreement. Nothing can perfect unity in the church but the spirit of Christlike forbearance."

²Testimonies for the Church, 3:446, 447.

The Christian Response to Conflict

How may Christians respond to conflict in ways that bless them, strengthen the church, and glorify God?

The Basics

There are basics that, if understood, accepted, and applied, will lead to a balanced Christian response to conflict.

Knowledge and Skills Are Important

Christians must have a balanced knowledge about conflict and understand how to relate to it in a positive way. Ellen White felt strongly that this is an area where serious study is needed. She indicated that Christians need to understand how to relate positively to differences in thought patterns and responses and that they need to discover how to resolve conflict situations.

Ellen White agonized over destructive conflict and the many devastating emotions and actions associated with it that are so disruptively common in God's church.¹ She repeatedly declared that it is important that Christians live in harmony with each other.² As a matter of fact, according to Ellen White, "there is no work more sacred for God's people than to maintain peace among themselves."³

Yes, Ellen White felt strongly that Christians must learn how to relate to conflict in a healthy way. She pleaded that far greater attention be given to the subject⁴ and called for focused effort on

¹"Disunion the Result of Unbelief," 19; "Our Duties and Obligations," 794; Testimonies to Ministers, 504.

²Testimonies for the Church, 7:182; 4:16-20. This second reference was apparently considered to be very significant because it was published three times in the Second Advent Review and Sabbath Herald (February 19, 1880, June 16, 1885, and January 25, 1887) and once in The Youth's Instructor (August 24, 1899).

³"Ministry, No. 2," 322.

⁴Selected Messages, 2:159; Manuscript Releases, 5:366.

the part of Christians to learn to become peacemakers and thus to answer Christ's prayer for peace in His church (John 17).¹ She indicated that the attitudes and skills required to maintain harmony must be "cultivated" and that training is needed in this area.²

Union with Christ Is Most Important

The gaining of knowledge and the learning of skills is not nearly enough. A much more necessary ingredient is required:

The cause of division and discord in families and in the church is separation from Christ. To come near to Christ is to come near to one another. The secret of true unity in the church and in the family is not diplomacy, not management, not a superhuman effort to overcome difficulties--though there will be much of this to do--but union with Christ."³

In another place Ellen White writes, "It is not striking actions that produce unity; it is the mold of the Holy Spirit upon the character."⁴ Though learning conflict-management skills is important, the thing most needed for genuine harmony is unity with Christ! Ellen White repeatedly emphasizes that a loving, trusting relationship with Christ is of prime importance.⁵

The topic of this work is not about how to come into loving unity with Christ. But it cannot be stated too strongly that the experience of finding union and peace with Christ is far more important and basic to the true resolution of conflict than are all

¹"Home Missions," 2; Manuscript Releases, 3:34.

²Manuscript Releases, 2:342; "Ellen G. White Comments," The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1970), 6:1083.

³Mind, Character, and Personality, 2:501.

⁴Our High Calling, 169.

⁵Here are some of a multitude of quotations in this area: Selected Messages, 1:337, 385; Battle Creek Letters (Payson, Ariz.: Leaves-Of-Autumn Books, 1984), 19; "Look Not Every Man on His Own Things," Advent Review and Sabbath Herald, January 2, 1894, 1; 1888 Materials, 1125; Manuscript Releases, 5:371; The Voice in Speech and Song (Boise, Idaho: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1988), 347.

the other ideas and techniques discussed on these pages.

It is true that without Christ a person can utilize conflict-resolution knowledge and skills to move through destructive conflict situations in a more or less positive manner. But where Christ is not central, selfishness continues to dominate the life and resolutions of conflicts are often superficial. Without Christ, even the resolutions that are more substantial are incomplete, because the root cause of destructive conflict--selfishness--remains untouched under the surface.

Conflict Resolution Knowledge and Skills

This section is not a comprehensive study of Ellen White's teachings in this area, but much of her approach is found here.

Cultivating Balanced Unity

Caring unity in diversity is far from natural in this selfish world. This kind of unity comes only as the result of individual and concerted effort. Ellen White repeatedly urges Christians to "press together."¹ "Cultivation" is another favorite expression she applies to this process of developing healthy, united relationships.² Ellen White explains that, since God "requires" a unity that is much more consistent than periodic "spasms of feeling," Christians need to give its development careful and daily attention.³

A positive attitude

Due to the selfish nature that all humans share, maintaining a positive, caring attitude toward others is a habit that must be

¹Selected Messages, 3:352; Manuscript Releases, 2:342; 18:237.

²Manuscript Releases, 2:342; Testimonies for the Church, 8:240; Testimonies to Ministers, 504.

³Manuscript Releases, 2:342.

fostered. Ellen White warns that negative or indifferent feelings toward others must be consistently resisted.¹ "Sweep away the rubbish of evil surmising and discord," she urges and "cultivate brotherly love and tenderness of heart."² She advises Christians to wrench their thoughts away from just seeing the bad in others and to center their thinking instead on others' positive qualities.³

Along with focusing on the positive in others, Ellen White counsels Christians to fill their minds with biblical promises and instructions. Then when Satan tempts them to become embroiled in negative conflict, their God-inspired, positive outlook will enable them to successfully resist Him.⁴

More than theory

The daily cultivation of caring unity is more than just a theoretical study. It includes very practical, down-to-earth applications. For example, Ellen White calls for training in the improvement of habit patterns that govern communication. She indicates that Christians need to learn better how to use the kind of words, vocal tones, and voice inflections that nurture caring unity at all times, including times of tension-filled conflict.⁵

Handling Differences of Opinion

Some say that there ought not to be differences between people, and certainly none in God's church. They support this belief

¹1888 Materials, 198; Historical Sketches of the Foreign Missions of the Seventh-day Adventists (Basel, Switzerland: Imprimerie Polyglotte, 1886), 214.

²Testimonies for the Church, 8:240.

³Historical Sketches, 214.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Manuscript Releases, 2:342.

in part with certain quotations from Ellen White such as "Why are not the words of our Saviour more decidedly practiced? Why is not greater caution exercised that differences should not exist?"¹

But, as has been shown previously, God designed that there be diversity when He created the human mind. With the entry of selfishness into the world, however, this diversity has brought much grief to relationships. Since it is clear that Ellen White recognized that not all differences are negative or divisive, these differences to which she refers are obviously caused or contaminated by sin and selfishness.²

In fact she declares that negative conflict situations are caused not by differences in thinking and opinion, but because these differences are selfishly "dwelt upon"³ and exaggerated.⁴ She maintains that negative conflict situations result when the differences are allowed to become "barriers"⁵ alienating people from each other,⁶ and arousing "the combative spirit" among them.⁷

Ellen White strongly teaches that the solution to negative conflict resulting from differences of opinion is a mutual love for

¹Ibid., 5:366.

²"The Character of John," The Signs of the Times, April 20, 1891, 125; Manuscript Releases, 19:67; Evangelism (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1970), 630.

³God's Amazing Grace (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1973), 210.

⁴Manuscript Releases, 5:366.

⁵This Day with God (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1979), 121.

⁶"The Love of God," The Youth's Instructor, August 2, 1894, 244.

⁷Selected Messages, 3:20.

Jesus, which results in caring lives focused upon Him.¹ She states that when Christians long to save souls instead of being so selfishly interested in saving their own feelings and reputations, they will stop being irritated and offended by the very frequently occurring, but relatively unimportant, differences that come up between them.²

In related counsel, Ellen White reveals that Christians can enjoy a rich spiritual unity of faith even when their opinions, habits, and tastes in various areas are divergent.³ She counsels that in areas where differences in thought or action surface, Christians must stretch themselves to make allowances for and adapt to each other.⁴ They must learn not to allow their feelings to be too easily wounded.⁵ She writes, "If other people do not agree with you, do not make a mountain [out] of a mole-hill and feel that you can no longer be united with them in the Lord Jesus."⁶ In the same statement she says that when Christians disagree, they are still to maintain their loving care for each other.

Learning to Deal with Anger

Participants in conflict situations frequently become angry. Many Christians consider anger to be a negative and even sinful emotion. While Ellen White writes much about the destructive results of anger, she also describes a positive anger.

¹This theme is central in almost every quotation noted in this section.

²Evangelism, 630.

³Testimonies for the Church, 4:65.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Evangelism, 630.

⁶Manuscript Releases, 19:67.

Righteous anger

To Ellen White, righteous anger is a healthy response to certain conflict situations. These include times when dishonor is unfairly heaped upon God or upon God's cause and times when innocent people are being treated harshly.¹ In differentiating positive anger from the negative variety, she explains: "It is a righteous indignation against sin, which springs from zeal for the glory of God, not that anger prompted by self-love or wounded ambition."²

Sinful anger

Along with self-love and wounded ambition, there are other contributors to negative anger. Among them, Ellen White lists "a hasty spirit" and a brooding resentment to perceived mistreatment.³

Results of sinful anger. Sinful anger has a negative impact upon physical health⁴ and, more importantly, a negative impact upon mental and spiritual health. Ellen White states that the results of a habitual and uncontrolled venting of anger are no less damaging to the character than are the results of alcoholism and other serious vices.⁵

People who allow themselves to become selfishly enraged are opening up their minds to a deep level of Satan's control.⁶ In effect, Ellen White declares that this sort of anger can bring people

¹The Desire of Ages, 310.

²Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers, 101.

³Testimonies for the Church, 4:242.

⁴Education (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1903), 197.

⁵Mind, Character, and Personality, 1:192.

⁶Desire of Ages, 310.

to a temporary state of insanity.¹

Unfortunately, selfish rage is contagious. When inflamed people vent their anger without restraint, more of the same variety of anger is spawned.²

The Christian advantage. During conflict, those who are maintaining a living connection with Christ are in a better position than others to manage their anger in a positive manner.³ By God's grace, their selfish desires to control and dominate others are being brought under firm control.⁴

Ellen White reveals that growing Christians will develop an appetite for peace.⁵ Instead of harboring rage, they will choose to banish the bitterness and animosity of anger.⁶ Becoming peacemakers for God, they will seek to acquire skills in controlling their anger along with related emotions and tendencies. In her words:

Those who are partakers of the divine nature will love peace and contentment; they will cultivate the virtues that insure those results. They will seek to allay wrath, to quiet resentment and fault finding, and all the evil passions that foster quarrels and dissensions.⁷

¹Mind Character, and Personality, 2:521; "Ellen G. White Comments," Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary, 3:1161; Testimonies for the Church, 4:242.

²Manuscript Releases, 19:344; Mind, Character, and Personality, 2:522; Our High Calling, 274.

³While growing Christians have an advantage when it comes to relating to anger during conflicts, self-control in this area is by no means automatic. For this reason, Ellen White gives much guidance about how to deal with anger.

⁴Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary, 3:1161; Our High Calling, 274.

⁵The Spirit of Prophecy, 2:209.

⁶The Desire of Ages, 310; Testimonies to the Church, 4:431.

⁷The Spirit of Prophecy, 2:209.

Necessity of controlling anger. Ellen White repeatedly underscores the value of righteous restraint when it comes to the expression of anger during conflict situations. She seems to feel that the importance of managing anger cannot be overstated. To her, self-control is essential whether a person is dealing with animals,¹ children,² or adults.³ "Go not to any man with a heavy tread of anger in your voice," she counsels.⁴

In one application of this advice, she cautions angry parents not to punish their children when their wrath is swelling toward an explosion.⁵ She suggests that a much better approach is to delay the confrontation until tempers have cooled down. Then the situation can be dealt with in a reasonable and constructive manner.⁶

In a related area, Ellen White urges parents to carefully teach their children how to relate to their own anger. Children need to be taught not to allow themselves to indulge in unbridled outbursts of temper.⁷

When erring church members are being confronted or disciplined, Ellen White insists that great care be exercised to speak to them kindly and calmly, without a trace of anger in words

¹Manuscript Releases, 3:49.

²Child Guidance (Nashville, Tenn: Southern Publishing Association, 1954), 244, 246, 253; Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students, 117.

³Gospel Workers 475; Manuscript Releases, 19:344.

⁴Christian Leadership (Washington, D.C.: Ellen G. White Estate, 1974), 11.

⁵Child Guidance, 244, 246.

⁶Ibid., 253. This guidance can also be quite helpful in defusing angry confrontations between adults.

⁷Ibid., 92.

and inflections.¹ Speaking of discipline, in at least one situation Ellen White calls for a chronically angry and unrestrained adult to be "taken in hand, and like a rebellious child, disciplined and chastened."²

Finally, when confronted by angry outbursts of others, Ellen White calls for a soft and even silent response.³

There is a wonderful power in silence. When impatient words are spoken to you, do not retaliate. Words spoken in reply to one who is angry usually act as a whip, lashing the temper into greater fury. But anger met by silence quickly dies away. Let the Christian bridle his tongue, firmly resolving not to speak harsh, impatient words. With the tongue bridled, he may be victorious in every trial of patience through which he is called to pass.⁴

Avoiding Some Negative Conflict Situations

There are times when conflict situations are best avoided or at least delayed.

Avoidance of doctrinal debates

When to be avoided. Theological differences have very often been fertile soil for negative conflict. According to Ellen White, Christians need to realize that the human mind will not be able to fully comprehend some obscure biblical passages and deep theological issues before the second coming of Christ. Those who understand this will choose to avoid confrontations arising from less important theological differences.⁵ Examples of what she classes as "foolish contentions" to be avoided are debates about (1) the finer points of

¹Testimonies for the Church, 2:52.

²Manuscript Releases, 9:320.

³Gospel Workers, 475.

⁴Mind, Character, and Personality, 2:522.

⁵Gospel Workers (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1948), 312.

God's grace or (2) exactly how the Holy Spirit works.¹

Doctrinal contention is to be avoided, especially in Sabbath School class discussions. Discussion which contains good-natured disagreement is often fine, but heated debate is never helpful. If it cannot be avoided altogether, a different setting must be chosen for it. Sabbath School classes need to be places of harmonious learning which nurture participants in their spiritual growth.²

When not to be avoided. Some theological conflicts cannot be ignored. When central, vital beliefs are challenged, those challenges must be courageously faced and met. Ellen White points out that only counterfeit peace and harmony are produced when real principle is sacrificed or when all differences of opinion are completely avoided. In her words, "True brotherhood can never be maintained by compromising principle."³

In the same vein Ellen White warns that Christians cannot afford to "sacrifice one principle of truth."⁴ In a carefully balanced statement on this subject, she explains that Christian leaders are to "stand firm and united in defense of the truth, while they carefully labor to avoid all injurious dissensions."⁵

Sometimes delay is best. The crisis caused in the very early 1900s, when Dr. John Harvey Kellogg and others attempted to introduce

¹Notebook Leaflets from the Elmshaven Library (Payson, Ariz.: Leaves-of-Autumn Books, 1985), 112.

²Testimonies on Sabbath-School Work (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1900), 51.

³Ibid.

⁴The Desire of Ages (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1940), 434.

⁵The Spirit of Prophecy (Battle Creek, Mich.: Seventh-day Adventist Publishing Association, 1969 facsimile, 1870, 1877, 1878, 1884), 2:139.

pantheism into the belief system of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, is a well-known example of how Ellen White handled serious theological conflict.¹ Interestingly, on this occasion she delayed for months directly meeting the false teaching.²

Then Ellen White was given a vision of a ship ramming and destroying a gigantic iceberg, and her delay ended. "I knew what my duty was, and that there was not a moment to lose. The time for decided action had come."³ Quickly, though it was 1:00 A.M., she began writing a direct answer to the challenge of pantheism.

Her answer reached church leaders across the continent from her home in California exactly when it was needed. Gathered in Washington, D.C., for Autumn Council, they had debated pantheism for a full day. On the next morning General Conference president A. G. Daniells read Ellen White's newly arrived communication on pantheism. The timing of this intervention was just right to turn the tide of thinking and belief against this false theology.⁴

Dealing with serious conflicts, whether theological or not, can be taxing and confusing. Sometimes, as God directs, it will be seen that a delay in the timing of a confrontation is needed to allow issues to come into clearer focus. Again there are instances when following God's leading will result in quick, decisive action.

¹A good account of this controversy can be found in A. Spalding, Origin and History of Seventh-day Adventists (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1961), 3:130-144, or in R. W. Schwarz, Light Bearers to the Remnant (Boise, Idaho: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1979), 282-298.

²Arthur L. White, The Early Elmshaven Years, vol. 5, The Ellen G. White Biography (Hagerstown, Md.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1981-1986), 293; Ellen G. White, Selected Messages, 1:205.

³Selected Messages, 1:205-206.

⁴Arthur L. White, The Early Elmshaven Years, 293-302.

Avoidance for evangelism
and church health

Since public disputes between church members damage the church and its evangelism, Ellen White advises that they be avoided.¹ She pleads that opposing views in heated disputes not be printed in church papers.² Contention in the church is also damaging because it so often brings on a dearth of spirituality.³ Ellen White urges believers to "take every proper precaution to avoid public disagreement; for in every division of interest, resulting in disputation and unhappy differences in the church, souls are lost."⁴

Paul's example. Ellen White notes that as the apostle Paul worked to form and nurture the Galatian church, he encountered strong negative influence from certain teachers who were proclaiming a false form of Christianity. Paul longed to publicly confront them in order to separate them from the young Christian church. However, because he calculated that the resulting struggle and strife would bring ruin to the church, he chose to avoid open conflict. Instead, he powerfully taught the Galatian Christians the importance of trusting in God's Spirit to lead them to mutual love and unity.⁵

Evangelism in the South. An illustration of how Ellen White applied her own counsel to avoid controversy for the sake of evangelism can be seen in her approach to segregation. As the Adventist message began to go to the Black people of the South in the

¹Testimonies to Ministers, 57.

²Testimonies for the Church, 7:156.

³"The Ministry Is Ordained of God," Advent Review and Sabbath Herald, January 6, 1903, 8.

⁴The Spirit of Prophecy, 2:139.

⁵Testimonies for the Church, 5:243.

1890s and the early 1900s, the prejudice of Whites toward Blacks became a barrier to evangelism among both races.

Even though Ellen White taught that Blacks and Whites were equal and should be allowed to worship in and hold membership in the same churches,¹ she was led to counsel that conflict in this area be avoided so that evangelism for both Whites and Blacks would be unimpeded. Although Ellen White considered the equality of races to be an important issue, she saw that debating it under the prevailing circumstances would be unwise. It would waste time and lead to great confusion.² And it would bring about a situation where "we could do nothing in presenting the truth."³

Consequently she counseled that what she called "the color line question" should not be debated at that time. In the South, where there was much prejudice, work for Whites and Blacks would have to be done separately for the time being. At the same time, work for the Whites and Blacks in the North could be done in a different manner because prejudice there was less.⁴ She added that there should be no haste in making decisions on how Whites and Blacks should relate in the church and that the Lord be allowed to bring about a resolution to this thorny problem in His own good time.⁵

Situations which cannot be resolved. Some situations seem chronically beyond resolution. Controversy between Christians and people who have firmly chosen to live under Satan's control,

¹The Southern Work (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1966), 9-14.

²Testimonies for the Church, 9:213.

³Manuscript Releases, 4:210.

⁴Testimonies for the Church, 9:213.

⁵Ibid., 209.

especially conflict over spiritual issues, has no lasting solution.¹ Whenever possible, Christians are to kindly and courteously avoid confrontation with faithless people whose purpose is to undermine and attack God's work.²

Ellen White states that entering into disputes of this sort is stepping upon Satan's ground. This is true because, even when a confrontation does not injure the involved Christians spiritually, others who are listening and who have not yet made firm decisions for or against Christ may be led to skepticism.³ Moreover, the enemies of Christ are likely to maliciously misinterpret the statements Christians make and then use those statements against God's cause.⁴

But the greatest danger associated with attempting to resolve conflict with unbelievers is the alluring temptation to compromise basic spiritual principles. Satan stirs up strife to lead peace-loving Christians toward apostasy. God's people must learn to accept the sad fact that no true unity is possible with His enemies. They must give up that goal because its cost is far too high. Ultimately, to experience peace with God's enemies is to give up peace with God.⁵

Applying the Counsel of Matt 18:15-17

Near the heart of what Ellen White has to say about the resolution of negative conflict between individuals is her discussion of Jesus' counsel recorded in Matt 18:15-17:

¹"Principle Never to Be Sacrificed for Peace," Advent Review and Herald, July 24, 1894, 465.

²"Skepticism--Its Cause and Cure," The Signs of the Times, June 8, 1882, 254.

³Ibid.

⁴The Desire of Ages, 434.

⁵"Principle Never to Be Sacrificed for Peace," 465.

Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother.

But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.

And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican.

Ellen White declares that if Christians would follow Christ's formula instead of their own impulses and emotions in dealing with negative conflicts, many severe problems would be eliminated!¹ She pleads that His instructions be stringently followed in every negative conflict situation, without exception.²

"Between thee and him alone"

At the beginning of the conflict resolution process, individuals involved in a dispute are to discuss the details of their controversy only with each other. Ellen White strenuously underlines the importance of this starting point.³ She declares:

Ministers and lay members of the church displease God when they allow individuals to tell them of the errors and faults of their brethren. They should not open their ears to these reports. They should inquire, "Have you strictly followed the injunction of your Saviour? Have you told him his faults between you and him alone?"⁴

Unfortunately, participants in conflict are much more likely to share their version of events with almost anyone except those who are disputing with them. This is a very common and extremely serious problem! As more people hear of the controversy and begin talking about it, the story balloons and the situation becomes increasingly more difficult to resolve. People become even more alienated. They

¹Manuscript Releases, 15:153.

²Ibid., 12:280; Testimonies for the Church, 7:261.

³Counsels to Parents, 154; Testimonies for the Church, 7:260; Manuscript Releases, 15:153.

⁴Manuscript Releases, 12:280.

find it easy to believe that others are spreading stories about them to gain revenge.¹

Ellen White says that nothing injures people more than this uncontrolled talk about conflict situations with and by individuals who have no reason to be involved.² Caring and trust, which are so important for the resolution of negative conflict, are severely damaged.³ At this stage if directly involved individuals feel compelled to speak about the situation, it is a Christian imperative that they communicate only with others directly involved, especially with those considered to be at fault.⁴

"Go and tell him"

Normally it is important to address negative conflict without much delay. Too much time before an attempt at resolution often allows hurt feelings to intensify.⁵

A strong Christian who is directly involved in a negative conflict situation is the best possible person to initiate a reconciliation. This is true because the genuine Christian attitude and approach are so necessary to successful resolution.⁶ Even though the process of initiating reconciliation can be difficult and painful, the Christian is to recognize this opportunity as both a privilege and a duty.⁷

¹Testimonies for the Church, 7:260.

²Manuscript Releases, 15:155.

³Ibid., 17:341.

⁴Counsels to Parents, 154.

⁵Testimonies for the Church, 7:261.

⁶Ibid.

⁷Ibid.

Ellen White states that before initiating reconciliation, it is vitally important to recognize the infinite value God places upon the other individuals involved in the conflict.¹ She uses words such as the following to describe the Christ-like attitude needed to initiate successful conflict resolution: patient, kind, affectionate, tender, earnest,² humble, sincere, calm, quiet.³ Angry words,⁴ criticisms, accusations, and condemnation are completely out of place in this process.⁵

Those initiating the reconciliation are to pray with and for the others who are involved.⁶ They are to reason calmly with those considered to be at fault, appealing to their better judgment.⁷ Ellen White suggests that a reconciler might put an arm around those in the wrong and "plead with them tenderly."⁸ This loving approach does not mean that sins are glossed over. Ellen White states that when necessary, shortcomings are to be kindly but directly addressed.⁹

The issues involved are to be frankly and openly discussed so that the true facts of the situation can be uncovered.¹⁰ Often when this is done, it will be found that the root of the controversy is a

¹Manuscript Releases, 12:278.

²Ibid.

³Testimonies for the Church, 7:261.

⁴Ibid.

⁵"Light and Responsibility," The Signs of the Times, April 1, 1889, 194.

⁶Testimonies to Ministers, 504.

⁷Testimonies for the Church, 7:261.

⁸"Light and Responsibility," 194.

⁹Manuscript Releases, 15:156.

¹⁰Ibid., 15:153; 17:342.

misunderstanding.¹ Even if this is not the case, Ellen White states that when Christ's approach is used, healing reconciliation is nearly always the result.² For people involved in a successful reconciliation, the wonderful miracle is often extended as they are led by the Holy Spirit to continue the work of repentance, confession, and resolution in other conflict situations and with other individuals.³

"Take with thee one or two more"

If pride and selfishness block the first attempt at reconciliation, it is now time to involve more people in the process, but not many more. Ellen White cautions that the controversy be confined to the fewest possible number of people⁴ and that those brought in to help be especially respected for their strong spirituality.⁵

The approach to be taken is similar to that taken in the first phase. But now two or three strong Christians unite in an attempt to bring reconciliation and peace. Ellen White says that they are to "labor" with the erring one and that, besides talking with the person, they are to humbly pray together.⁶ Perhaps this caring appeal will change the mind of the erring where the first approach did not. It is hoped that as the united position of mature fellow Christians is clearly and caringly communicated,

¹Ibid.

²Ibid., 15:153.

³Testimonies for the Church, 7:262.

⁴Manuscript Releases, 15:154.

⁵Testimonies for the Church, 7:262.

⁶Manuscript Releases, 15:154.

reconciliation will become possible.¹

"Tell it unto the church"

If the second phase of resolution is unsuccessful, it is now time to involve the whole church family in the attempt to find reconciliation. If this attempt is successful, all members in the church family are to completely accept the newly reconciled one(s) with wholehearted caring.

But if the voice of the united church body is ignored, it must be recognized that the choice of the recalcitrant one(s) is to separate from the other believers. Still, in this eventuality, the goal of Christians remains the restoration of a caring relationship. They continue to give loving invitations for repentance and reconciliation.²

Summary

The goal of this chapter has been to discover Ellen White's answers to these questions: Why is it that people become engaged in conflict? Why is it that conflict is so often negative and destructive? What benefits does conflict bring? How may Christians respond to conflict in ways which bless them, strengthen the church, and glorify God?

People become engaged in conflict in part because God created humanity in such a way that people are very diverse in numerous ways including the ways they think, evaluate situations, and interrelate with one another. God balanced this diversity which He designed for people by connecting it to a trusting unity with Him and a caring unity with each other.

Conflict among people is so commonly negative because Satan

¹Testimonies for the Church, 7:262.

²Ibid., 262, 263.

was able to induce humanity to choose to become selfish. Selfishness systematically erodes trust, caring, and unity. When selfishness replaces unity in the partnership with diversity, divisive and destructive conflict results.

The damage to God's church that is caused by negative conflict is enormous. Trust and fellowship are marred or even destroyed. Christians involved in conflicts are often vicious in their criticism of each other. Christians in conflict commonly try to manipulate and control each other. Destructive conflicts severely damage the witness of God's church in numerous communities.

On the other hand, conflict can be a doorway to important benefits for God's people. New positive ideas and better methods for strengthening God's church and spreading the gospel can be generated through conflict. During conflict situations, the demonstration of caring unity among very diverse people who are working together under God's direction is be a powerful witness for God.

There are ways in which Christians may prepare for and respond to conflict which will bless them, strengthen the church, and glorify God. By far the most important is to nurture a growing relationship of love for and trust in God. Much less important, but highly recommended, is the acquiring of knowledge and skills in various areas relating to conflict resolution and management. These areas include learning to have a positive outlook on life and to look for the best in others, learning to handle differences of opinion unselfishly, learning how to deal with anger, learning how to evaluate conflict situations and how to respond (sometimes by avoiding them temporarily or even permanently), and learning how to carefully follow Jesus' counsel on conflict resolution and management found in Matt 18:15-17.

Conclusion

The way in which people relate to conflict situations is influenced by a number of factors. One factor is their set of beliefs about the basic nature of conflict. A recognition that before sin God designed humans to be diverse, to think and perceive differently, is very influential. It opens the door to an appreciation of the conflicts that are sparked in part by human diversity. Further, the recognition that humanity has allowed Satan to fasten a universal selfishness to this specially created diversity is also important. The prevalence of selfishness explains why conflict is so often damaging.

Another factor is whether or not people have the necessary knowledge and skills to deal with and resolve conflict. Knowledge can be learned and skills can be acquired.

Undoubtedly, there are other factors as well, but by far the most important factor which influences how people deal with conflict is found in how they relate to God. Individuals who live in loving, growing unity with God have a wonderful base from which to deal positively in conflict situations with other people. Because the selfishness with which these healthy Christians were born is being neutralized by the Holy Spirit, they are being freed to find true "unity in diversity" with others.

Those who are solidly united with God, who understand the basic nature of conflict and who are gaining the knowledge and skills needed to deal with it, are fortunate. They are able to accept the presence of conflict and to deal with it in constructive ways. They have learned to welcome differing viewpoints and will value them as possible windows to other important facets of reality. They live in a world where conflicts are seen as opportunities, not barriers.

It is the purpose of this project to introduce people to this positive possibility.

CHAPTER THREE

CURRENT VIEWS AND APPROACHES ON RELATING TO CONFLICT

Direction of Chapter 3

The goal of this chapter is to make a brief, investigative survey of current literature¹ about conflict in order to discover positive approaches to understanding, managing, and resolving conflict that are in harmony with concepts presented in chapter 1.

Perspectives on Conflict

Among authorities who have written on the subject, there is a spectrum of opinion concerning the nature of conflict and the relationship between conflict and sin.

"Conflict Is Negative"

McSwain and Treadwell contend that conflict is negative and has never been part of God's plan for humankind. They consider conflict to be a direct result of sin, the antithesis of the peace and harmony God created in the beginning.² They moderate their position somewhat by declaring that, while conflict itself is of no moral worth, it is possible for the results of conflict to be positive and healthy.³

¹This survey is not an exhaustive study of the sources available. Since the orientation of this project is Christian, almost all of the commonly-cited sources are by Christian authors.

²McSwain and Treadwell, 19-21.

³Ibid., 118.

Huggett seems to agree cautiously. But her position becomes less clear when she concludes that, although there is no cure for conflict this side of eternity, perhaps conflict is not a sickness needing a cure after all.¹

"Conflict Is Neutral"

Another point of view is represented by Griffin, Johnson, and Nelson-Jones who suggest that conflict is a neutral fact of living that can lead to negative or positive results, depending upon how participants relate to it.² Augsburger also believes that conflict is "neither good nor bad, right nor wrong."³

"Conflict Is an Opportunity"

Conflict is an opportunity, but a dangerous one, declares Robert Bolton.⁴ Lynn Buzzard, Speed Leas, Paul Kittlaus, and Leslie B. Flynn go beyond Bolton to suggest that churches need conflict to be healthy, growing communities.⁵

In his fine book, The Peacemaker, Ken Sande develops and fine-tunes the positive view of conflict. Disagreeing with McSwain and Treadwell that conflict is fully sin-caused, he correctly notes

¹Joyce Huggett, Creative Conflict (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1984), 11-24.

²Em Griffin, Getting Together (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1982), 134; Johnson, 6; Richard Nelson-Jones, Human Relationships (Pacific Grove, Calif.: Brooks/Cole Publishing Company, 1990), 227-229.

³David Augsburger, Caring Enough to Confront (Ventura, Calif.: Regal Books, 1981), 11.

⁴Robert Bolton, People Skills (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1989), 207.

⁵Lynn Buzzard, "War and Peace in the Local Church," interview by Terry Muck, Dean Merrill, and Marshall Shelley, Leadership 4 (Summer 1983): 22; Speed Leas and Paul Kittlaus, Church Fights: Managing Conflict in the Local Church (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1973), quoted in Leslie B. Flynn, Great Church Fights (Wheaton, Ill.: Victor Books, 1976), 21.

that God created individuals to be unique and diverse with widely varied inclinations, attitudes, and preferences. At the same time, Sande acknowledges that many conflicts also have deep roots in evil motives and actions. He proclaims, however, that all conflicts, regardless of their causes, provide opportunities to glorify God.¹

People's Views of Conflict Make a Difference

Sande shows that the views people have of conflict make an important difference in how they relate to it. Those who believe conflict is evil try to avoid it. When this is impossible, they tend to strike out in anger or get defensive.

Those who believe conflict is neutral may be inclined to diminish the importance of spiritual and moral issues like sin, righteousness, repentance, confession, and forgiveness. When this happens, deep underlying problems related to the conflict are never really addressed.

In Sande's words the most helpful view is that "conflict is an opportunity to solve common problems in a way that honors God and benefits everyone involved." Where God's principles of peacemaking are put into practice, conflict need not be viewed as an enemy to be avoided but as a potential opportunity to bring one closer to wholeness and maturity.²

With an awareness of the dangers associated in conflict situations, participants with this view can focus on gaining the positive benefits of conflict.

The Benefits of Conflict

The dangers associated with conflict are well known. Less

¹Ken Sande, The Peacemaker (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, 1991), 19-20.

²Ibid., 16.

acknowledged is the fact that conflict can be the gateway to invaluable benefits. Here are some examples:

Without conflict there would probably be far less creativity and perhaps little social advancement in society.¹

Since conflict is present in human relationships, especially where people come into close and prolonged contact, real intimacy is impossible both where there is no conflict and where conflict is nothandled in a positive way.² Well-handled conflict builds trust³ and, consequently, it can hardly be separated from love.⁴ Conflict makes people aware of difficulties in their relationships that need to be addressed, and it motivates them to deal with these challenges.⁵ In families where honest, caring conflict is modeled and encouraged by parents, children tend to have high self-worth.⁶

Conflict situations can be used by the Holy Spirit to invite people closer to God. During conflict, weaknesses such as pride, an unforgiving spirit, a criticizing tongue, and other sinful attitudes and practices are revealed. The Holy Spirit can use conflict situations to shape the believer's character into Christlikeness as flaws are pointed out and the need to depend upon God is underlined.⁷

¹Bolton, 207; Griffin, 135.

²Bolton, 207.

³Nelson-Jones, 229.

⁴Bolton, 207.

⁵David W. Johnson, Reaching Out (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1981), 196.

⁶Bolton, 207.

⁷Sande, 25.

Modes of Relating to Conflict According to
the Thomas-Kilmann Diagram

There are five general modes of relating to conflict according to the Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Matrix: competing, avoiding, compromising, accommodating, and collaborating (fig. 1).¹

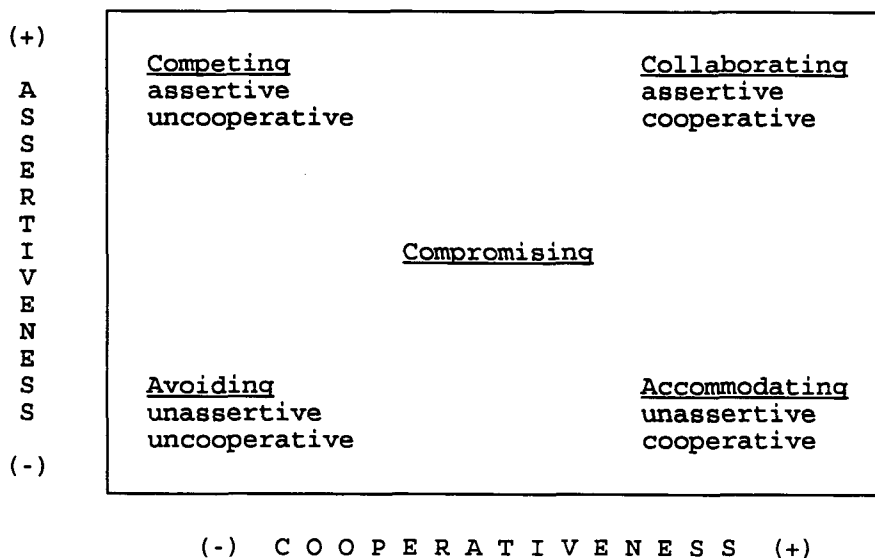


Fig. 1. The Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Matrix.

The Thomas-Kilmann diagram suggests that these five modes arise from two basic categories or dimensions of a person's behavior while relating to conflict: assertiveness and cooperativeness. Assertiveness is the degree to which people go to obtain their own desires. Cooperativeness is the degree to which people try to fulfill other people's desires.²

¹Kenneth W. Thomas and Ralph H. Kilmann, Thomas-Kilmann Conflict-Mode Instrument (Tuxedo, N.Y.: Xicon, 1990), 9-10.

²Reynolds, 15, 17.

Competing

On the Thomas-Kilmann diagram, the competing mode is assertive and uncooperative. This mode is one of domination, the imposing of one's will on others.¹ Here a high value is placed upon the desires and needs of the individual, while a low value is placed on the desires and needs of others.

In conflict situations it would be expected that aggressive people would try to dominate their "competition." Interestingly, it is often true that people who are usually yielding will switch into this mode when they move into a position of authority. Bolton suggests that this is probably because they "have seldom experienced alternatives to domination and capitulation." Consequently, when given authority, they follow the familiar model they have experienced at earlier times in their lives.²

The competing mode can be essential in a real crisis where quick decisions and action are necessary, and it may be helpful when true moral issues are at stake. Usually though, this mode of relating during conflict damages relationships.³

Accommodating

On the Thomas-Kilmann diagram, the accommodating mode is unassertive and cooperative. This yielding style is the opposite of the competing mode.⁴ Here a low value is placed upon the desires and needs of the individual, while a high value is placed on the desires and needs of others.

People using the accommodating mode of dealing with conflict

¹Richards, 132; Bolton, 235.

²Bolton, 235.

³Griffin, 145.

⁴Richards, 132.

have an overriding desire for peace. They often believe that true Christians or mature people shun conflict.¹ Discovering that the quickest way to diminish controversy is to give in, they are willing to purchase peace by sacrificing their other desires.²

The accommodating mode is the best choice when a person is certain to lose in a confrontation or when an issue is trifling to one but significant to the other.³ It can also be a temporary step toward a better solution.⁴ But many habitually accommodate, willing to give up important needs or even deep convictions for the sake of peaceful relationships.⁵ They do not realize that yielding over the long term eventually produces a sense of uncertainty in others. Thus relationships are weakened and even destroyed.⁶

Compromising

On the Thomas-Kilmann diagram, the compromising mode is halfway between the above-mentioned modes in both assertiveness and cooperativeness. This give-and-take mode is more flexible than the competing mode and less yielding than the accommodating mode.⁷ Here a medium value is placed upon the desires and needs of the individual, and a medium value is placed on the desires and needs of others.

People using this mode are willing to bargain, each expecting the other to go after the best possible deal. Their negotiations end

¹David Augsburger, When Caring Is Not Enough (Ventura, Calif.: Regal Books, 1983), 50.

²Griffin, 144.

³Ibid.; David Johnson, 239.

⁴Augsburger, Caring Enough to Confront, 17, 18.

⁵Griffin, 145.

⁶Augsburger, When Caring Is Not Enough, 51.

⁷Richards, 132.

in a solution where both sides concede a part and also receive a part of what they want. Usually neither is completely happy.¹

The compromising mode is useful when each side can block or hinder the other and when the collaborating mode is unattainable.² But compromise is not really based upon mutual trust. Repeated use of this mode is damaging to relationships.³

Avoiding

On the Thomas-Kilmann diagram, the avoiding mode is unassertive and uncooperative. This mode is one of withdrawal from conflict situations.⁴ Here a low value is placed upon the desires and needs of the individual, and a low value is placed on the desires and needs of others.

A wide variety of methods are used by people to avoid conflict. Very commonly, pessimism, distance, escape, and silence are deliberately chosen, while communication and commitment to relationships are rejected.⁵

The avoiding mode may be acceptable when issues are of little consequence or if they are likely to disappear quickly.⁶ Moreover, avoiding a conflict is sometimes a helpful way of "counting to ten" before dealing with it in a more positive way.⁷ However, in most cases, avoiding only aggravates the controversy and/or spawns other

¹Bolton, 236-238.

²Griffin, 148.

³Bolton, 238.

⁴Richards, 132.

⁵Augsburger, When Caring Is Not Enough, 104-106.

⁶David Johnson, 238; Huttenlocker, 29.

⁷Griffin, 143.

problems. Even though avoiding is the most common mode of relating to conflict,¹ it is usually a poor approach.²

Collaborating

On the Thomas-Kilmann diagram, the collaborating mode is assertive and cooperative. In this mode both sides of the conflict work together to discover a mutually satisfying solution.³ Here a high value is placed upon the desires and needs of the individual and upon the desires and needs of others.

Effective collaboration requires honesty and mutual trust along with persistence and flexibility. Proficiency in communication skills is a prerequisite to collaboration.⁴

Each mode is appropriate in certain conflict circumstances,⁵ and sometimes more than one may be helpful.⁶ In the end though, the mode of collaborating is usually the most effective way of relating to conflict.⁷

In general there are five successive steps for dealing with conflict, according to Augsburger:

1. The mode of choice is collaborating.

¹Augsburger, When Caring Is Not Enough, 104.

²Huttenlocker, 31.

³Richards, 132.

⁴Sande, 18.

⁵Augsburger, Caring Enough to Confront, 17,18.

⁶Reynolds, 18.

⁷Augsburger, Caring Enough to Confront, 17. Augsburger uses the words "caring and confronting" or "care-fronting" to refer to collaborating.

In one way or another, most of the books cited in this chapter were written to help people learn to use the collaborating mode of dealing with conflict. The rest of this chapter focuses mainly on Christian collaboration.

2. If this is not productive, a caring switch to the compromising mode may be a helpful, temporary solution before true collaborating is possible.

3. If this does not work, the mode of accommodating is the next step, aimed again at building up the relationship so that collaborating will be possible.

4. If this is unsuccessful, it is time to move into the competing mode. Even here the hope is to jolt the conflict, if possible, back into collaboration.

5. Finally, when nothing else works, the mode of avoiding and withdrawing becomes necessary.¹

When dealing with conflict, most people utilize first a predominant mode and then a backup mode.² However, Augsburgur advises that it is best to learn to respond to conflict, depending on the circumstances. For example, he suggests that when an opponent in conflict is in the competing mode, the correct immediate response is the accommodating mode which then moves toward collaboration. When the other is in a withdrawing mode, a momentary focus on compromise is helpful before a shift toward collaboration.³

Christian Collaboration

In his book, The Peacemaker, Ken Sande argues convincingly that, while collaborating is the best of the five basic modes on the Thomas-Kilmann diagram, it is still deficient.

Collaborating generally focuses on the interests of the people involved, not on God's interests. In addition, because this style usually fails to deal biblically with the underlying causes of conflict, collaborating, too, sometimes produces incomplete solutions and leaves the door open for further controversy.

¹Ibid.

²Reynolds, 18.

³Augsburger, Caring Enough to Confront, 17, 18.

Anytime we leave God out of the picture and disregard his commands to deal with the underlying causes of conflict, it will be more difficult to resolve disputes and restore genuine peace.¹

Bob Phillips concurs. He adds that the best methods of conflict resolution are ultimately self-centered and manipulative when they are divorced from committed Christian love.²

Both would agree, however, that when the highest motivation is loving God and guarding His interests and where Bible principles form the foundation for conflict resolution, an understanding of the five basic modes of the Thomas-Kilmann diagram and other conflict resolution theories which are congruent with the biblical data is extremely valuable.

Ken Sande proposes a Christian collaboration mode of conflict resolution and describes his understanding of how it works in four phases. The remainder of this chapter is indebted to Sande's four phases for its structure.³

Glorify God

Instead of seeing conflict as a problem or as a chance to gain a selfish advantage, Christians are called in 1 Cor 10:31-11:1 and elsewhere to take the view that conflict presents an opportunity to bring glory to God, to do service for others, and to grow to be more Christlike.

Sande notes that unless the Christian is faithful and aims first to glorify God during conflict, someone or something else will be glorified. Either it will be demonstrated that the Christian has

¹Sande, 18.

²Bob Phillips, The Delicate Art of Dancing with Porcupines (Ventura, Calif.: Regal Books, 1989), 12.

³The Peacemaker, written by Ken Sande, contains 246 valuable pages, sprinkled liberally with biblical references, which detail his four phases of Christian collaboration. Appropriately, the subtitle of this book is "A Biblical Guide to Resolving Personal Conflict."

a big God or "a big self and big problems."¹

During conflict situations, Christians must realize that they do not need to take on the huge responsibility for bringing about resolution. Speed Leas points out that this is God's work.² Leslie B. Flynn quotes Eph 4:3, "endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace," and explains that while it is the Holy Spirit's work to originate peace, Christians are called to do all they can to extend the Spirit's peace-producing influence.³ Under the direction of God's Spirit, they are to create environments in which the possibilities of reconciliation are increased.⁴

Remaining faithful to God, staying focused upon God and His will instead of on the conflict, necessitates a great deal of prayer. This persistent prayer zeros in on the love and power of God. It requests that the strained relationships be brought back into harmony with God's design.⁵

As this persevering prayer continues, trust in and faithful service to God grows.

The more you trust God, the easier it is to do his will. This is especially true when you are involved in conflict. If you believe that God is watching over you with perfect love and unlimited power, you will be able to serve him faithfully as a peacemaker, even in the most difficult circumstances.⁶

This faithful service results in a growing Christian maturity.

As you worry less about going through conflict and focus more on growing through conflict, you will . . . experience the

¹Sande, 22.

²Speed B. Leas, Moving Your Church Through Conflict (Washington, D.C.: Alban Institute, 1985), 9.

³Flynn, 15.

⁴Leas, Moving Your Church Through Conflict, 9.

⁵Huggett, 54.

⁶Sande, 43.

incomparable blessing of being conformed to the likeness of Jesus Christ.¹

Consider Self

After centering upon God and His concerns and before focusing on others involved in the conflict, the Christian needs to follow the counsel of Matt 7:3-5 and consider self. In other words, it is time to scrutinize inner attitudes and motives, time to pay special attention to one's own contributions to the conflict situation.

M. Scott Peck emphasizes the importance of this process before any confrontation. He describes it as a "scrupulous self-doubting and self-examination."² Joyce Huggett agrees, pointing out that at the beginning of conflict it is essential for Christians to make an inner inspection. She correctly points out that there is something wrong when the major priority is to change someone else's thinking or actions. The main goal for Christians in conflict needs to be the making of their own hearts available for God's Spirit to change as God sees best.³

Discover Underlying Beliefs

As part of this process, it may be helpful to look deeply into one's belief system. There are a number of commonly held irrational ways of thinking that too often play significant roles in the birth and life of damaging conflict. Three potentially hazardous, irrational thought-patterns--demandingness,

¹Ibid., 25.

²M. Scott Peck, The Road Less Traveled (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1978), 152.

³Huggett, 42-44.

exaggerated badness, and perfectionism--are considered here.¹

"Demandingness"

"Demandingness" turns desires and wishes for self, others, relationships, and situations into demands. There is often nothing wrong with the original desires, but when transformed into demands, they become unhealthy, controlling, and basically selfish. Words like "should," "ought," and "must" are commonly associated with this way of thinking.²

Here are a few illustrations of "demandingness": "I should never make mistakes." "I must never appear foolish." "No member of my family should ever criticize me." "My unmarried daughter must not get pregnant." "My son must not use alcohol or other drugs." "My husband ought to meet all of my needs." "I must not lose this job." "My wife should never get a job." "There ought not ever be a conflict in our marriage." "Others must never know that there is conflict in our marriage."

While some of the situations alluded to above are serious, the transforming of wishes into demands upon self or upon others can have severe consequences. "Demandingness" puts great stress upon emotional and spiritual health. It has warped or ruined countless relationships. Acknowledging or expressing desires is healthy. Making demands in this way is self-centered, controlling, and dysfunctional.

Experts are coming to believe that "demandingness" is the

¹Sandra D. Warnock, "Rational-Emotive Therapy and the Christian Client," Journal of Rational-Emotive and Cognitive-Behavior Therapy 7 (Winter 1989): 265-267. Warnock's article lists a total of 4 basic irrational beliefs and 11 underlying irrational beliefs. Undoubtedly some of those not discussed in this chapter also underlie conflict situations at times.

²Raymond DiGiuseppe and Russell C. Leaf, "The Endorsement of Irrational Beliefs in a General Clinical Population," Journal of Rational-Emotive and Cognitive-Behavior Therapy 8 (Winter 1990): 236.

basic root of all damaging irrational beliefs.¹ Included among the negative results of "demandingness" is a great deal of destructive anger² which is directly related to numerous conflicts. (How to relate to anger is considered below.)

"Exaggerated badness"

"Exaggerated badness," sometimes called "awfulizing," is based on the idea that when things are not the way one wants them to be, the situation is catastrophic.³ According to Lawrence and Huber, people who have been dealt with unfairly, rejected, or blocked from reaching a significant goal can either judge rationally that the situation is inconvenient or disadvantageous, or they can convince themselves that it is terrible, horrible, and awful.⁴ This self-centered form of thought is commonly present with "demandingness."

A few illustrations of "awfulizing" thought are: "It is just awful when I am wrong." "It is terribly humiliating if I ever appear foolish." "When someone in my family criticizes me, it is dreadful." "If my unmarried daughter got pregnant it would just be the end of me." "It's a shameful disgrace that my son uses alcohol and other drugs." "If my husband doesn't meet all of my needs it will be appalling." "If I lose this job, it will be catastrophic." "It is horrible that my wife got a job." "If there is conflict in our marriage, our relationship is a failure." "If others discover that there is conflict in our marriage, it will be a shocking disgrace."

While some of the situations mentioned above are quite

¹Ibid.

²Nelson-Jones, 206.

³Warnock, 265, 269.

⁴Constance Lawrence and Charles H. Huber, "Strange Bedfellows? Rational-Emotive Therapy and Pastoral Counseling," Personnel and Guidance Journal 61, no. 4 (December 1982): 211.

serious, thinking of and then describing them in unreasonably exaggerated terms is irrational. "Awfulizing" is used as leverage to manipulate and control the behavior of others.

Exaggerated badness contributes negatively to conflicts in another way as well. When positions or situations are perceived as completely awful, catastrophic, or irreparable, it is not surprising that resolutions are difficult to reach.

A much more healthy and helpful way of thinking is explained by Speed Leas.

The most powerful resource that I have for managing my own conflicts and helping others manage their conflict is a belief that whatever happens will not be absolutely final. I believe that no matter how bad the mess I or others make, there will be another chance to do better.¹

"Perfectionism"

According to Claudio Naranjo, "perfectionism" is associated with "high moral and religious standards, an excessive control of instinctual life, dogmatism, judgmentalness, and a do-goodism based on implicit self-glorification rather than true generosity."² This condition focuses on one's own behavior, on the behavior of others, or on conditions one demands be achieved or maintained.³

"Perfectionism" has roots both in "demandingness" and in "exaggerated badness." Simply put, perfectionists cannot endure their own mistakes and failings, nor can they tolerate the imperfections of others.⁴ When the flawless solution is not achieved,

¹Leas, Moving Your Church Through Conflict, 83, 84.

²Claudio Naranjo, "On Puritanical Character," American Journal of Psychoanalysis 42, no. 2 (Summer 1982): 144.

³Ibid., 21.

⁴Carol Cannon, Never Good Enough (Boise, Idaho: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1993), 207.

perfectionists are inclined to see the situation as catastrophic.¹

Since "perfectionism" tends not to recognize that humans are fallible, this irrational thought pattern leads a person to relate to behavior in terms of "always," "never," "have to," and "must not."² These intolerant thought patterns lead directly to inner conflict and frequently to conflict with others. "Perfectionism" ultimately alienates people from each other.³ And the perfectionist may be so inflexible that healthy conflict resolution is very difficult.

Perfectionist Christians need to discover that Godliness does not include an inward looking, self-absorbed spiritual correctness or a forced bending of others toward "righteousness." Godliness is a wholesome, upward- and outward-looking completeness to which God invites people. Gradually, without pressure or demands, He nurtures those who respond to wholeness.⁴

Weigh the Situation

Early in the conflict is the time to carefully consider the issues and decide whether they are really worth "fighting" about. Often it is wise to overlook minor offenses or short-term problems.⁵ It is possible to avoid confrontation during a lesser conflict if it has not seriously separated people, if it has not harmed the reputations of God or others, and if complete forgiveness is possible

¹Warnock, 272.

²Leas, Moving Your Church Through Conflict, 21. Certainly there are absolutes. There is a definite right and there is a definite wrong. The issue here is whether or not there is room for failure as a natural part of the human experience in this sinful world.

³Augsburger, When Caring Is Not Enough, 171.

⁴Ibid., 171, 172.

⁵Huttenlocker, 29.

without the confrontation.¹

What about the "rights" of Christians? Paul talks a lot about rights in 1 Corinthians. "Do all to the Glory of God" (1 Cor 10:31) is his final answer to the question. Four questions that will help the Christian find a Godly balance in this area are:

Will exercising my rights please and honor God? Will exercising my rights advance God's kingdom--or will it advance only my interests at the expense of his kingdom? Will exercising my rights benefit others? Is exercising my rights essential for my own well-being?²

Deal with Anger

Caring people usually find conflict and confrontation difficult. In a sense this is good. An eagerness to point out faults in the lives of others almost certainly reveals a deep need to go back and reconsider the importance of bringing glory to God. It also may show a need to reexamine the significance of one's own contributions to the situation.

But the avoidance of all confrontation is not necessarily caring. Christians need to understand that there are times when they are called to carefully confront others for God's glory and for the good of His people.³

A common reason Christians avoid confronting others is that they do not know how to relate to anger. Numerous believers deny anger because they consider this emotion to be sinful. Others suppress it because they fear the possible emotional pain and devastation that might result.⁴ Neither of these attitudes toward anger is helpful or healthy.

¹Sande, 63, 64.

²Ibid., 73.

³Ibid., 120-122.

⁴Nelson-Jones, 203; Augsburger, When Caring Is Not Enough, 86.

Another damaging concept is the belief that anger is dangerously corrosive and so must be quickly vented if one is to avoid psychological damage. While suppressed rage can eventually produce harmful physical and/or psychological symptoms, impulsive explosions of anger are not a good solution.

When anger is allowed to erupt, some tension may be released for the time being, but usually at the same time the flames of wrath are fanned even higher. Resentment is increased, energy is wasted, little or nothing is solved, and the conflict is aggravated.¹

Understand anger

In order to relate to anger in a healthy way, it is essential to understand that anger is not automatically a sinful emotion. Anger is at least neutral² and some experts consider it to be positive.³ One author suggests that the ability to become angry is a facet of being created in God's image.⁴

On the other hand, even though anger is not negative or sinful by nature, it is usually associated with sin and sin's destructive results. This is true because selfish tendencies and motives are almost always allowed to control and direct the energy of anger. No wonder Harry Stack Sullivan rated anger as "the curse of interpersonal relations."⁵

Joyce Huggett compares handling one's anger to working with

¹Augsburger, When Caring Is Not Enough, 87, 88; idem, Caring Enough to Confront, 41.

²McSwain and Treadwell, 112; Huggett, 86, 111.

³Augsburger, Caring Enough to Confront, 42.

⁴David A. Seamands, Healing for Damaged Emotions (Wheaton Ill.: Victor Books, 1981), 107.

⁵Harry Stack Sullivan, The Psychiatric Interview (New York: W. W. Norton, 1954), 218, 219, quoted in Augsburger, Caring Enough to Confront, 40.

dynamite or to boiling milk. These experiences are meant to be positive, but they can easily and quickly become negative. Since selfishness is pervasive in this world, Huggett stresses the importance of a vibrant prayer life in which angry feelings are offered to God as soon as they become apparent. In this environment, anger can make positive contributions instead of being a curse.¹

Accept and acknowledge anger

It is crucial to acknowledge and accept ownership of anger instead of denying or suppressing it. Acknowledging anger is different from an uncontrolled venting of angry feelings. When one is angry, admitting the presence of anger is vital to one's well being. There is no positive way to deal with unacknowledged anger.²

It is also crucial to recognize that angry feelings are not caused by circumstances or by what other people say or do. Anger is a chosen emotional response.³ In a situation when a person becomes angry, many other emotional responses are available besides anger. These include feelings of disgust, kindness, exasperation, or humor.⁴

Anger is a signal communicating that something is wrong.⁵ It is helpful to nurture the habit of being sensitive to one's inner emotional anger signals. This habit is greatly enhanced if, when

¹Huggett, 88-89, 111-113.

²Gary R. Collins, Christian Counseling: A Comprehensive Guide (Waco, Tex.: Word Books, 1980), 108, 111, 406.

³Paul A. Hauck, Overcoming Frustration and Anger (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1974), 43; Huggett, 86.

⁴Augsburger, Caring Enough to Confront, 46-48.

⁵Harriet Goldhor Lerner, The Dance of Anger (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1985), 1; Nelson-Jones, 201.

anger is detected, it includes taking that feeling to God in prayer.¹

Analyze and evaluate anger

When one has discovered that anger is present, it is time to analyze and evaluate it. Augsburgur points out that anger is an emotional response to perceived demands and that the demands need to be recognized and weighed. "Some of the demands are irrational, all out of proportion to the situation. These can be owned and, with proper humility and humor, cancelled."²

Augsburger concludes that 90 percent of the demands underlying angry feelings are irrational and can be dealt with accordingly.³ Paul A. Hauck estimates that this figure is even higher.⁴

According to Hauck, anger based upon irrational demands happens in a predictable five- or six-step irrational anger pattern. The process can actually be boiled down to two steps: "(1) I want my way, and (2) I must therefore have it." Hauck's entire anger sequence is presented below.⁵

Step 1: "I want something." Obviously wanting something is not a problem by itself. If the irrational anger sequence is followed, an awareness of this initial desire is important to an understanding of the source of angry feelings.

Step 2: "I didn't get what I wanted and I am frustrated." When one is blocked from achieving a desire, frustration is normal and need not be viewed as a problem. How people choose to relate to

¹Huggett, 87.

²Augsburger, When Caring Is Not Enough, 87-88.

³Ibid., 88.

⁴Haauck, 26.

⁵Ibid., 43-54.

the frustration is crucial, however, in determining whether they will follow a reasonable or unhealthy emotional path.

Step 3: "It is terrible not to get what I want." This "awfulizing" response is harmful and sets a person up for irrational anger.

Step 4: "You shouldn't frustrate me! I must have my way." The initial desire becomes a requirement and "demandingness" becomes the mode of thinking. Unmet demands result in rising indignation.

Step 5: "You're bad for frustrating me." Just because someone else's behavior blocks one from obtaining a desire does not mean that that person is bad. At this stage the pattern of thinking is becoming destructive. Here the possibility of disapproving of a person's actions or attributes without disapproving of the person is rejected.

At times this step is the end of the irrational anger sequence. At other times there is one final step.

Step 6: "Bad people ought to be punished." A person who reaches this stage of irrational anger will very likely inflict pain of some sort on the "bad people."

Augsburger suggests that only about 5 percent of the demands underlying angry feelings are both rational and important enough to call for a determined stand.¹ An example of this situation is when a person receives a threat of rejection or devaluation as a human being. Circumstances like this call for an assertive stand.²

Direct the energy of anger

Where one is able to accept, analyze, and classify angry feelings, anger connected with reasonable demands can be pursued,

¹Augsburger, When Caring Is Not Enough, 88.

²Augsburger, Caring Enough to Confront, 43.

while anger arising from irrational demands can be exposed and dealt with wisely. Special prayer for God's guidance is essential as this process unfolds.¹ Numerous negative conflicts could thus be avoided or defused, and the surge of energy that anger generates can be more consistently directed for good.

When confrontation is deemed necessary, it is vitally important that anger be directed against behavior, not against people. One can communicate appreciation for a person and at the same time express anger concerning that person's behavior. This allows the participants in conflict to remain in touch.²

For positive confrontation, the energy of anger needs to be expressed like a surgical laser beam to bring healing, not like a shotgun blast to cripple or destroy. Criticizing, belittling, labeling, or blaming other people can be carefully avoided. The aim is to utilize clear and pointed, but caring, communication designed to slice cleanly through emotional barriers.³

Confront the Other

Once God's concerns have been identified and personal contributions to the conflict have been considered, it is time for the Christian to begin confronting others involved (Matt 18:15) as part of the restoration process (Gal 6:1).

David Augsburger calls confrontation "an art to be learned." He explains, "To affront is easy. . . . To confront is hard."⁴ Keith Huttenlocker explains that one can learn to avoid much of the

¹Huggett, 88, 89.

²Augsburger, Caring Enough to Confront, 43.

³Ibid., 41.

⁴Ibid., 51.

negative fallout from conflict by acquiring confrontation skills.¹

When possible it is helpful to spend time planning before a confrontation. Careful preplanning can mean the difference between the movement toward peace or the escalation of hostility. Planning the confrontation includes choosing the right time and place, deciding how to invite others to participate, thinking through the main points of discussion, and considering how to relate to possible negative responses.²

Confess Willingly

Along with confronting others about their faults, Christians need to be willing to confess their own. When one bears any part of the responsibility for conflict, quick repentance and confession are in order.³

Ken Sande lists seven "A's" in effective confession:

1. Address everyone involved.
2. Avoid "if," "but," and "maybe" when making the confession.
3. Admit specifically the wrong attitudes and actions.
4. Apologize, expressing sincere sorrow and regret for hurting others.
5. Accept the consequences and make restitution.
6. Alter the offending behavior and explain how it will be changed.
7. Ask for forgiveness without applying any pressure.⁴

As the sixth "A" states, an essential part of taking

¹Huttenlocker, 62, 63.

²Sande, 137.

³Huggett, 55, 56.

⁴Sande, 93-102.

responsibility is seeking to change one's offending attitudes and behaviors. Change is often difficult, but by God's grace it is very possible. It comes by allowing God to replace the negative with positive. This happens through surrender to God, prayer, focused thought on the Lord, spiritual study, and persevering practice of new thought and habit patterns (in one or two areas at a time). By God's grace, failures, no matter how frequent or serious, need never be seen as final.¹

Communicate Positively

Effective communication is vital to the success of confrontation. Huttenlocker suggests, "Whenever communication has transported us into conflict, we need to reverse the trolley and ride it back to oneness."² He believes that there are few church conflicts that cannot be resolved when participants have mastered good communication skills.³ McSwain and Treadwell agree, stating that training church members to be effective communicators is the best tactic for avoiding interpersonal conflict.⁴

Bolton spotlights an essential balancing dimension.

The person who has mastered the skills of communication but lacks genuineness, love, and empathy will find his expertise irrelevant or even harmful. Important as they are, the techniques of communication by themselves are unable to forge satisfactory relationships.⁵

Genuineness, love, and empathy are gifts God gives His friends.

These traits grow as one's relationship with God matures.

Three important facets of communication during a

¹Ibid., 103-109.

²Huttenlocker, 65.

³Ibid., 72.

⁴McSwain and Treadwell, 94.

⁵Bolton, 259.

confrontation are: trust building, intense listening, and careful speech.

Build trust

Basic trust is crucial to human relationships.¹ During conflict, people who feel insecure, threatened, or fearful find it difficult to think clearly, let alone communicate effectively. But where respect is offered, a level of trust makes articulate and open communication possible. Therefore, it is wise to strengthen the position of opponents in conflict by sincerely encouraging trust and a sense of security.²

One's attitude while confronting can set the tone for trust. According to Scott Peck, people who confront others assume one of two basic attitudes: an immediate and dogmatic confidence that they are certainly right, or a conviction that they are probably right based upon careful thought and critical self-examination. Confrontation springing from the first attitude is common, selfish, and arrogant. The first attitude undercuts trust. Sadly, confrontation rooted in the second attitude is infrequent. Being the way of genuineness and humility, the second attitude builds trust and often leads to a successful reconciliation.³

An important way of encouraging trust is to genuinely respect opponents. How one listens, pays attention, and responds during conflict can convey respect or rudeness.⁴ Respect is not compatible

¹Augsburger, Caring Enough to Confront, 64.

²Norman Shawchuck, How to Manage Conflict in the Church (Irvine, Calif.: Spiritual Growth Resources, 1986), 6.

³Peck, The Road Less Traveled, 152.

⁴Bolton, 219.

with threats, blame, or any other form of mind-control.¹ Sometimes respecting others is difficult.

For many of us, an act of willpower is needed to fight the gravitational pull into disrespect. The exertion of moral force is required to treat the other as a person of worth with whom we will enter into a dialogue as equals.²

Listen intently

Jas 1:19 counsels, "Be quick to listen." Augsburger explains, "Being heard is so close to being loved that for the average person they are almost indistinguishable."³ Careful listening communicates acceptance by saying, "I don't have all the answers" and "I value your ideas."

In conflict situations it is essential for people to clearly understand the needs and feelings of those who disagree with them. This calls for careful listening. David Johnson underscores the importance of good listening.

There is nothing more important in resolving conflicts than understanding how the other person views the conflict. . . . It is usually much easier to resolve a conflict when the other person feels understood. The more skilled you are in seeing things from other people's shoes, the more skilled you will be in resolving conflicts constructively.⁴

Since in stress situations the likelihood of quality listening decreases seriously,⁵ one needs to make a decided choice to concentrate on this vital aspect of communication. Effective listening calls for regular eye contact along with other verbal and

¹Leas, Moving Your Church Through Conflict, 10; Huttenlocker, 62, 63; Shawchuck, 6.

²Bolton, 220.

³David Augsburger, Caring Enough to Hear (Ventura, Calif.: Regal Books, 1982), 12.

⁴David Johnson, 243.

⁵Bolton, 242.

nonverbal expressions of interest and understanding.¹

Bolton points out that, for effective and positive communication during conflict, one must come to a clear understanding of the opposing viewpoints through careful listening. For him, this listening includes an accurate restatement of the positions and feelings one has just heard. Only when the other is satisfied that one understands correctly is one in a position to make a response. During harsh attacks, if one resists the temptation to strike out in anger and chooses instead to reflect the other's points and feelings, it is amazing how soon civil communication is possible.²

Speak carefully

Along with building trust and listening intently, it is necessary to send messages during confrontation. Below are some guidelines for careful speaking during conflict.

1. Speak briefly. David Augsburger states, "When I speak: I want to speak simply. To say what I mean in the clearest, shortest, frankest words I know."³ Bolton counsels that in a highly charged conflict setting, it is best to keep messages short and to the point.⁴

2. Speak courteously and honestly. Discourteous remarks, whether harsh or insulting, tend to enrage or intimidate others. Either way, effective communication is terminated. The temptation to put an opponent at a disadvantage by distorting or exaggerating the facts must be stoutly resisted. This form of dishonesty leads others to mistrust and resent the speaker.⁵

¹Sande, 130-133.

²Bolton, 220, 221.

³Augsburger, Caring Enough to Confront, 26.

⁴Bolton, 222.

⁵Huttenlocker, 68.

Cutting humor is too often used during conflict as an undercover assault.

It bites deeply into self-esteem, pokes sharply at appearance, performance, or personality. Its negative power lies in its hidden judgments, devaluations, and the subtle ways it can dehumanize.¹

Questions too often hinder rather than aid real communication in times of conflict.²

During confrontations they are commonly utilized to criticize, punish, coerce, or manipulate others. Here are some examples: "Wouldn't you rather . . . ?" "Why did you . . . ?" "When will you do something about . . . ?" "What are you waiting for?" "What do you mean by that?"³ During times of conflict Augsburg's counsel is to avoid questions and, in their place, to use straightforward statements and invitations.⁴

Christians in conflict sometimes claim God for their side. Bible quotations are used to attack or control others.⁵ Even prayer can be misused to carry loaded messages. Lynn Buzzard explains:

So often prayer is used to say, "I don't think you're understanding what I'm saying, and surely it must be because the Lord isn't making it clear to you. So let's stop and call upon him, so you can understand how right I am."⁶

3. Make liberal use of "I" messages. One needs to learn to consistently use "I" messages and avoid "you" messages. "You" messages are almost always attempts to accuse, blame, control,

¹Augsburger, When Caring Is Not Enough, 110.

²Mark Robert, Managing Conflict from the Inside Out (Austin, Tex.: Learning Concepts, 1982), 84.

³Ibid., 84, 85; Augsburg, Caring Enough to Confront, 30-32.

⁴Augsburger, When Caring Is Not Enough, 116.

⁵Sande, 140, 141.

⁶Buzzard, 27.

criticize, devaluate, or shame others.¹ "You always . . ." "You never . . ." "You didn't . . ." "I" messages, on the other hand, say "something about the self without criticizing or blaming the other person and without holding the other person responsible for our feelings or reactions."²

A formula for "I" messages is as follows: "I feel [] when you [], because []. As a result []." For example, "I feel upset when you don't clean your room, because you promised to keep it clean. As a result I am having a hard time believing that you will keep your other promises."³

Sincere "I" messages get straight to the point, while they share from the heart. During conflict they can be honest invitations to find a joint resolution. The use of "I" messages is crucial during a confrontation, especially at its beginning.

Be Ready

Sometimes a person responds to being confronted with a vicious attack. At other times, this sort of attack comes completely unexpectedly. Since one's immediate response greatly influences the outcome of these potentially ugly confrontations, it is essential to have ready a general plan for relating to sudden attacks.

The foundation for a positive response to an unexpected assault is a predetermination to bring glory to God. Next, it is essential to realize that during an attack, defending oneself or trying to show attackers where they are in error will almost invariably be counterproductive.

¹Augsburger, Caring Enough to Confront, 42; idem, When Caring Is Not Enough, 157.

²Lerner, 200.

³Sande, 139, 140.

Instead of taking the attack personally and becoming defensive, it is advisable to relate to the situation as another problem to be solved.¹

It is also usually wise to give verbal assailants the benefit of the doubt, choosing to believe that they are not malicious, but are simply having a difficult day.² The immediate goal is to respond in a way that will eventually lead to some form of cooperative conflict resolution.

Depending upon the nature of the attack, a combination of some of the following response strategies may be appropriate:³

1. Listen carefully. During the initial outburst it is best for one to focus on listening. This listening includes reflecting back the gist of what was said, and perhaps asking honest questions to communicate interest and to increase understanding.

2. Invite concrete details. "Maybe you're right. Could you tell me what I did that . . ."

3. Solicit criticism. "I'm not sure I understand. What's wrong with . . . ? How could the situation could be improved?"

4. Treat ideas respectfully. "I'd like to look at your idea a little more closely."

5. Agree where possible. This is not giving in. It is finding common ground.

6. Ignore some statements. This can give the other a chance to rethink hasty remarks and move on to more positive issues.

¹Howard Margolis, "What to Do When You're Verbally Attacked: The Critical Moment," NASSP-Bulletin 74 (February 1990): 35.

²Alan Loy McGinnis, Bringing Out the Best in People (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1985), 160.

³Margolis, 34-38. All the elements of the plan suggested are based on Howard Margolis' article, "What to Do When You're Verbally Attacked: The Critical Moment."

7. Ask for a break. It is best to end the initial confrontation by arranging for another meeting to discuss the issues. This gives time for emotions to cool down. "I'm feeling a bit bewildered right now. I need some time to think so that I can be more sensitive to your needs. Could we meet next Monday to discuss the issues you raised?"

Include Others When Necessary

Only when private discussions fail to bring resolution and when the situation is too serious to overlook has the time come to follow Matt 18:16 and ask one or more others to become involved. It is preferable that these people be chosen with the mutual agreement of all parties involved.

If there is still no resolution, it may be time for church leaders to get involved, along with the whole church, as needed.¹

Be Reconciled

Reconciliation is the last phase in the Christian collaboration process. The goal here is to replace animosity and alienation with harmony and friendship. For full reconciliation, two things need to happen. First, personal issues, differences, and offenses must be laid to rest through confession and forgiveness. Then, if there are substantive issues, they must be negotiated and resolved.²

Forgive by Choice

Confession (discussed above) is inseparable from forgiveness and is an essential ingredient of the reconciliation process. It is not uncommon for each participant in a conflict to have something

¹Sande, 147-151.

²Ibid., 157.

related to that conflict to confess.

There can be no reconciliation without forgiveness. In Col 3:12-14, Paul counsels, "Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you." Many people choose not to forgive, because they misunderstand some aspects of forgiveness.¹ To comprehend forgiveness, it may be helpful first to see what forgiveness is not.

What forgiveness is not

William R. Miller and Kathleen A. Jackson delineate what forgiveness does not include. Forgiveness is not forgetting, nor does it require forgetting. Forgetting is a passive thing which happens to a person as time goes on. Forgiveness is active, involving a deliberate choice.

Forgiveness is not excusing. It is the opposite of excusing. Where there is an excuse, there is no need for forgiveness. Forgiveness is granted in spite of the wrong.

Forgiveness is not a reward. It cannot be earned or deserved. It is a gift one gives without considering worthiness.

Forgiveness is not a sanctioning of the wrong. If one approved, there would be no injury and there would be no need of forgiveness.

Forgiveness is not permission for the wrongdoer to stay the same. While forgiveness is given with the knowledge that the wrongdoer may not change, one forgives hoping for positive growth on the part of the other. Often forgiveness stimulates and enables change.²

¹William R. Miller and Kathleen A. Jackson, Practical Psychology for Pastors (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1985), 252.

²Ibid., 252.

What forgiveness is

Forgiveness is a decision, a choice, an act of the will. Because forgiveness is a decision, it is possible to forgive immediately, even though wounded feelings may take a good deal longer to heal.¹

When the offender has repented, forgiveness releases that person from liability. Forgiveness can be seen as a decision to make four promises:

"I will no longer dwell on this incident." "I will not bring up this incident again and use it against you." "I will not talk to others about this incident." "I will not allow this incident to stand between us or hinder our relationship."²

By choosing to make and keep these promises, one follows God's forgiving example in opening the door to a restored relationship.

Even when an offender has not repented, it is crucial to make the first forgiving commitment not to focus on the conflict event which has brought injury. Why should one suffer depression for another's sin?³ However, the other three promises of forgiveness are inappropriate until the wounder has come to repentance.⁴

Overcome unforgiveness

It can be difficult to make the commitments called for by true forgiveness, and even more difficult to keep them. However, any barriers to forgiveness can be overcome as one accepts and continues to experience God's forgiveness and grace.

Forgiveness is often blocked by sinful attitudes such as beliefs that the offender needs to suffer, ought to earn forgiveness,

¹Frank B. Minirth and Paul D. Meier, Happiness Is a Choice (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, 1978), 156.

²Sande, 164.

³Minirth and Meier, 154.

⁴Sande, 165.

or must guarantee that the offense will not happen again. These attitudes, which are in direct opposition to God's command to forgive (Matt 6:14,15; Mark 11:25,26), must be repented of.

Also, it is difficult to forgive when an offender's confession is not clear and specific. In this situation it may be wise to explain the difficulty to the offender.

One of the greatest helps in overcoming unforgiveness is remembering how God forgives. Too often one takes God's generous forgiveness for granted while withholding forgiveness from others. It is as if the wrongs others commit are worse than any sin of one's own which God has kindly forgiven. This attitude is an insult to God, as the parable of the king who forgave his ungrateful servant's huge debt illustrates (Matt 18:21-35).

As one reaches out to God in faith, knowing that "all things work together for good to them that love God" (Rom 8:28) and asking Him for the love and strength to forgive, the miracle of forgiveness becomes a reality in one's experience.¹

Put forgiveness into practice

Under God's guidance, true forgiveness is demonstrated in thought, word, and action--especially action. It is true that actions speak louder than words.

Loving actions toward the offender can bring two wonderful results. First, they erase any doubt in the offender's mind as to the genuineness of the forgiveness. Responding to its genuineness, the offender will probably find it easier to reach out and work hard to rebuild the relationship. Second, loving actions will help the forgiver to gradually overcome negative thoughts and feelings toward

¹Ibid., 166-170.

the offender.¹

Solve Substantive Differences
Together

Sometimes after areas of emotional conflict have been resolved for the most part, concrete (substantive) problems still remain. At other times substantive issues alone cause conflicts. Examples of substantive conflicts are disagreements over what color of carpet to put in a church, what a business contract means, or how to compensate for damage caused by an accident.

When it comes to resolving substantive conflicts, cooperative negotiation, often referred to as problem solving, is far superior to competition. Here, instead of viewing each other as enemies, participants choose to see themselves as allies who are coming together to solve a mutual difficulty. The problem becomes the enemy and the conflict partners attack it together.²

Before problem solving begins, one is wise to make careful preparations. This is the time to pray and study the Bible for wisdom, get advice from experienced Christians, gather facts, identify the issues involved, discover what motivates each participant, begin formulating solution options, select a meeting site and time, carefully plan opening remarks, and decide what to do if negotiations fail.³

The early tasks one has in a session to resolve substantive conflict are, first, to make sure the others involved understand the problem solving method (outlined below) and, second, to convince them

¹Ibid., 171-173.

²Joyce L. Hocker and William W. Wilmot, Interpersonal Conflict, 2d ed., (Dubuque, Iowa: Wm. C. Brown Publishers, 1985), 102.

³Sande, 180, 181.

that this method is superior to other alternatives. Cooperative problem-solving is preferable because it aims at meeting the needs of all concerned, and because other methods so commonly produce the negative results of resentment, rage, and frustration.¹

Define the problem

All parties involved in the conflict need to agree on a clear definition of the problem. There is a distinct advantage in understanding the problem in terms of participants' needs, rather than in terms of their positions or the solutions they desire.² When people take positions, they will usually become entrenched and defend them against each other. But when people focus on mutual interests instead of separate positions, they usually find that there are many possible solutions they may not have considered.³ The interests and needs which motivate people are often much more compatible than the solutions for which they strive.⁴

Uncovering perceived needs, even one's own, can be difficult. Another key is to ask the question, "Why is this solution being pursued?" The answer to this question points to perceived needs. Careful reflective listening is a helpful tool in determining the basic needs of others. Along with listening for the needs of others, it is essential to simply and clearly express one's own needs.⁵ The liberal use of "I" messages is essential at this point.

When all agree that the others involved understand their needs, the needs can be formulated into one statement of the problem.

¹Bolton, 252.

²Ibid., 240.

³Hocker and Wilmot, 103, 104.

⁴Sande, 184, 185.

⁵Bolton, 241, 243.

Because of the stress of conflict, this process may take a considerable amount of time even when major features of the problem seem clear from the beginning. However, it is time well spent.¹

Brainstorm

Now it is time for participants to brainstorm. The objective of brainstorming is to quickly come up with numerous potential solutions. This is not the time to criticize or even evaluate ideas. The evaluation will take place after brainstorming.²

During brainstorming it is desirable to welcome unusual contributions. The proposals which seem silly may prove to be valuable upon evaluation. Some of the best solutions grow out of seemingly outlandish suggestions. Many are arrived at by combining elements of various solution ideas.³

Select a solution

After brainstorming it is time to select the solution or combination of solutions that will best meet the needs of all involved. Now is the time for one to look for options that provide advantages for both sides. In weighing the alternatives, one needs to steer away from personal feelings and be as objective as possible.⁴

Instead of wasting time eliminating options, it is best to focus on solutions favored by participants, looking for areas of concurrence. If the needs have been well defined at the beginning, some of the same solutions may well be chosen by both sides.⁵

¹Ibid., 242, 243.

²Nel-Jones, 247.

³Sande, 190; Bolton, 243-245.

⁴Sande, 190, 191.

⁵Bolton, 245.

During negotiations at this stage, it may be necessary for participants to modify positions somewhat, perhaps making trade-offs. It is well for one to recognize and communicate appreciation for any concessions made by others.¹ Also, one needs to keep in mind that when people in the opposing camp are satisfied with the agreement, they will be motivated to implement it.²

If negotiations seem to come to a stalemate, one must not give up too soon. A number of strategies may still help. One is to back up and carefully go through the earlier steps again. Another is to summarize what has been accomplished and what still needs to be accomplished and then to take a break from negotiations for a few hours or even days. A third is to agree that unresolved issues be settled with the help of one or more mediators.³

When a solution has been agreed to, the settlement needs to be clearly formalized. Unclear agreements are more likely to be broken, rekindling the conflict.⁴

At the simplest level, an agreement contract may be verbally rehearsed by all involved. Usually, however, it is better to write out an agreement contract. Agreements need to include specifics involving such things as who is responsible for what, timetables, and other particulars detailing how the solution will be implemented.⁵

Implement and evaluate the solution

Now it is time to act upon the agreement. If one becomes dissatisfied with the agreement, rather than breaking the contract,

¹Nelson-Jones, 247.

²Bolton, 245.

³Sande, 193.

⁴Nelson-Jones, 247.

⁵Shawchuck, 7.

one can call for a renegotiation. In fact, it is advisable to include a clause in the agreement calling for a later evaluation and leaving open the possibility that the agreement will need to be adjusted somewhat.¹

Summary

The goal of this chapter has been to describe positive approaches to understanding and dealing with conflict as they are outlined in current, mainly Christian, literature. Care has been taken to ensure that these concepts are in harmony with the principles outlined in chapter 2 of this work.

The attitudes people have toward conflict make a definite difference in how they relate to it. While conflict is described as mainly negative by some authorities, it is best seen as a positive opportunity.

Five common modes of relating to conflict are competing, avoiding, compromising, accommodating, and collaborating. While there is a place for each of these modes, collaborating is usually the most effective way of relating to conflict.

However, when those collaborating do not have a deep trust in God, this mode of relating to conflict produces incomplete and somewhat shallow results. Christian collaboration is the most effective mode of dealing with conflict. Christian collaboration can be understood in four distinct phases: "glorify God," "consider self," "confront the other," and "be reconciled."

At the beginning of a conflict, Christians need to remember that conflict need not be seen as something awful, and neither should it be assessed as a chance to gain a selfish advantage over others. Conflict is an opportunity to bring glory to God, to do service for

¹Nelson-Jones, 247, 248.

others, and to grow to be more Christlike. Persistent prayer at this point brings spiritual balance to the evaluation of the conflict situations.

After centering upon God and His concerns and before focusing on others involved in the conflict, Christians need to look inward and consider in what ways they may have contributed to the conflict situation. Perhaps their own unhealthy attitudes and ways of thinking are inflaming the conflict unnecessarily.

Once God's concerns have been identified and personal contributions to the conflict have been considered, it is time for Christians to begin confronting the others involved as part of the restoration process. This involves a willingness to honestly confess personal failings which may have contributed to conflict situations. Positive, open, and caring communication is an essential part of this phase.

Reconciliation is the last phase of the Christian collaboration process. The goal here is to replace animosity and alienation with harmony and friendship. A willingness to truly forgive is an essential element of reconciliation. This attitude lays a foundation for the sincere negotiations often necessary to resolve substantive issues that may lie near the core of conflicts.

Conclusion

In this modern world many helpful concepts and techniques are available to aid people in dealing with conflict situations. However, where God and His will are disregarded during conflicts by non-Christians or Christians, the results of applying these positive concepts and techniques are frequently disappointing. Yet, when dedicated Christians choose to trust God to guide them through the stresses of conflict situations, they find that He can bring beneficial results from any conflict situation. This is especially

true of those who understand the dynamics of conflict and who have made the effort to learn conflict-management skills.

CHAPTER FOUR

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT

Introduction

This chapter includes a description of the Hazelton Seventh-day Adventist Church and its community, a description of those who participated in "Peacemaking" (my seminar on the positive resolution of interpersonal and substantive conflict), a description of the seminar itself, and an overview of the sequence of events leading up to the presentation of the seminar.

The Hazelton Seventh-day Adventist Church and Its Setting

It is hardly possible to understand the Hazelton Seventh-day Adventist Church without understanding something about the local community in which it exists.

The Community of Hazelton

In the northwestern Canadian province of British Columbia a number of small settlements are clustered closely together near the junction of the Skeena and Bulkley rivers. Collectively they are often called the Hazeltons or just Hazelton, as they will be known hereinafter.

Hazelton is surrounded by rugged, snowcapped mountains and vast forests. The Yellowhead Highway (#16), which links the large farms of the Canadian prairies with the Pacific port of Prince

Rupert,¹ arcs to its most northerly point at Hazelton. No other paved roads pass directly through Hazelton, but twenty-seven miles southwest, the Cassiar Highway (#37)² branches north from the Yellowhead Highway.

Currently Hazelton is made up of six small communities, two of them on First Nation (Indian or native)³ reserves.⁴ The communities on First Nation reserves with their resident populations are Gitanmaax (555) and Hagwilget (185). The other communities with their resident populations are Hazelton (339), New Hazelton (785), South Hazelton (605), and Two Mile (498).

The total population of Hazelton is close to 3000 people, of whom about 25 percent are of Indian ancestry. In a much larger adjacent area with Hazelton roughly in the middle,⁵ there are 6500 residents of whom at least 55 percent are of Indian ancestry. Nearly all of the non-Indian residents are White.

The local economy is almost completely dependant upon the timber industry. Most employed residents either do logging or work in a mill that processes timber. Some have government jobs, and a few are engaged in agriculture.

¹Prince Rupert is located 176 miles southwest of Hazelton.

²The Cassiar Highway is the newest land route to the Yukon and Alaska.

³In Canada the term "First Nations" is commonly used to refer to Indian and Inuit (Eskimo) peoples. In northern British Columbia, Indians are commonly referred to as "natives."

⁴Tracts of land under the jurisdiction of First Nations are called "reserves."

⁵On Highway #16 this area goes from Morristown which is 20 miles southeast of Hazelton to Cedarvale, which is 37 miles southwest of Hazelton. Also included are people living in habitable areas near the highway. These are mainly north of the Highway #16 up to 30 miles along the Kispiox valley and along Highway #37.

Analysis of Potential for Conflict Among
Residents of the Community

Three chronic areas of significant conflict influence thought and life in the Hazeltons:

1. There are festering tensions between residents who are of Indian ancestry and other residents.

2. There are large land-claim disputes between First Nations band counsels and various levels of government in Canada.

3. There are disagreements in philosophy between forest-product workers and environmentalists.

Even though most non-Indians would deny it, I believe there is a significant amount of prejudice in the Hazelton area against Indians. Many consider the majority of Indians to be somewhat lazy, untrustworthy, or incompetent. Naturally the Indians are offended by these negative attitudes and react against them. Among Indians there is a strong feeling that they have been mistreated and that their lands have been stolen. Many non-Indian residents fear that Indians will try to gain legal control of private properties owned by others and many non-Indians resent what they consider to be preferential treatment of Indians by the provincial and federal governments.

The local bands of Gitksan and Wetsuwet'en peoples claim ownership to vast areas of valuable timber land. Their claims are strengthened by the fact that the government has never made any treaty agreements with them. During the past few years, the Gitksan and Wetsuwet'en peoples have drawn attention to their claims by well-publicized court cases and with the occasional blockading of logging roads, the highway, and even the railroad. As a result, many non-Indian residents have been very angered. Currently, both the federal and provincial governments are negotiating land claims made by local First Nation peoples.

In British Columbia, environmentalists are quick to support

the land claims of the First Nations. They strongly criticize local logging practices and sometimes successfully hamper logging operations.¹ Environmentalists have been much more active elsewhere in the province than in this area, but local loggers and their families are keenly interested in this issue. They are deeply disturbed by any interference with their livelihood.

The Hazelton Seventh-day Adventist Church

When it comes to religion, a large percentage of people in the Hazeltons are relatively uninvolved. There are six Protestant churches and one Catholic church in the community. While none of them is very large, the Seventh-day Adventist Church is probably the largest.

The Hazelton Seventh-day Adventist Church sanctuary is located on three acres of land with the church school building in the village of Two Mile. It is an attractive and relatively new structure, easily seating over 200 people. It was dedicated in 1989 and currently meets the needs of the 126-member congregation that meets there.

The beginnings of the congregation go back to the early 1950s when several Seventh-day Adventist families moved into the Hazelton area. In 1956, the church group was formally organized with eleven charter members.

Early services were held in the Anglican Church Army Hall. In the fall of 1956, pastor Ronald Reimche, ministerial intern, George Reid, and local members began to build an Adventist church between Two Mile and Old Hazelton. By the next spring, worship services were being held in the newly completed church basement. The new church was officially opened and dedicated in September of 1957.

¹Relatively few Indians work as loggers.

That structure served the needs of the congregation until the present sanctuary was constructed.

The Hazelton Seventh-day Adventist Church operates a church school with twenty-seven students under the tutelage of two teachers. The aging school building is chronically mice-infested, and its basement usually floods in the spring when the snow melts. There is no gymnasium. The outdoor recreation area is adequate with a backstop at one end and a few pieces of old but mostly usable playground equipment on the edge. In the fall of 1993, parents and students erected an outdoor ice arena.

With a large number of babies and small children belonging to families in the church, the church school enrollment will probably remain at least stable in the foreseeable future. Since there are no other Christian schools in the area, the Hazelton SDA School could possibly boost its enrollment and become an effective evangelistic outreach tool by actively recruiting non-Adventist students. However, church members show little interest in the idea, perhaps fearing that their children would be negatively influenced and that they would have to build a larger school plant.

The Hazelton Seventh-day Adventist Church is not very involved in community activities. The Pathfinder Club helps with some community service projects and every year it marches in the Remembrance Day Parade on November 11. The Dorcas Society is known in the Hazelton area for the "fire boxes" packed with household basics it gives to residents whose homes burn down.¹

Evangelistically, the church has not made a large impact on

¹Since many homes in this area are heated by wood stoves, house fires are not uncommon during the winter months.

Hazelton.¹ It has sporadically offered various seminars to the community. Every second or third summer, when someone musters enough energy to lead out, a Vacation Bible School is sponsored. Usually there are one or two Bible study groups going which include non-members. During the period between 1990 and 1994, two full-scale evangelistic series were held in Hazelton. Church members supported them quite well, but otherwise the results were mediocre.

Currently in the Hazelton area there is no evangelistic outreach designed specifically to reach local Indian people. Most likely this is at least partly because there are almost no Indian members in the Hazelton Seventh-day Adventist Church. There is one member whose ancestry is one quarter Cree, but he is not originally from this area.²

Analysis of Potential for Conflict Among Members of the Church

The Hazelton Seventh-day Adventist Church has proven to be a spawning place for a wide array of negative conflicts. Besides the expected sources of conflict, there are unique features and situations that seem to perpetuate friction.

One distinctive feature about the Hazelton Seventh-day Adventist Church is that the husband or wife in 80 percent of church couples is related to someone in at least one other church family. Many church members are related to numerous other members.

This phenomenon results from the fact that an unusually high percentage of second- and third-generation Adventists have chosen to remain in the Hazelton community. There are three families where

¹Almost all of the church members have moved into the area to work in the timber industry.

²It is my opinion that First Nations people do not feel completely comfortable or accepted in the Hazelton Seventh-day Adventist Church.

parents along with four married children and their spouses are local church members. There are eight other families where parents and at least one married child are local church members. The potential for conflict is heightened because a number of people from these families have married each other and some have since obtained divorces.

Most of the employed male members work in the logging industry. Five of them have been or are logging contractors who employ at least five workers. Four others have been associated as partners in horse logging.¹ Since it is easier to get Sabbaths off with an Adventist contractor, many of the Adventist employees have hired on with Adventist bosses. This is another possible field for conflict.

I estimate that at least twenty, and probably more, male and female church members have been sexually abused by other church members. As far as can be determined, most of the abuse happened over ten years ago. I am unaware of any sexual abuse within the past five years. Six or seven years ago, a man lost his membership and went to jail for being a sexual abuser. Since then, at least four other members have been accused, mostly in private, of being sexual abusers. This has been and will probably continue to be an explosive and divisive issue in the Hazelton Seventh-day Adventist Church.

A minimum of eighteen couples in the Hazelton Church have had serious marital problems in the last five years. In most cases, both the husband and wife have been church members. Five of the eighteen couples have divorced.

A complicating factor related to local instances of sexual abuse and the marital conflict is that some influential members of

¹A few logging contractors use horses instead of machines to drag trees out of the forest. Horse logging is most useful in places that will not be clear cut or where the environment is especially sensitive.

the Hazelton Church are suspicious of and somewhat judgmental toward psychology and counselling. They have applied various forms of pressure to discourage others from consulting counsellors. In spite of that pressure, a large number of members have sought out counsellors in order to find help in dealing with their sexual abuse and/or marriage problems.¹ Interlocked with the conflict about counselling is a festering debate about "dysfunction" in families.

Two factors seem to be related to this and other conflicts: the members' ages and the amount of post-secondary education to which they have been exposed.

The membership of the Hazelton Seventh-day Adventist Church is unusually young. Just over 50 percent of adult church members are between twenty and forty years old. Moreover, 17 percent of the total membership have not yet reached twenty years of age.

With regard to education, only 35 percent of adult members have had any exposure to college at all, and only 12% have received a college degree. In some areas, it seems that the attitudes of the majority of those who have not attended college are somewhat narrow.

While lines of thought in the Hazelton Seventh-day Adventist Church are not strictly drawn along age or education boundaries, younger members and better-educated members tend to be more likely to favor innovations, while older members and less-educated members tend to oppose them. Examples of recent conflicts in Hazelton that have divided members roughly along lines of age and/or education include whether or not to accept women as elders in the church,² whether or

¹The fact that I have encouraged numerous people to see counsellors has certainly not strengthened my relationships with the church leaders who oppose what they call "psychology." Interestingly, none of the anti-counselling members attended my "Peacemaking" classes.

²A conflict over whether or not to approve women elders was extremely divisive a year or two before I arrived in Hazelton in 1990. A women elder was actually voted into office but never

not to accept government aid for our church school,¹ and whether or not to allow church members who wear wedding rings to assume important offices.²

Description of Seminar Participants

Various factors relating to the participants are revealed in tables 1 and 2. They are considered in the following categories: general information, church relationship, and seminar attendance.

General Information

Of the seventeen people who participated in "Peacemaking," twelve were female and five were male. The 29 percent male participation in the seminar was lower than the percentage of males in the Hazelton congregation, which stands at 42 percent.³

The age of the participants was slightly older than the average age of the congregation.⁴ Of the participants, 59 percent were under forty. In the congregation, 67 percent are under forty. The average age of participants was just over forty-one.

ordained. There have been no women elders nominated in Hazelton since.

¹At a contentious Church Business meeting in the spring of 1990, it was decided to accept government aid from the province of British Columbia. Our Hazelton school was one of the very last Adventist schools in British Columbia to accept this assistance. While some older members still oppose this move, our school is now receiving in excess of \$50,000 each year.

²The wedding ring issue came up at my first church board meeting after moving here in January of 1990. The wearing of wedding rings was most strongly opposed by the older members. Eventually the church board reluctantly decided to go along with the official General Conference pronouncement on wedding rings.

³Most of the husbands are loggers who are often not very interested in attending meetings after a long day of work. Also it may be that women are more interested in the topic of "Peacemaking."

⁴This is mainly because none of the numerous younger members, many of whom are under 16 years of age, attended the seminar.

TABLE 1

SEMINAR PARTICIPANTS DATA

Per- son	Sex	Marital Status	Age	Years an SDA	Years of School	Profession	Church Offices
A	M	Married	35	Raised an SDA	12	Logger	Sound System School Board Deacon
B	F	Married	34	Raised an SDA	10	Housewife/ Bookkeeper	Home and School School Board Church Board
C	F	Widowed	72	40	8	Housewife	Greeter
D	F	Married	36	Raised an SDA	14	Housewife	Deaconess Assistant Superintendent
E	F	Married	66	8	10	Farmer	--
F	M	Married	65	8	12	Farmer	--
G	M	Married	28	Raised an SDA	9	Laborer	Church Librarian
H	M	Married	46	24	26	Physician	Temperance Leader Church Board
I	F	Married	44	8	14	Housewife	Pathfinders Greeter School Board
J	M	Married	44	Not an SDA	14	Saw Mill Inspector	--
K	F	Married	43	26	13	Housewife	Assistant Secretary
L	F	Single	18	Raised an SDA	12	Gas Station Attendant	--
M	F	Married	39	Raised an SDA	15	Housewife	Assistant Superintendent
N	F	Married	39	Not an SDA	10	Housewife	--
O	F	Married	30	Not an SDA	12	Housewife	--
P	F	Single	36	Raised an SDA	16	Teacher	Church School Teacher
Q	F	Married	31	Raised an SDA	12	Housewife	Cradle Roll Leader

Just over 80 percent of those who attended "Peacemaking" were married,¹ while only 58% of church members are married.² Compared to the church, which contains a large number of young, unmarried members, only two participants of "Peacemaking" were unmarried.

The educational level of "Peacemaking" participants was higher than that of the local congregation. While 44 percent of participants had received some college training, only 35 percent of church members in general have attended any college classes.³

Nine participants were wives of forest industry workers. Three of the men who attended worked in logging-related occupations. One couple grew and sold alfalfa sprouts for a living. A physician, a gas station attendant, and a church school teacher also attended.

Relationship to the Church

Eight of the seventeen "Peacemaking" participants had been reared in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The other Adventists had belonged to the church for eight years or more.

Three of the seventeen participants were not members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. One woman was studying the Bible with church members and frequently attended church. A second woman was studying the Bible with a church member and rarely attended church. The third was the Jewish husband of a church member who was also a participant. He never attended church services, but he did participate in a few other church-related functions.⁴

All but three of the attending church members held church

¹Three couples were in attendance.

²There are 32 couples who are local church members. Only 6 members have spouses who are not church members.

³Of the participants, 2 had college degrees.

⁴The Jewish participant was not comfortable with the Christian content of "Peacemaking," but he did not miss a session.

offices. Two were on the church board and two were on the school board. A deacon and a deaconess, but no elders, attended.

Attendance Record

Participant attendance at "Peacemaking" sessions is indicated in Table 2. Attendance at the actual sessions of "Peacemaking" was just over 85 percent. Of the eighty-five possible person/sessions, twelve were missed. Seven participants took time to make up a session each by reading a printed copy of the missed lecture or by listening to it on a cassette recording. When these seven made-up sessions are taken into account, the "attendance" is raised to 94 percent, with participants missing only five person/sessions.

Attendance was least at the third and fifth sessions of "Peacemaking." It is not known why so many participants missed the third session. Each of the five person/sessions which were not made up occurred with the fifth presentation. At least three of these were connected to "spring breakup."¹

Twelve participants, 71 percent, were exposed to the material of every session and took both tests. Five participants did not attend the fifth session and did not take the final test.²

Observations

In some ways the group of participants in "Peacemaking" was a fairly good cross section of the Hazelton Seventh-day Adventist Church. But as has been shown above, the group of participants could not be classified as being completely representative of the Hazelton

¹"Spring breakup" is a muddy thaw time, usually beginning at the end of March and extending well into May, when logging is virtually shut down. Many loggers take vacations during this season.

²These 5 were given tapes or printed copies of the fifth session lecture along with the second test to be taken at the end. None of them completed the second test and it is not known whether they listened to or read the final lecture.

TABLE 2

ATTENDANCE RECORD

Person	1st Test	Session Number					2nd Test
		1	2	3	4	5	
A	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
B	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
C	X	Made up ^a	X	X	X	-	-
D	X	X	X	X	X	-	-
E	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
F	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
G	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
H	X	X	X	Made up	X	-	-
I	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
J	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
K	X	X	X	X	Made up	X	X
L	X	X	X	Made up	X	-	-
M	X	X	X	X	Made up	X	X
N	X	X	X	Made up	X	X	X
O	X	X	X	Made up	X	-	-
P	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Q	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

^a"Made up" indicates that the session was missed but that the participant made it up by listening to a recording of it or by reading the printed lecture.

Seventh-day Adventist Church. Indeed, none of the numerous church members who are younger than eighteen attended. In addition, some of the participants were not church members at all.

I was somewhat disappointed that none of the members whom I consider to be the primary leaders of the church chose to attend. However, seven of the participants are rising leaders who will probably assume a primary leadership role in the not-too-far-distant future. Since the modeling of conflict resolution skills by church leaders is vital to helping all church members learn the skills, it is likely that "Peacemaking" will have a long-term positive impact on the church as participants become more and more influential.¹ This expectation is based on an assumption that, since participants choose to attend "Peacemaking" voluntarily, they will be motivated to continue applying the principles they have learned.

Description of "Peacemaking"

"Peacemaking" was designed to be a learning experience where participants were (1) exposed to information about conflict management and resolution that was Christian, understandable, positive, and practical, and (2) involved in small-group experiences which supported and illustrated the information presented in the lectures.

The five-session seminar started with a general introduction to conflict. The other four sessions were devoted to the following steps in addressing conflict: (1) trusting in God before and during conflict, (2) identifying personal contributions to the conflict situation, (3) successfully confronting others involved in the

¹It is very possible that "Peacemaking" will be offered again in the Hazelton church, either in its present form, in a more concentrated weekend seminar form, or it may even be transformed into a series of sermons. If this happens, more members will be exposed to the peacemaking principles.

conflict, and (4) resolving substantive problems relating to the conflict and becoming reconciled.

Instructional Goals

It was expected that a number of instructional goals would be reached during the "Peacemaking" sessions. These goals are listed below and the sessions in which they were addressed are indicated by the numbers in parentheses after each goal statement.

The basic goals for "Peacemaking" were that participants would:

1. Understand the sources of conflict from a theological standpoint. (1)
2. Grasp the biblically valid principles of conflict management and resolution and be able to discern them in conflict situations recorded in the Bible. (1-5)
3. Become familiar with Ellen White's illumination of sound conflict management and resolution principles.¹ (1-5)
4. Discover that God created people to be diverse, to think differently, and to have unique interests and strengths. (1)
5. Come to value the diversity among humans while at the same time nurturing and treasuring unity with others. (1-5)
6. View conflicts, even the most serious, as potential doorways to opportunity and positive growth by God's grace. (1-5)
7. Discover that a deep trust in God is absolutely basic to the true resolution of conflict. (1, 2)
8. Accept as fact that, while learning conflict management and resolution skills is beneficial, those skills are incomplete at best unless they are balanced by and built upon a deep trust in God. (1, 2)

¹At each session material from Ellen White on the topics presented were given to participants.

9. Become aware of the three types and the five levels of conflict. (1)
10. Be able to explain the five common modes of relating to conflict along with the advantages and disadvantages of each. (1, 2)
11. Be able to explain the phases of Christian collaboration. (2-5)
12. Find out how certain common, irrational thought patterns, especially "demandingness," "awfulizing," and "perfectionism" block positive ways of relating to conflict. (2, 3)
13. Come to see how irrational thinking commonly turns anger toward destructive results in conflicts. (3, 4)
14. Learn to relate to anger in a positive manner. (3, 4)
15. Discover how to cancel the negative demands of anger and channel the energy of anger toward positive ends. (3)
16. Know how to confess wholeheartedly and simply. (3)
17. Learn to confront others positively. (4)
18. Understand the importance of strengthening an opponent in order to build an environment of trust in which conflict can be dealt with constructively. (4)
19. Comprehend the importance of real listening. (4)
20. Accept the value of speaking simply, briefly, kindly, and honestly. (4)
21. Begin to become comfortable using "I messages." (4)
22. Become familiar with a method of relating to unexpected verbal attacks. (4)
23. Be able to explain the four major steps of problem-solving. (5)
24. Know what true forgiveness is not and what it is. (5)

Instructional Materials

Participants were given three-ring binders with five

dividers, one for each of the five "Peacemaking" sessions. At the beginning of each session, participants were given a packet of punched handouts which they snapped into their notebooks.¹

The core of each packet of handouts was a section of six to eight pages which included the most significant parts of the lecture material. These notes were interspersed with several blanks on which participants were to fill in missing words as the lecture progressed. For each blank space, participants heard the answer from the presenter and also saw it via an overhead transparency. Overheads also illustrated many of the concepts with humorous images.

In each packet, handouts were also provided for two or more group activities. Other handouts included the Conflict Attitude Test, a course outline, a bibliography, and various pages of extra information. The last section of each packet was a five-to-seven-page series of quotations by Ellen White on the topics presented during the session.

The Individual Sessions

The length of each "Peacemaking" session was between 90 and 105 minutes. Sessions were divided into segments which averaged between 15 and 20 minutes in length.² The format of each "Peacemaking" session was similar. All began with a devotional and prayer.³ Lecture segments were alternated with small group learning segments. Questions were welcomed at any time.

¹All of these handouts are included in appendix 2.

²See the lesson plans in appendix 2.

³The devotionals, which focused upon Bible conflict situations, served to show how people in the Bible related to conflict and also were designed to review conflict information which had been presented the week before.

Session One--"One + One
= Conflict"

The theme was to introduce conflict-coping modes. The purpose was: (1) To present a theology of conflict which recognizes the positive benefits that can arise from conflict situations, but does not excuse the common negative results of conflict, (2) to define the three categories of conflict, (3) to make participants aware of the five levels of conflict, and (4) to thoroughly discuss the five basic ways in which people relate to conflict.

Session Two--"Before Reacting,
Look Up and In"

The theme was on the importance of a balanced trust in God and the danger of irrational thought patterns during conflict. The purpose was: (1) to emphasize the vital importance of trusting in God during conflict situations, and (2) to point out the three selfish and irrational thought patterns that commonly turn conflicts toward negative results.

Session Three--"What to Do
with Your Anger"

The theme was on how to relate to anger and how to make a confession. The purpose was: (1) to explain the benefits and dangers of anger, (2) to show how irrational thinking produces negative anger, and (3) to consider the nature and importance of confession.

Session Four--"Confrontation,
a Doorway to Harmony"

The theme was on positive confrontation with an emphasis on communication skills. The purpose was: (1) to explain and demonstrate the importance of building an atmosphere of trust during conflict situations by communicating sincere respect of opponents, (2) to explain and demonstrate the importance of skillful listening

during conflict situations, (3) to explain how to send effective verbal messages during conflict situations with special attention on learning how to give "I messages," and (4) to present a plan for relating to unexpected negative confrontations.

Session Five--"Finding Reconciliation and Peace"

The theme was on forgiveness and a sequence for solving substantive problems. The purpose was: (1) to present a four-step plan for solving disagreements and problems that can begin when opponents are willing to come together to attack, not each other, but their mutual problem, and (2) to explain what forgiveness is not and to point out what forgiveness is.

Events Leading up to the Presentation of "Peacemaking"

Members of the Hazelton Seventh-day Adventist congregation first heard of this project before I became their pastor. In November of 1989 when I was considering an invitation to be the Hazelton pastor, I traveled to Hazelton and met with members of the church board. At that time I let the board members know that I was working toward a Doctor of Ministry degree through Andrews University.

After I accepted the call to Hazelton, my periodic travels to Walla Walla College or Andrews University to take Doctor of Ministry classes reminded the church members of my involvement in the degree program.

In November of 1993 I wrote an article for "In Touch," the Hazelton Church newsletter.¹ In that article I gave a report of the progress I had made in the Doctor of Ministry program and stated that

¹A copy of this article is included in appendix 1.

I planned to have a seminar on conflict resolution ready for presentation by late January. I invited people interested in the seminar to contact me. In the December "In Touch" I included another article updating my progress.¹

At the December church board meeting, I presented a report on my seminar. The church board voted that I could present my seminar, beginning sometime in January.

The January, 1994, "In Touch" carried the following announcement:

If you would like to participate in Pastor Bruce Boyd's 5-session Conflict Resolution Seminar which will probably begin in late January or early February, please put a note to that effect in Pastor Boyd's mail box. It seems very likely that anyone who is willing to come to all sessions or make up missed sessions will be accepted into the seminar. Watch for further announcements after Pastor Boyd returns in January.

By this time, a number of people had become interested enough to talk to me about the possibility of attending my seminar.

It took longer to prepare the seminar than I expected. On Friday, February 18, I printed a general letter which I distributed in the church mail boxes to every church member.² The letter invited all church members to participate in "Peacemaking" on Thursday evenings. It asked those who were interested to meet with me after church when we could settle on a starting time for each session. Only four or five people met with me, but I knew of a number of others who planned to attend. We selected 7:00 P.M. as a starting time.

¹A copy of this article is included in appendix 1.

²A copy of the letter is in appendix 1.

The first session of "Peacemaking" met on Thursday evening, February 24. Sessions continued each Thursdays through March 24.

Participants filled out the "Conflict Attitude Test"¹ at the beginning of the first session and at the end of the fifth session. The results of these tests are discussed in chapter 5.

Four pastors in the province of British Columbia were recruited² to help me select a control group for my project. I asked each of them to hand-deliver, at random, ten envelopes that each contained the "Conflict Attitude Test,"³ a cover letter,⁴ and a self-addressed, stamped envelope. This was done on Sabbath, February 26, or soon thereafter. Thirty-one out of the forty people contacted returned the test to me.

On March 20, a second copy of the test was sent with a cover letter and a self-addressed and stamped envelope to the thirty-one control group members who had responded.⁵ Of the thirty-one second tests sent out, twenty-six were returned. The results of these tests are considered in chapter five.

Summary

The goals of this chapter have been to characterize the community and the church in which "Peacemaking" was offered, to

¹Jan Johnson gave me permission to use this test which he created as an evaluation tool for his "Conflict Skills Seminar." A copy of the "Conflict Attitude Test" is found in appendix 3.

²The first 4 pastors I phoned agreed to assist with my project. I sent each pastor a packet of 10 sealed test envelopes. A sample of the cover letter, which I sent in each packet, is found in appendix 3.

³This test was identical to the one given to "Peacemaking" participants with the exception that it asked for names and addresses so that a second copy of it could be sent to control group members.

⁴See appendix 3.

⁵For a sample of this letter, see appendix 3.

describe the people who attended the seminar, and to outline the events which led up to the presentation of the seminar.

The Hazelton Seventh-day Adventist Church is a large-for-the-area congregation located in a cluster of small towns known as the Hazeltons or just Hazelton. The community is significantly troubled by some unique conflicts that center on relationships between Indians and non-Indians, between Indian governing bodies and other governments, and between environmentalists and those who work in the timber industry. The church is not very active evangelistically and is challenged by serious conflict situations, which are complicated by deep-rooted family tensions and widespread past sexual abuse.

The body of "Peacemaking" participants was not completely representative of the church membership at large; in fact three of them were not church members at all. In contrast with the average church member, the average participant was somewhat older, was more likely to be married, and was better educated. Of the fourteen participants who were church members, all had been members at least eight years and all but three held at least one church office. However none of the participants were prominent church leaders.

The "Peacemaking" seminar is designed to help participants learn through lectures and small-group exercises to manage and resolve conflict in an effective, Christian manner. The five-session course moves through four basic areas: (1) trusting in God during conflict, (2) identifying personal contributions to conflict, (3) confronting others while in conflict, and (4) becoming reconciled.

The Hazelton church members first became aware that I would be doing a D. min. project in Hazelton as soon as I was called to become the pastor of the Hazelton Church in 1989. Specific promotion of "Peacemaking" began in November 1993.

Before the first session and again after the fifth session,

participants took the "Conflict Attitude Test." A randomly selected control group made up of Seventh-day Adventists from four pastoral districts in British Columbia also took the tests at approximately the same times.

CHAPTER FIVE

EVALUATION OF THE PROJECT

Introduction

This chapter investigates the effects of "Peacemaking" in order to determine whether it influenced or changed participants' attitudes concerning conflict. This evaluation is based on the following factors: (1) testing results, (2) evaluation feedback from participants, and (3) my own observations. Recommendations for future implementations of "Peacemaking" are included at the end of this chapter.

Testing Results

The Conflict Attitude Test was utilized to evaluate changes in "Peacemaking" participants' attitudes toward conflict and to make comparisons with a control group. This instrument was developed by Jan Johnson to test participants in a conflict-skills seminar which he presented as part of his D. min. project in 1986.¹

The Conflict Attitude Test contains thirty-five questions. Three of these, which centered on areas not directly covered by "Peacemaking," were eliminated from the test version that was used to evaluate its effectiveness. The thirty-two remaining questions can be divided into five categories: (1) the sources of conflict, (2) the resolving of conflict, (3) the morality of conflict, (4) the

¹On p. 120 of his Project Report, Jan Johnson describes his Conflict Attitude Test as a "quasi-experimental test using a nonequivalent control group design with a pretest and posttest." For more detailed information about the Conflict Attitude Test, see Jan Johnson, 120-125, 148-151, and 324-332.

TABLE 3

CONFLICT ATTITUDE TEST SCORES

<u>Treatment Group Member's Scores</u>		<u>Control Group Member's Scores</u>	
Pretest	Posttest	Pretest	Posttest
91	119	96	90
111	116	121	128
140	141	104	105
120	129	101	108
110	138	116	108
137	143	116	121
112	136	80	92
121	154	132	131
118	129	121	121
135	150	116	124
117	115	137	134
119	151	98	96
		119	115
		124	119
		87	79
		108	103
		117	119
		99	99
		114	116
		110	109
		85	96
		101	93
		114	106
		84	88
		96	95
		105	109

results of conflict, and (5) a self-appraisal in conflict.¹

The treatment group was made up of the twelve "Peacemaking" participants--nine of them local Seventh-day Adventists, who filled out the "Conflict Attitude Test" immediately before and immediately after the five seminar lectures.² The control group was made up of twenty-six randomly selected Seventh-day Adventists who filled out the "Conflict Attitude Test" near the beginning and soon after the five "Peacemaking" lectures were delivered to the treatment group.

The highest possible score which could be achieved on the Conflict Attitude Test was 160 points. The treatment group scores on the first application of the test ranged from 91 to 140 points. (See Table 3 for each individual's test scores.) On the second application, the same group's scores ranged from 115 to 154. The control group scores on the first application of the test ranged from 80 to 137 points. On the second application, scores for the control group ranged from 79 to 134 points.

The treatment group arithmetic mean³ (see table 4) indicates a shift of over fifteen (+15.8333) points upward from the pretest to the posttest. The control group arithmetic mean shows a slight negative shift (-.1923) between the two test applications for the control group.

¹For an analysis of each question that identifies the category into which it fits, see table 7 in appendix 3.

²Five of the original 17 participants missed the fifth session for various reasons and did not fill out the second test.

³The arithmetic mean is discovered by adding together the observed values (test scores in this case) and dividing by the number of observations. A serious drawback of the arithmetic mean is that it is greatly affected by very large or small values. Lawrence L. Lapin, Business Statistics (Fort Worth: Harcourt Brace College Publishers, 1984), 24.

TABLE 4

TREATMENT AND CONTROL GROUP ARITHMETIC MEANS

Test Group	Pretest	Posttest
Treatment Group	119.25	135.0833
Control Group	107.7307	107.5384

The treatment group median¹ (see table 5) shows a positive shift of 18.5 points upward from the pretest to the posttest. The control group median indicates a two-point drop between the two test applications.

TABLE 5

TREATMENT AND CONTROL GROUP MEDIANS

Test Group	Pretest	Posttest
Treatment Group	118.5	137
Control Group	109.0	107

The strong upward shift from pretest to posttest in the treatment group arithmetic mean and median seems to indicate a significant change in the attitudes toward conflict among "Peacemaking" participants between the two test applications. In contrast, the almost static, even slightly negative result for persons in the control group seems to indicate that their attitudes toward conflict remained nearly constant during the same period. It may be deduced that the positive shift experienced by treatment group

¹The median is the middle value which is identified after sorting and ordering all observations (test scores) by increasing values. The median is not unduly affected by extremely high or low values. Lapin, 25.

members resulted from their participation in the "Peacemaking" seminar.

Evaluation Feedback from Participants

A feedback sheet (see table 6) was distributed to "Peacemaking" participants at the end of the fifth session.¹ Participants were invited to express their opinions in ten areas. Eight of the areas dealt with the following elements of "Peacemaking": (1) devotionals, (2) lectures, (3) lecture handouts, (4) information handouts, (5) Ellen White quotation handouts, (6) group activities, (7) the number of sessions, and (8) the length of each session. The ninth area requested an overall rating of usefulness of the classes. The tenth solicited other comments or suggestions.

Participants could communicate their opinions by circling a number on a scale of 1 to 5. On this scale 1 was the most positive response and 5 the most negative. Space was also provided in each area for written responses.

It is to be understood that there is no claim to scientific accuracy for the feedback sheet responses. However, these subjective responses to selective questions may have some limited value and thus are included here.

Devotionals

On the number scale, the participants' ratings of the devotionals were 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 3, 5. One respondent² appreciated how the biblical examples illustrated the various conflict-related topics covered. Another found it helpful to see how God brings good from conflict situations. The most negative rating

¹See the last page of appendix 2.

²For all of the written comments, see appendix 4.

TABLE 6

SEMINAR EVALUATION RESULTS

Evaluation Areas	<u>Positive</u>				<u>Negative</u>
	1	2	3	4	5
Devotionals	9		1		1
Lectures	10	2			
Lecture Handouts	10	2			
Information Handouts	10	1		1	
Ellen White Handouts	10		1		1
Group Activities	8	3	1		
Number of Sessions	6	4			
Length of Sessions	9	1	1		
Overall Usefulness	12				

probably came from the Jewish participant who was somewhat uncomfortable with Christian material.

Lectures

The participants' number scale ratings of the lectures were 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 2, 2. There were only two comments in this area. One expressed approval of the humor used and the other found the lectures "informative, educational, and very helpful."

Lecture Handouts

The ratings for the lecture note handouts were 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 2, 2. Three people expressed appreciation for these handouts. However, one respondent stated that the fill-in-the-blanks in the lecture handouts were distracting and actually impeded learning.

Information Handouts

The ratings on these handouts were 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 2, 4. Judging from the few comments, it appears that those responding (and probably others) may not have taken time to read the extra information handouts.

Ellen White Quotation Handouts

The ratings on the Ellen White handouts were 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 3, 5. Three of the respondents made it clear that the authors had not found the time to read the 30-odd pages of quotations. The most negative rating was probably made by the Jewish husband¹ of a participating Adventist. The comment was "Do not respect E.G.W." It seems that this participant's experiences with Ellen White's writings have not been positive.

Group Activities

The ratings on the group activities were 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 2, 2, 2, 3. The ratings in this area were somewhat lower, but all of the written comments were positive. Phrases used to describe them were "helpful and entertaining," "great fun and interesting," and "fun and educational."

Number of Sessions

The ratings concerning the number of sessions were 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 2, 2, 2, 2. Two of the participants wrote that more sessions would have been difficult to fit into their schedules. However, four felt that more sessions were needed.

¹On his response form this man identified himself as a "non-Christian." All other participants strongly considered themselves to be Christian.

Length of Sessions

The ratings concerning the length of each session were 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 2, 3. One of the participants was delighted with the "great break from home." Three other respondents agreed that more time was needed for questions and discussion.

Overall Usefulness

The ratings concerning the overall usefulness of "Peacemaking" were 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1. The comments here were all positive and some were a bit humorous. "Now I can argue well," wrote one writer. A more serious comment showed that the participant appreciated the seminar material, but was wondering whether or not the concepts would actually be put into practice.

Other Comments

There were many kind comments here. Again participants commented upon the amount of material crammed into five sessions. Four of them suggested a need for more sessions to allow for further discussion. My Jewish friend wrote, "I think the course was of high value, but it also just opened the door to wanting to explore ideas."

Personal Observations

These observations relating to "Peacemaking" are my own opinions and reflections. They are not based in any way upon a systematic analysis of the seminar.

Seminar Structure and Material

The seminar flowed naturally through the four steps of the "Peacemaking" outline. The order in which the material was presented in the designed progression seemed logical and effective. Beginning each session with a discussion of a biblical conflict situation and using biblical conflict illustrations elsewhere helped to set a positive spiritual tone for each session. These biblical conflict

stories, pointing out that spiritual Bible characters were commonly involved in conflict, showed that conflict need not be negative. They also illustrated what valuable opportunities for helpful change conflict can provide.

The Ellen White material, which was incorporated into the seminar, provided helpful foundational information in a number of areas. And it was especially useful in substantiating "Peacemaking" as a solidly Adventist seminar.

If there had been more than five sessions, it is doubtful that some of the participants would have chosen to attend the seminar. However, it was an extremely tight squeeze to cover all of the material necessary for a balanced and effective seminar in five 100-minute sessions.

In the struggle to fit all of the material into a little over eight hours, time for class discussion disappeared. While it seemed that participants understood much of what was presented, the shortage of discussion time proved to be a significant problem.

The numerous handouts were kept neatly in order by the three-ring notebooks that were provided to each participant. When participants filled in the blanks, the lecture handouts became a complete copy of the material presented during "Peacemaking." With the bibliography, the Ellen White comments, and added items of information, the "Peacemaking" notebook became a valuable source of information on conflict resolution for participants to consult at a later date.

Participant Involvement and Response

The interest level of participants remained high throughout "Peacemaking." They appeared to be listening carefully during most presentations. High interest in "Peacemaking" is indicated by the

good attendance record,¹ by the fact that those who missed sessions were eager to receive the handouts for that session, by positive comments of the participants, and by the increased scores on the Conflict Attitude Test.² High interest is also indicated by the desire of many class members for more discussion and class time.

The seventeen participants divided nicely into two smaller groups for activities. Each person seemed to be quite willing to become involved in the various learning activities provided. By the third session, members of the two small groups were becoming very comfortable with each other and were enjoying some spirited and positive exchanges.

The Author's Evaluation

Was the presentation of "Peacemaking" a helpful experience for the participants and more generally, was it a healthy experience in the life of the Hazelton Seventh-day Adventist Church? That is not an easy question to answer, but I would respond with a guarded "yes."

As I write this, it has been nearly six months since I conducted "Peacemaking." Participants do not often mention "Peacemaking" in my presence, and I have not gone out of my way to discover how they feel about it now. However, I am noticing that the amount and magnitude of negative conflict situations among participants in particular and even among church members in general seems to be diminishing. I believe that a number of participants are

¹Lack of interest does not seem to be the reason why most of the five participants who missed the last session of "Peacemaking" were absent.

²The high interest level among those who chose to attend "Peacemaking" could have resulted in part because they knew the seminar was part of my Doctor of Ministry project. Perhaps their desire for me to succeed and their curiosity about what I had produced kept their interest level higher than it would have otherwise been.

practicing and modeling some of the conflict management skills which were presented in "Peacemaking" and that this is having a positive impact upon family and church life.

Yes, I believe that the "Peacemaking" experience has been a helpful one for my church. Presently I am pondering how best to expose more of my church members directly to the "Peacemaking" concepts. I think I will either present those concepts again in another offering of "Peacemaking" or I will reorganize them into a series of sermons.¹

Recommendations

There are a number of recommendations which, if implemented, could validate the usefulness of "Peacemaking," improve the results of "Peacemaking," and make the seminar widely available to other Seventh-day Adventist church groups.

Test "Peacemaking"

It takes more than one successful application of a new seminar to validate it as an effective tool. More testing needs to be done to discover whether or not the positive results achieved through "Peacemaking" among a group of participants at the Hazelton Seventh-day Adventist Church can be replicated elsewhere.

It is recommended that "Peacemaking" be presented at other Seventh-day Adventist churches that vary in congregation size and type. It is also recommended that participants in these "Peacemaking" presentations be tested similarly to the participants of the original Hazelton presentation, but also that they be tested over a period of time to see whether positive results of the seminar are long-term. If the helpful results are short in duration,

¹While I think the seminar format is probably more effective for learning than a sermon series, many of my church members choose not to attend seminars.

"Peacemaking" is of little value.

Redesign "Peacemaking"

If further testing shows that "Peacemaking" is an effective conflict-resolution seminar, it is recommended that "Peacemaking" be redesigned. A major weakness in "Peacemaking" seems to be a shortage of time for interaction and discussion.

After the testing of "Peacemaking" is complete, the Conflict Attitude Test will no longer be included in the seminar. The deletion of this test from the first and fifth sessions will make approximately thirty more minutes available. However, more time than this is needed.

It is recommended that at least one of the three following options be implemented to rectify this problem:

1. Add a sixth session to "Peacemaking" and reformat the material presented in such a way that more time is provided for interaction and discussion.
2. Lengthen each of the five "Peacemaking" sessions to two hours and utilize the extra time at each session for questions and discussion.
3. Delete half of the material from the first "Peacemaking" session by removing the segments dealing with the five modes of conflict management. Reshape this material, which includes a sizable examination of the Biblical story of Jacob, into a sermon and use it to introduce "Peacemaking" to the entire church. This would free up forty-five minutes and it would also serve to interest more members in attending "Peacemaking."

The handouts for the lecture presentations of each session were designed with too many blanks to be filled in by participants. It is recommended that the number of these blanks be reduced.

The quality of material used for the small-group exercises

may not be as high as that of the lecture presentations. As part of the redesigning process, it is recommended that the small-group activities be evaluated and, where expedient, replaced with better exercises.

It is possible that certain self-evaluation testing experiences would strengthen the learning experience of "Peacemaking." However, since a shortage of time is already a problem, caution must be exercised in adding more material to the seminar.

It is recommended that a search be made for valid testing instruments in conflict-related areas which are directly covered in "Peacemaking," such as conflict-management modes or personal anger levels. If high-quality instruments can be found that would not take too much time, it is recommended that one or two of them be incorporated into the seminar.¹

For a number of reasons, many Seventh-day Adventist church members seldom attend church functions that are not scheduled for Sabbath morning. Therefore, it is recommended that consideration be given to the possibility of adapting the "Peacemaking" material and using it to create a series of sermons.

Share "Peacemaking"

If "Peacemaking" is found to be useful and if it is redesigned, it is recommended that "Peacemaking" be packaged and promoted in such a way that it can be made available for wide-scale use in other Seventh-day Adventist churches. Various organizations associated with the Seventh-day Adventist Church would be capable of doing this packaging and promotional work.

¹Since the Conflict Attitude Test will not be administered in future "Peacemaking" sessions, there may be a bit more time available for other helpful instruments.

Summary

The goals of this chapter have been to investigate whether "Peacemaking" influenced participants' attitudes about conflict and to make recommendations for possible future implementations of "Peacemaking."

To test the effectiveness of "Peacemaking," the Conflict Attitude Test was administered to the treatment group (the participants) and to a control group both before and after the seminar was presented. From the first to the second test application, scores of the control group remained static while scores of the treatment group increased significantly. These Conflict Attitude Test results seem to indicate that "Peacemaking" had a positive impact upon participants.

After the last session of "Peacemaking," participants filled in a feedback and suggestion form. By-in-large their responses were extremely positive. All of them agreed that the "Peacemaking" experience had been very useful to them.

Recommendations concerning the "Peacemaking" seminar are that it be tested further, that it be redesigned, and that it be shared with other Seventh-day Adventist churches.

A P P E N D I X

APPENDIX 1

PRE-SEMINAR EXHIBITS

CONFLICT RESOLUTION SEMINAR COMING¹

By Bruce B. Boyd

Most of you probably know that I've been working on a project for my Doctor of Ministry degree from Andrews University. This project is the last remaining requirement of my class work which I commenced in 1985. The ponderous and technical title for my project is "Development, Implementation, and Evaluation of a Seminar on Positive Resolution of Substantive and Interpersonal Conflict in the Hazelton, British Columbia Seventh-day Adventist Church."

On October 27 I sent copies of the first draft of my second chapter and the second draft of my first chapter to my two advisors and the dissertations proof reader at Andrews University for suggestions and corrections. Now, based upon the study I've done for the first two chapters, I'm beginning to write the seminar itself. My plan is to have the seminar ready for presentation here in Hazelton by late January.

Some of my goals and expectations for this conflict resolution seminar are as follows: (1) Those who participate in the seminar will more consistently manage and resolve conflict in a positive and productive manner. (2) Those who participate in the seminar will find that their relationships with other people in marriage or family, on boards or committees, and generally in all the various situations of life will be improved. (3) Those who participate in the seminar will find that time and energy which is commonly lost in negative conflict will be available for more positive pursuits. (4) The Christian witness of those who participate in the seminar will become brighter and more genuinely and consistently Christian.

The conflict resolution seminar will consist of 4 or 5 evening sessions which will meet once a week. Each session will be from 1 to 1½ hours in length.

There is a good chance that number of participants allowed into this seminar will be limited, but I have not yet made a final decision in that area. If the seminar size is limited, admittance will not necessarily be on a "first come, first served" basis. If you are interested in participating in this seminar, and IF YOU WILL COMMIT TO MAKING ATTENDANCE A VERY HIGH PRIORITY, contact me.

¹This is a copy of the "In Touch" church newsletter article which was distributed in November of 1993.

CONFLICT RESOLUTION SEMINAR UPDATE¹

By Bruce B. Boyd

Last week I received feedback on the 2nd chapter of my project from Dr. Benjamin Schoun who is my major advisor and also the assistant dean of the Seminary at Andrews University. He seemed quite pleased with my work overall, and advised me to begin work on chapter 3. My 3rd chapter, which I plan to finish by January 7, will contain the actual seminar.

Dr. Schoun asked for a preliminary seminar outline. That outline is included below:

Session #1

Seminar Evaluation Test
Devotional
Define and Introduce Conflict
(Including EGW)
Thomas-Kilmann Diagram

Session #2

Devotional
"Glorify God"
(Christian Collaboration #1)
-This is the foundation for
 dealing well with conflict
-Trusting and growing like God
-Growing devotional Life

Session #3

Devotional "Glorify God" Review
"Consider Self"
(Christian Collaboration #2)
-Irrational thinking
-Weigh specific situation
-Deal with anger

Session #4

Devotional "Consider Self" Review
"Confront the Other"
(Christian Collaboration #3)
-Heartfelt confession
-Open communication
-Preparation for confrontation
-Include others as necessary

Session #5

Devotional - "Confront the Other"
"Be Reconciled"
(Christian Collaboration #4)
-Genuine forgiveness
-Problem solving
Seminar Evaluation Test
Seminar Sessions Evaluation Form

¹This is a copy of the "In Touch" church newsletter article which was distributed in December of 1993.

SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH

BOX 211 • HAZELTON, BRITISH COLUMBIA V0J 1Y0 • (604) 842-5596

February 18, 1994

Dear Friend,

The series of classes I've been designing on conflict resolution will be offered starting on Thursday, February 24. In all there will be 5 Thursday evening classes, with the last being on March 24. The title I've chosen for this series is:

PEACEMAKING
A Biblical Approach to
Dealing with Personal Conflict

If you would like to attend these classes, please meet with me immediately after the worship service today (Feb. 19) at the back of the Sanctuary where the large S.S. class meets. In this brief meeting we will decide when to begin the evening classes. Possible times are 7:00, 7:15, and 7:30. Each session is expected to last from 1½ to 1¾ hours.

My major goal for PEACEMAKING is not to teach techniques for handling conflict, even though techniques will be presented. The main objective of these classes is to show how learning to trust God wholeheartedly and others cautiously can make a very positive difference in the way we relate to and deal with conflict.

The Bible will be used extensively in each session. If you plan to participate, make sure to bring your Bible each Thursday evening. Along with other handouts, Ellen G. White comments on the topics presented will be provided.

These classes are open to all who will agree to do their best to attend each class presentation or, when a class must be missed, will listen to a tape of the missed class. There will probably be a small cost for the notebook and materials. This is not likely to exceed \$5.00.

Your friend in Christ,

Bruce B. Boyd, Pastor

APPENDIX 2

"PEACEMAKING" LESSON PLANS AND HANDOUTS

PEACEMAKING LESSON PLANS

Session I
"One + One = Conflict"

<u>Min.</u>	<u>Item</u>	<u>Description</u>
15	Activity	The first administration of the Conflict Attitude Test.
10	Presentation	Devotional: Becoming like Christ is the key to complete conflict resolution (Phil 2:3-5).
10	Activity	Discussion on why there are so many conflicts.
20	Presentation	Definition, types, and levels of conflict.
5	Break	
20	Presentation	Modes of dealing with conflict #1.
15	Activity	Small group exercise dealing with modes.
10	Presentation	Modes of dealing with conflict #2.

Session II
"Before Reacting, Look Up and Look In"

<u>Min.</u>	<u>Item</u>	<u>Description</u>
25	Presentation and Activity	Devotional: Conflict between Paul and Barnabas (Acts 15:36-40). Role play and discussion.
20	Presentation	Importance of trusting God as a foundation for conflict resolution.
20	Activity	Demonstration of "quiet time," a form of devotional reading.
30	Presentation	Importance of considering self as a possible source of conflict. Discussion of certain irrational thought patterns.

Session III
"What to Do With Your Anger"

<u>Min.</u>	<u>Item</u>	<u>Description</u>
15	Presentation	Devotional: Conflict at the Jerusalem Council (Acts 15:1-11).

<u>Min.</u>	<u>Item</u>	<u>Description</u>
15	Activity	Discovery of how Ellen White counsels people to deal with irrational thoughts during conflict situations.
20	Presentation	How to deal with anger.
15	Activity	Small group exercise on how to deal with anger and frustration when you've "had it."
15	Presentation	What confession is not and what it is.
10	Activity	Discussion of a variety of faulty confessions. (Optional).

Session IV
"Confrontation, A Doorway to Harmony"

<u>Min.</u>	<u>Item</u>	<u>Description</u>
20	Presentation	Devotional. Conflict in Jonah (Jonah 1-4).
5	Presentation	Introduction to effective communication.
15	Activity	Small group exercise on the importance of trust for effective communication.
15	Presentation	The importance of trust and active listening.
15	Activity	Role play focusing on the importance of active listening to good communication.
10	Presentation	How to speak carefully.
10	Activity	Small group exercise on how to use "I messages."
10	Presentation	Being ready for unexpected confrontations.

Session V
"Finding Reconciliation and Peace"

<u>Min.</u>	<u>Item</u>	<u>Description</u>
15	Presentation	Devotional: Conflict between the early Greek and Hebrew Christians (Acts 6:1-7).

<u>Min.</u>	<u>Item</u>	<u>Description</u>
15	Activity	Small group discussion on how to deal with a specific conflict situation.
15	Presentation	Solving substantive issues.
10	Activity	Small group activity putting into practice method for dealing with substantive issues.
15	Presentation	What forgiveness is not and what it is.
15	Activity	The second administration of the Conflict Attitude Test.
10	Activity	Survey requesting feedback.

CONFLICT ATTITUDE TEST

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PLEASE READ BEFORE YOU BEGIN

The following questions are designed to examine how you perceive conflict.

Read each question thoughtfully, then circle the number that indicates the **DEGREE** to which you **AGREE** or **DISAGREE**.

It is important that you circle a number for **EVERY** question.

If you always or completely agree, circle 1.

If you usually or mostly agree, circle 2.

If you occasionally or partially agree or disagree, circle 3.

If you usually or mostly disagree, circle 4.

If you always or completely disagree, circle 5.

Please be honest and candid. There are **NO** right or wrong answers.

QUESTION:	AGREE		DISAGREE		
1. Conflict occurs because of sin in the human heart.	1	2	3	4	5
2. I feel ill at ease when someone disagrees with me in public.	1	2	3	4	5
3. I avoid people who have made me angry.	1	2	3	4	5
4. Conflict arises because people view situations differently.	1	2	3	4	5
5. It is best not to bring sensitive issues to the surface because it only seems to increase conflict.	1	2	3	4	5
6. When in a conflict, I feel compelled to win.	1	2	3	4	5
7. It is best to avoid a situation that may result in conflict.	1	2	3	4	5
8. It is possible for conflict to have a positive effect on church life.	1	2	3	4	5

Peacemaking

Session I

Page 2

Handout A

QUESTION:	AGREE		DISAGREE		
	1	2	3	4	5
9. The church should allow people to express their differing opinions.	1	2	3	4	5
10. Conflict is out of place in the church.	1	2	3	4	5
11. I worry that if I get angry in a conflict I may say things that I'll regret.	1	2	3	4	5
12. I get irritated with people who express ideas that conflict with mine.	1	2	3	4	5
13. Conflict closes the lines of communication.	1	2	3	4	5
14. To love others is to avoid conflict with them.	1	2	3	4	5
15. If a person is agitated on some issue in the church, he should be allowed to express his opinion.	1	2	3	4	5
16. Conflict is the opposite of caring for people.	1	2	3	4	5
17. If church members were converted, they would not be in conflict.	1	2	3	4	5
18. The less said when people are in disagreement the better.	1	2	3	4	5
19. Conflict occurs most often in congregations in which there is a deep commitment to the church.	1	2	3	4	5
20. An open expression of differences of opinion is good for the church.	1	2	3	4	5
21. I feel frustrated and upset when someone gets angry with me.	1	2	3	4	5
22. The church functions best when conflict is not present.	1	2	3	4	5

Peacemaking

Session I

Page 3

Handout A

QUESTION:	AGREE		DISAGREE		
	1	2	3	4	5
23. I feel confident in dealing with people who are angry with me.	1	2	3	4	5
24. If there is conflict over an issue in a business meeting, it is best to limit discussion and vote before people lose control of their tempers.	1	2	3	4	5
25. In an argument, it may be to my advantage to point out my opponent's spiritual weaknesses.	1	2	3	4	5
26. Conflict is normal and unavoidable whenever people come together in organizations (including the church).	1	2	3	4	5
27. In a conflict, it is best to disregard people's personal feelings about the issue and stick to the facts of the issue.	1	2	3	4	5
28. Conflict in the church should be suppressed.	1	2	3	4	5
29. One reason there is so much conflict is because people hold such unusual ideas.	1	2	3	4	5
30. It is not possible for an organization to go through change without also experiencing conflict.	1	2	3	4	5
31. In a conflict, I might have to reveal some unrelated but embarrassing information about the other person if it would help truth prevail.	1	2	3	4	5
32. Conflict leads to positive results.	1	2	3	4	5
33. Date of your birth.	_____				
34. Number of years of education.	_____				

COURSE OUTLINE

SESSION I

"1 + 1 = Conflict"

An introduction which looks at the sources of conflict along with various modes of dealing with it.

SESSION II

"Before Reacting, Look Up and Look In"

A discussion of how a person's relationship with God and how common irrational ways of thinking can impact conflict situations.

SESSION III

"What To Do with Your Anger"

A consideration of anger and confession.

SESSION IV

"Confrontation, a Doorway to Harmony"

A plan for positive confrontation including an overview of communication skills.

SESSION V

"Finding Reconciliation and Peace"

A consideration of forgiveness along with a design for resolving real conflict issues.

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ONE + ONE = CONFLICT

Conflict Resolution Needs to Be God-centered

We don't have much _____ when it comes to conflict. Whenever there are two or more _____ in one place, there will eventually be conflict. We can't choose whether or not to have conflict, but we can choose _____ to _____ to conflict when it comes our way.

*** Phil. 2:3-5 ***

Without _____, the most modern methods of conflict resolution are incomplete. There are wonderful concepts out there, but they are _____ of _____ without God. Without God, no matter what techniques we use, sooner or later we veer selfishly toward manipulation.

I believe our only hope for the deep resolving of conflict is to _____ more and more like _____. "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus."

Why study this topic?

We can be very experienced Bible students and still have huge _____ spots when it comes to handling conflicts with other people.

Speaking of a conflict situation that tore his church apart, Keith Huttenlocker states: "We were enlightened by no other book except the Bible, and tragically our interpretation of it made us no more than _____ doctors in the science of conflict resolution."¹

People who claim to be true followers of _____, who _____ the Bible and say they understand it, have been involved in _____ of destructive conflicts.

¹Keith Huttenlocker, Conflict and Caring (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan Publishing House, 1988), 14.

Conflict: Its Roots, Types and Levels

What is conflict? There are lots of definitions of conflict. Here's the one we'll be using: "Conflict is the state of relationship between people who _____ (sense, understand, interpret) an idea, event, or situation differently."

When this happens the outcome is generally one of these three possibilities: 1. The results of their interaction are _____, perhaps destructive. 2. The results of their interaction are _____, perhaps wonderful. 3. No apparent interaction results from the situation.

The Roots of Conflict

Why is there conflict? To answer this question, let's consider two related questions: 1. Why do people see ideas, events and situations differently? 2. Why is conflict often so negative and destructive?

Why People See Ideas, Events and Situations Differently

_____ created us so that no two people are exactly alike. Not only did God create humans to be male and female, he designed each with a reproductive system that allows for almost _____ variety.

We are _____ in thousands of ways, including the way we feel and _____. God made us to sense and interpret life differently. We each arrive at decisions differently.

To balance this diversity that God designed into humanity, He coupled it with trusting, caring _____. Look at the first marriage (Genesis 2). Adam and Eve are very different, male and female, and at the same time they are _____ together, "_____ flesh."

Not All Conflict Is Bad

Many people consider all conflict to be very bad and sinful. But many of our differences are neither _____ nor _____. They are the result of perfectly good personal preferences.

In a caring and trusting environment, disagreements _____ quite beneficial. They often encourage positive new thought patterns and stimulate helpful _____. Conflict sparked by diversity can strengthen and enrich people who enjoy _____ and trusting relationships.

Why Conflict Is so Often Negative and Destructive

The reason conflict is so often destructive is because the first humans allowed _____ to tear apart the diversity and _____ which God linked together. In place of unity, Satan connected _____ to the wonderful diversity which God designed. This blocks us from _____ God. It also results in _____ for each other. Selfish diversity is extremely divisive and destructive conflict is the predictable result.

The good news is that God can _____ the unity that was lost. And He can even bring good out of negative conflict situations when He is allowed to (Romans 8:28).

_____ conflict situations can be used by the Holy Spirit to: 1. _____ people to come closer to God. 2. _____ the believer's character into Christ-likeness as flaws are revealed.

Instead of seeing negative conflicts as _____, it is wise to give them to God in prayer and ask the Holy Spirit to bring _____ out of them. This optimistic focus is very important in relating successfully to conflict. Col. 3:1-2 says, "Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things."

Types of Conflict

There are three basic categories of conflict:

Conflict

This conflict refers to the contention people have _____ themselves. It is the result of clashing desires, values, and beliefs, etc., in a person's own mind.

The resolution of intrapersonal conflict is not directly addressed by these classes. People suffering from serious intrapersonal conflict need the assistance of a skilled _____.

Conflict

This conflict centers on personalities and takes place on the _____ level. It arises from the dislike people have for each other.

Actual issues are often said to be the sources of these contentions, but they are not. The real roots of interpersonal conflicts are deep in emotions such as annoyance, _____, and _____ which are prompted by irritating or threatening personality and temperament differences.

Conflict

This conflict has its source in real _____. It arises from contention between people over matters which are of particular significance to them. These might be facts, _____, goals, or _____. Interpersonal conflict may also be involved, but the real roots of substantive conflict are not emotional in nature.

Levels of Conflict

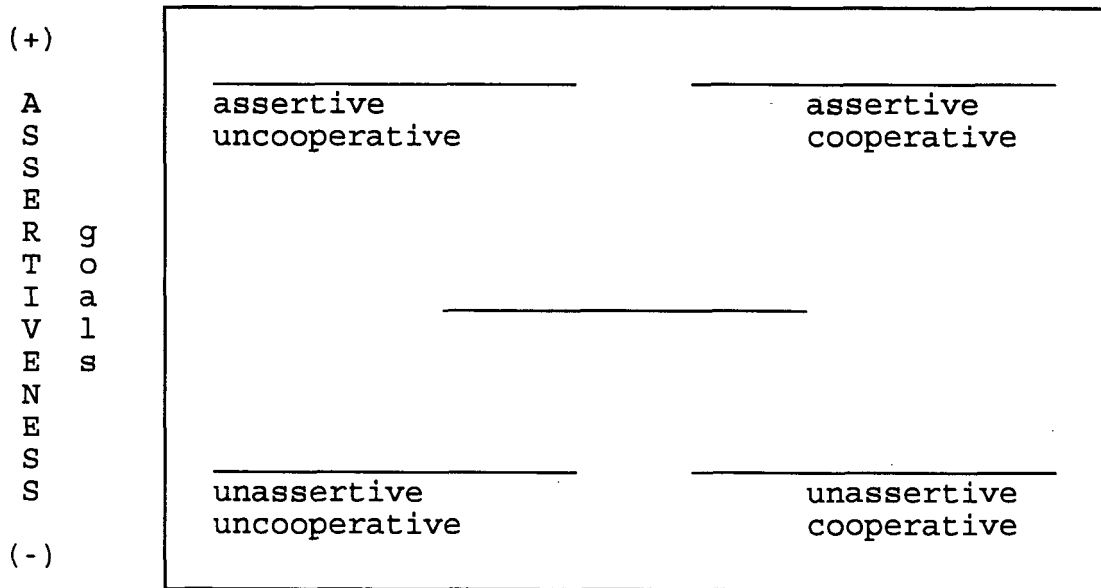
There are five major levels of conflict. These range from short-lived _____ accompanied by some discomfort to long term, out-of-control _____. (See the handout for a description of each level.)

These classes are designed to deal with the common conflicts which occur at the lower levels of intensity.

Basic Ways of Relating to Conflict

There are five basic ways in which people relate to conflict.¹

THE THOMAS KILMANN CONFLICT MODE MATRIX



(-) C O O P E R A T I V E N E S S (+)

r e l a t i o n s h i p s

¹Kenneth W. Thomas and Ralph H. Kilmann, Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument (Tuxedo, N.Y.: Xicon, 1990), 9, 10.

1. _____ / _____

Some people just have to win. They love the feeling of _____ and _____. They have to have what they want. They must reach their goals, at almost any cost.

There are times when competing is the _____ way to handle conflict, like during a crisis where quick decisions and actions are necessary or when true moral issues are at stake. However, this mode of relating during conflict often seriously damages relationships.

2. _____ / _____

The goal here is to keep things as they are, avoid change, avoid the work of winning and at the same time avoid the pain of losing. You can't _____ if you don't fight.

There are various ways of withdrawing, some more mild or subtle than others. We can abruptly change the subject of conversation, make _____, leave the room (or the _____), or give our opponent the _____ treatment.

Avoiding may be acceptable when the conflict issues don't really _____ much. And a temporary withdrawal can be a valuable way of "counting to ten" before dealing with a conflict in a more positive way.

3. _____

Here we give a little to get a little. Compromise is necessary and helpful _____. But utilizing compromise as the _____ way of dealing with conflict is not healthy. This is because both parties bargain from the standpoint of _____ and self-interest. Since we expect the other person to take an extreme position and then move toward the middle, we take an extreme position ourselves.

4. _____ / _____

Here we _____ to get along. "If you want to win so bad, have it your way." "Anything you say, dear."

In some areas of relationship it is wise to accommodate.

Accommodation is the best choice when we are certain to _____ or when an issue is trifling to us but significant to the other. And yielding can be a temporary step toward a better solution.

But habitual yielding is harmful! It _____ relationships and can _____ them severely.

5. _____

The idea here is to come together during conflict in order to find a solution that will _____

Not only is this the best method, it's also the _____. The deepest resolving of conflict is only possible when the people involved really _____ and _____ for each other, or at least really _____ to trust and care for each other.

When we relate in this mode, conflict, which is usually associated with trouble and pain, can be seen as a potentially positive growing experience. It all depends on how we relate to it. And in the final analysis, that all depends on how we relate to _____.

Peacemaking

Session I

Version 1

Handout E

WAYS OF RELATING TO CONFLICT
PRACTICE SESSION¹

Directions:

Read the background statement below.

Do not discuss the background statement with the rest of your committee.

Do not discuss the style of management that you or the group are taking or should take to solve the issue because likely, you would not do this in a real-life committee.

You are to role play your part on the committee. If you are older than $\frac{1}{2}$ of the members of your group, you are in favor of the status quo. If you are younger than $\frac{1}{2}$ of the members of your group, you are in favor of the innovation. Your committee must either come to a decision on this matter this evening or it must set up the mechanism to resolve the problem.

Background:

You are on a committee commissioned to redecorate the church sanctuary. Early in your work, a conflict develops in your committee over whether to replace the pews with movable seating and to extend the podium into the seating area. Your committee is evenly split on the subject--the younger members favor the innovation and the older members opt for the status quo.

Though there has been some discussion among the members of the congregation over the possibility of change, so far the members of your committee feel more strongly about the issue than the rest of the church. Though you would like to see your way prevail, you are not anxious that the issue divide the church. You feel, however, that if the committee was able to make a unanimous decision either way, the membership would likely go along. YOUR WAY OF RELATING TO THIS CONFLICT IS TO PROMOTE COMPROMISE IN ORDER TO GET A UNANIMOUS DECISION.

¹Adapted from Jan Johnson, 224-227.

Peacemaking

Session I

Version 2

Handout E

WAYS OF RELATING TO CONFLICT
PRACTICE SESSION

Directions:

Read the background statement below.

Do not discuss the background statement with the rest of your committee.

Do not discuss the style of management that you or the group are taking or should take to solve the issue because likely, you would not do this in a real-life committee.

You are to role play your part on the committee. If you are older than $\frac{1}{2}$ of the members of your group, you are in favor of the status quo. If you are younger than $\frac{1}{2}$ of the members of your group, you are in favor of the innovation. Your committee must either come to a decision on this matter this evening or it must set up the mechanism to resolve the problem.

Background:

You are on a committee commissioned to redecorate the church sanctuary. Early in your work, a conflict develops in your committee over whether to replace the pews with movable seating and to extend the podium into the seating area. Your committee is evenly split on the subject--the younger members favor the innovation and the older members opt for the status quo.

There has been some discussion among the members of the congregation over the possibility of change and some feel as you do. Though you haven't stated it publicly, you feel so strongly about the change that if it doesn't go your way, you will transfer to another church. You are hoping that the committee will delay a decision rather than make the wrong one. **YOUR WAY OF RELATING TO THIS CONFLICT IS TO AVOID IT IF POSSIBLE AND TO WITHDRAW IF YOU DON'T GET YOUR WAY.**

WAYS OF RELATING TO CONFLICT
PRACTICE SESSION

Directions:

Read the background statement below.

Do not discuss the background statement with the rest of your committee.

Do not discuss the style of management that you or the group are taking or should take to solve the issue because likely, you would not do this in a real-life committee.

You are to role play your part on the committee. If you are older than $\frac{1}{2}$ of the members of your group, you are in favor of the status quo. If you are younger than $\frac{1}{2}$ of the members of your group, you are in favor of the innovation. Your committee must either come to a decision on this matter this evening or it must set up the mechanism to resolve the problem.

Background:

You are on a committee commissioned to redecorate the church sanctuary. Early in your work, a conflict develops in your committee over whether to replace the pews with movable seating and to extend the podium into the seating area. Your committee is evenly split on the subject--the younger members favor the innovation and the older members opt for the status quo.

Though there has been some discussion among the members of the congregation over the possibility of change, you are not aware of any strong feelings either way. You are aware, however that a member on your committee has said privately that he would transfer his/her membership if the committee voted the wrong way. You, personally, can't see why chairs should be such an important issue. **YOUR WAY OF RELATING TO THIS CONFLICT IS TO YIELD IF THAT'S WHAT IT TAKES TO KEEP THE PEACE.**

WAYS OF RELATING TO CONFLICT
PRACTICE SESSION

Directions:

Read the background statement below.

Do not discuss the background statement with the rest of your committee.

Do not discuss the style of management that you or the group are taking or should take to solve the issue because likely, you would not do this in a real-life committee.

You are to role play your part on the committee. If you are older than $\frac{1}{2}$ of the members of your group, you are in favor of the status quo. If you are younger than $\frac{1}{2}$ of the members of your group, you are in favor of the innovation. Your committee must either come to a decision on this matter this evening or it must set up the mechanism to resolve the problem.

Background:

You are on a committee commissioned to redecorate the church sanctuary. Early in your work, a conflict develops in your committee over whether to replace the pews with movable seating and to extend the podium into the seating area. Your committee is evenly split on the subject--the younger members favor the innovation and the older members opt for the status quo.

There has been some discussion among the members of the congregation over the possibility of change, and a few of you have studied the Bible and Ellen White on the subject. You are now convinced that your viewpoint is the only righteous possibility. Since you certainly don't want the church to sin, you have determined to stand your ground. **YOUR WAY OF RELATING TO THIS CONFLICT IS TO COMPETE. NOTHING LESS THAN A WIN IS ACCEPTABLE.**

LEVELS OF CONFLICT

Speed B. Leas defines five levels of conflict. To identify each level of conflict, Leas uses two key factors: the objectives of the participants and their use of language.¹

Level I: Problems to Solve

The objective of people at Level I of conflict is to define and fix the problem in a rational way. There may be short-lived anger, some discomfort, or even denial of negative feelings, but participants are problem-centered, not person-centered at this level.

The language is most often clear, specific, and focused on the present. It is not loaded with accusation or hidden negative meanings.

Level II: Disagreement

The objective of people at Level II of conflict moves away from problem-solving toward self-protection. In other words it becomes more important for participants to keep from getting hurt. Consequently a higher level of strategy and cunning is present.

The language moves from focusing on particulars, and deals more in cautious generalizations. Barbed humor, putting others down along with their beliefs or positions, is common at this level of conflict.

Level III: Contest

The objective of people at Level III of conflict shifts primarily to a type of winning which approaches conquering. Since the objective is to change the opponent or the situation, the level of conflict moves considerably higher.

The language is no longer straightforward and the resulting distortion becomes a significant problem.

¹Speed B. Leas, Moving Your Church Through Conflict (Washington, D.C.: Alban Institute, 1985), 17-22.

Arguments become more emotional and less rational, while personal attacks grow common.

Level IV: Fight, Flight

The objective moves at Level IV from simply triumphing over to hurting and/or expelling the opponent. Within churches or other organized groups, factions solidify, strong leaders emerge, and the health of the faction becomes more important to combatants than the well-being of the whole organization.

The language usually focuses on basic principles such as freedom, truth, and justice instead of on specific issues. An attempt is made to appeal to these principles in order to sanctify the combatants and so enable them to ignore the fundamental Christian ethics governing relationships. Combatants separate from each other and will only speak together in hostility. They exhibit a chilling self-righteousness along with an unforgiving attitude. Being right and punishment of the other faction become significant themes.

Level V: Intractable

At level V the objective is to destroy the opponent. At this level the conflict is out of control.

Higher Levels Not Addressed

The principles and strategies discussed in these classes are primarily applicable to the first two levels. They may also apply to mild manifestations of Level III.

When conflicts at levels higher than this are encountered, the principles and methods presented in these classes are of limited value and may even prove detrimental. Beginning at level III, the services of a skilled outside consultant can prove to be of great benefit.

MODES OF RELATING TO CONFLICT ACCORDING TO
THE THOMAS-KILMANN DIAGRAM

There are five general modes of relating to conflict according to the Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Matrix: competing, avoiding, compromising, accommodating, and collaborating.¹

The Thomas-Kilmann diagram suggests that these five modes arise from two basic categories or dimensions of a person's behavior while relating to conflict: assertiveness and cooperativeness. Assertiveness is the degree to which people go to obtain their own desires. Cooperativeness is the degree to which people try to fulfill other people's desires.

Competing

On the Thomas-Kilmann diagram the competing mode is assertive and uncooperative. This mode is one of domination, the imposing of one's will on others. Here a high value is placed upon the desires and needs of the individual, while a low value is placed on the desires and needs of others.

In conflict situations it would be expected that aggressive people would try to dominate their "competition." Interestingly, it is often true that people who are usually yielding will switch into this mode when they move into a position of authority. Bolton suggests that this is probably because they "have seldom experienced alternatives to domination and capitulation." Consequently, when given authority, they follow the familiar model they have experienced at earlier times in their lives.²

The competing mode can be essential in a real crisis where quick decisions and action are necessary, and it may be helpful when true moral issues are at stake. Usually though, this mode of relating during conflict damages relationships.

¹Kenneth W. Thomas and Ralph H. Kilmann, Thomas-Kilmann Conflict-Mode Instrument (Tuxedo, N.Y.: Xicon, 1990), 9-15.

²Robert Bolton, People Skills (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1989), 235.

Accommodating

On the Thomas-Kilmann diagram the accommodating mode is unassertive and cooperative. This yielding style is the opposite of the competing mode. Here a low value is placed upon the desires and needs of the individual, while a high value is placed on the desires and needs of others.

People using the accommodating mode of dealing with conflict have an overriding desire for peace. They often believe that true Christians or mature people shun conflict.¹ Discovering that the quickest way to diminish controversy is to give in, they are willing to purchase peace by sacrificing their other desires.

The accommodating mode is the best choice when a person is certain to lose in a confrontation or when an issue is trifling to one but significant to the other. It can also be a temporary step toward a better solution. But many habitually accommodate, willing to give up important needs or even deep convictions for the sake of peaceful relationships. They do not realize that yielding over the long term eventually produces a sense of uncertainty in others. Thus relationships are weakened and even destroyed.²

Compromising

On the Thomas-Kilmann diagram the compromising mode is halfway between the above-mentioned modes in both assertiveness and cooperativeness. This give-and-take mode is more flexible than the competing mode and less yielding than the accommodating mode. Here a medium value is placed upon the desires and needs of the individual, and a medium value is placed on the desires and needs of others.

People using this mode are willing to bargain, each expecting the other to go after the best possible deal. Their negotiations end in a solution where both sides concede a part and also receive a part of what they want. Usually neither is completely happy.

The compromising mode is useful when each side can block or hinder the other and when the collaborating mode

¹David Augsburger, When Caring Is Not Enough (Ventura, Calif.: Regal Books, 1983), 50.

²Ibid., 51.

is unattainable. But compromise is not really based upon mutual trust. Repeated use of this mode is damaging to relationships.¹

Avoiding

On the Thomas-Kilmann diagram the avoiding mode is unassertive and uncooperative. This mode is one of withdrawal from conflict situations. Here a low value is placed upon the desires and needs of the individual, and a low value is placed on the desires and needs of others.

There are a wide variety of methods used by people to avoid conflict. Very commonly, pessimism, distance, escape, and silence are deliberately chosen, while communication and commitment to relationships are rejected.²

The avoiding mode may be acceptable when issues are of little consequence or if they are likely to disappear quickly. Moreover, avoiding a conflict is sometimes a helpful way of "counting to ten" before dealing with it in a more positive way. However, in most cases, avoiding only aggravates the controversy and/or spawns other problems. Even though avoiding is the most common mode of dealing with conflict, it is usually a dysfunctional and damaging way of dealing with conflict.³

Collaborating

On the Thomas-Kilmann diagram the collaborating mode is assertive and cooperative. In this mode both sides of the conflict work together to discover a mutually satisfying solution. Here a high value is placed upon the desires and needs of the individual and upon the desires and needs of others.

Effective collaboration requires honesty and mutual trust along with persistence and flexibility. Good communication skills are a prerequisite to collaboration.⁴

¹Bolton, 238.

²Augsburger, 104-106.

³Ibid., 104; Huttenlocker, 31.

⁴Ken Sande, The Peacemaker (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, 1991), 18.

Each Mode Is Useful in Its Place

Each mode is appropriate in certain conflict circumstances, and sometimes more than one may be helpful.¹ In the end though, the mode of collaborating is usually the most effective way of relating to conflict.

In general there are five successive steps for dealing with conflict:

1. The mode of choice is collaborating.
2. If this is not productive, a caring switch to the compromising mode may be a helpful, temporary solution before true collaborating is possible.
3. If this does not work, the mode of accommodating is the next step, aimed again at building up the relationship so that collaborating will be possible.
4. If this is unsuccessful, it is time to move into the competing mode. Even here the hope is to jolt the conflict, if possible, back into collaboration.
5. Finally, when nothing else works, the mode of avoiding and withdrawing becomes necessary.

Collaboration Needs to Be Christian

In his book, The Peacemaker, Ken Sande argues convincingly that, while collaborating is the best of the five basic modes on the Thomas-Kilmann diagram, it is still deficient.

Collaborating generally focuses on the interests of the people involved, not on God's interests. In addition, because this style usually fails to deal biblically with the underlying causes of conflict, collaborating, too, sometimes produces incomplete solutions and leaves the door open for further controversy.

Anytime we leave God out of the picture and disregard his commands to deal with the underlying causes of conflict, it will be more difficult to resolve disputes and restore genuine peace.²

¹Augsburger, Caring Enough to Confront, 17,18.

²Sande, 18.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

Unity with God is Needed to Resolve Conflict

The cause of division and discord in families and in the church is separation from Christ. To come near to Christ is to come near to one another. The secret of true unity in the church and in the family is not diplomacy, not management, not a superhuman effort to overcome difficulties--though there will be much of this to do--but union with Christ. Mind Character and Personality, 2:501.

The cause of division or discord in the church is separation from Christ. The secret of unity is union with Christ. Christ is the great Center. We shall approach one another just in proportion as we approach the Center. United with Christ, we shall surely be united with our brethren in the faith. The Ellen G. White 1888 Materials, 1125.

It is the same to-day as it was in the days of Christ. As the disciples were brought together, each with different faults, some inherited or cultivated tendency to evil, so in our church relations we find men and women whose characters are defective; not one of us is perfect. But in Christ, and through Christ, we are to dwell in the family of God, learning to become one in faith, in doctrine, in spirit, that at last we may be received into our eternal habitation. We shall have our tests, our grievances, our differences of opinion; but if Christ is abiding in the heart of each, there can be no dissension. The love of Christ will lead to love of one another, and the lessons of the Master will harmonize all differences, bringing us into unity, till we shall be of one mind and one judgment. Strife for supremacy will cease, and no one will be disposed to glory over another, but we shall esteem others better than ourselves, and so be built up into a spiritual temple for the Lord. "The Character of John," The Signs of the Times, April 20, 1891, par. 4.

Unity is the strength of the church. Satan knows this, and he employs his whole force to bring in dissension. He desires to see a lack of harmony among the members of the church of God. Greater attention should be given to the subject of unity. Selected Messages, 2:159.

The Importance of Learning Right Thinking

The actual discipline of life is made up of the little things. The training of the thoughts is essential. Mind, Character, and Personality, 2:656. (MS 76, 1900).

The training of the heart, the control of the thoughts, in cooperation with the Holy Spirit, will give control of the words. This is true wisdom, and will ensure quietness of mind, contentment and peace. There will be joy in the contemplation of the riches of the grace of God. (Lt 10, 1894). Mind, Character, and Personality, 2:656.

There is earnest work before each one of us. Right thoughts, pure and holy purposes, do not come to us naturally. We shall have to strive for them. Mind, Character, and Personality, 2:656.

If the thoughts are wrong, the feelings will be wrong, and the thoughts and feelings combined make up the moral character. When you decide that as Christians you are not required to restrain your thoughts and feelings, you are brought under the influence of evil angels and invite their presence and their control. If you yield to your impressions and allow your thoughts to run in a channel of suspicion, doubt, and repining, you will be among the most unhappy of mortals, and your lives will prove a failure. Testimonies to the Church, 5:310.

God Created "Unity in Diversity"

The strength of God's people lies in their union with him through his only begotten Son, and their union with one another. There are no two leaves of a tree precisely alike; neither do all minds run in the same direction. But while this is so, there may be unity in diversity. Christ is our root, and all who are grafted into this root will bear the fruit which Christ bore. They will reveal the fragrance of his character in the talent of speech, in the cultivation of hospitality, of kindness, of Christian courtesy and heavenly politeness. Look at the flowers in a carpet, and notice the different colored threads. All are not pink, all are not green, all are not blue. A variety of colors are woven together to perfect the pattern. So it is in the design of God. He has a purpose

in placing us where we must learn to live as individuals. We are not all fitted to do the same kind of work, but each man's work is designed by God to help make up his plan. "God's Design for His People," Advent Review and Sabbath Herald, July 4, 1899, par. 1.

Like the different parts of a machine, all are closely related to one another, and all dependent upon one great Center. There is to be unity in diversity. No member of the Lord's firm can work successfully in independence. Each is to work under the supervision of God; all are to use their entrusted capabilities in his service, that each may minister to the perfection of the whole. "The Relation of Man to His Fellow Man," Advent Review and Sabbath Herald, May 13, 1909, par. 2.

Christ prayed that His disciples might be one, even as He and His Father are one. In what does this unity consist? That oneness does not consist in everyone having the same disposition, the very same temperament, that makes all run in the very same channel. All do not possess the same degree of intelligence. All have not the same experience. In a church there are different gifts and varied experiences. In temporal matters there is a great variety of ways of management, and yet none of these variations in manner of labor, in exercise of gifts, need to create dissension and discord and disunion. One man may be conversant with the Scriptures, and some particular portion of the Scripture is especially appreciated by him because he has seen it in a certain striking light; another sees another portion as very important; and thus one and another presents the very points to the people that appear of highest value. This is all in the order of God. One man blunders in his interpretation of some portion of the Scripture, but shall this cause diversity and disunion? God forbid. We cannot then take a position that the unity of the church consists in viewing every text of Scripture in the very same shade of light. Manuscript Releases, 15:149.

A life consecrated to the service of God will be developed and beautified in its individuality. No person can sink his individuality in that of another, but we are all, as individuals, to be grafted into the one parent stock, and there is to be unity in diversity. The great Master Artist has not made two leaves of the same tree precisely alike; so His creative power does not give to

all minds the same likeness. They are created to live through ceaseless ages, and there is to be complete unity, mind blending with mind, but none are to be of the same mold. Mind Character and Personality, 2:426.

Unity in diversity is God's plan. Among the followers of Christ there is to be the blending of diverse elements, one adapted to the other, and each to do its special work for God. Every individual has his place in the filling up of one great plan bearing the stamp of Christ's image. . . . One is fitted to do a certain work, another has a different work for which he is adapted, another has a still different line; but each is to be the complement of the others. . . . The Spirit of God, working in and through the diverse elements, will produce harmony of action. . . . There is to be only one master spirit--the Spirit of Him who is infinite in wisdom, and in whom all the diverse elements meet in beautiful, matchless unity. Our High Calling, 169.

The Creator of all ideas may impress different minds with the same thought, but each may express it in a different way, yet without contradiction. The fact that this difference exists should not perplex or confuse us. It is seldom that two persons will view and express truth in the very same way. Each dwells on particular points which his constitution and education have fitted him to appreciate. The sunlight falling upon different objects gives those objects a different hue. The Publishing Ministry, 100.

The connection of the branches with one another and with the Vine constitutes them a unity, but this does not mean uniformity in everything. Unity in diversity is a principle that pervades the whole creation. While there is an individuality and variety in nature, there is a oneness in their diversity; for all things receive their usefulness and beauty from the same source. The great Master Artist writes his name on all his created works, from the loftiest cedar of Lebanon to the hyssop upon the wall. They all declare his handiwork, from the lofty mountain and the grand ocean to the tiniest shell upon the seashore. Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary, 5:1143.

If we would work as Christ worked, we must have the mind of Christ. He can not co-operate with those whose lives reveal variance, strife, and bitterness. Those who

cherish these attributes are not susceptible to the influence of the Holy Spirit. The divine Comforter strives with them, but they close the door of the heart to His gracious pleading, desiring to be left alone in their foolish, selfish perversity. They find a satisfaction, a kind of rest, without pardon, without wearing Christ's yoke and learning His meekness and lowliness. But let adversity come, and they find that they have leaned on a broken reed. There is no peace for the wicked. Difference and dissension will be seen among those who are not chosen by the Lord; but let it not spring up and bear fruit among those who claim to be representing Christ. There is no work more sacred for Christians than to maintain peace among themselves. Then they present to the world the unity that Christ prayed might exist, and bear witness that God sent Christ into the world to redeem the human race. The Signs of the Times, "Ministry, No. 2," May 23, 1900, par. 3.

The religion of Christ does not require us to lose our identity of character, but merely to adapt ourselves, in some measure, to the feelings and ways of others. Many people may be brought together in a unity of religious faith whose opinions, habits, and tastes in temporal matters are not in harmony; but if they have the love of Christ glowing in their bosoms, and are looking forward to the same heaven as their eternal home, they have the sweetest and most intelligent communion together, and a unity the most wonderful. There are scarcely two whose experience is alike in every particular. The trials of one may not be the trials of another, and our hearts should ever be open to kindly sympathy and all aglow with the love that Jesus had for all His brethren. Testimonies to the Church, 4:65.

Benefits of Conflict

Through conflict the spiritual life is strengthened. Trials well borne will develop steadfastness of character and precious spiritual graces. The perfect fruit of faith, meekness, and love often matures best amid storm clouds and darkness. Christ's Object Lessons, 61.

HOMEWORK

If you would like to sharpen your skills in relating to conflict here are some ideas.

1. As you go through this week, notice and observe the conflicts between the people around you. Also analyze the conflicts in which you become involved.
2. Try to distinguish whether a particular conflict is interpersonal or substantive in nature.
3. You might even consider what part intrapersonal issues may be playing in the conflict, but be careful. Unless you are looking at your own role in the conflict, distinguishing intrapersonal conflict issues is a process very subjective and prone to error. Put very little weight on your opinions in this area!
4. Do your best to identify which of the 5 basic modes of dealing with conflict each participant is using (win, yield, avoid, compromise, collaborate).
5. If you and someone else in this class happen to observe or be involved in a conflict, cautiously and without becoming judgmental, discuss the questions 2-4 above.

BEFORE REACTING, LOOK UP AND LOOK IN

Christian Collaboration

While collaborating is usually the best of the five basic modes on the Thomas-Kilmann diagram, I believe that when God is left out, even this mode is _____. In the rest of our time together, we'll consider a model of Christian Collaboration in four distinct phases:

- | | |
|-------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Trust God. | 3. Confront the other |
| 2. Consider self. | 4. Be reconciled. |

Trust God

When it comes to really resolving conflict, a basic trust in God is essential.

During conflict, as we're deciding how to meet the crisis, we're _____ on somebody's _____. If we're not trusting God, we're trusting in ourselves or in someone else. Human wisdom can be pretty foolish.

*** Proverbs 3:5,6 ***

Instead of focusing our attention on our problems, instead of trusting in ourselves or in others to solve those problems, we need to _____ our focus to _____.

*** Col. 3:1-2 ***

Let's learn to set our hearts and minds on things above, to trust completely in God's guidance and in His solutions. Without God, the most up-to-date methods of conflict resolution are too _____ and _____.

We Can Trust God to Deal with Conflict

Part of trusting God is _____. We need to acknowledge that resolving conflict is _____, not ours. That can take a major weight off of our shoulders.

*** Eph 4:3 ***

It's the Spirit's job to originate _____. We are called to trust in God to deal with conflict. At the same time, it's our job to do what we can to "_____" the peace. Under God's direction we are invited to "make every effort" to _____ a _____ in which the possibilities of reconciliation are _____. By our attitudes and actions we can encourage others to respond to conflict in a helpful way.

When We Trust God We See Conflicts as Opportunities

*** 1 Cor. 10:31-11:1 *** (Context = conflict)

Conflicts are opportunities for God's _____ to:

1. _____ by demonstrating that He is loving and fair.
2. _____ with consistent caring.
3. Develop an _____ sense of _____ - _____ as our spiritual maturity increases and we grow to become more and more like Christ.

*** James 1:2-4 ***

What Trusting God Means in Real Life

Trusting God doesn't mean that we expect Him to make things happen just the way we think they should. It means that we believe God will _____ things out _____ for us in the _____ and that we accept His leading.

Trusting God doesn't mean that we never have questions, _____ or _____. Trusting God means that even when we don't understand His leading, we _____ to His promises like the one in Romans 8:28.

*** Romans 8:28 ***

Believing this, we are _____ to worry less and less about going through conflicts. We are _____ to anticipate positive benefits from conflicts. We are

_____ from selfish preoccupation to ask ourselves:
 "How can I _____ and _____ my God in this
 situation?" David's prayer in Psalm 19:14 becomes ours:
 *** Psalm 19:14 ***

How to Nurture Trust in God

How can we nurture a deep trust in God? By choosing to spend _____ every day with the One we want to trust. In our daily _____ of God's word, in our frequent _____ and meditation, in _____ God's love with others, we can become deeply immersed in the living current of a trusting _____ with God.

For more detailed information see the handouts entitled: "Devotional Secrets" and "How to Be a Spiritual Athlete".

Consider Self

After centering upon God and His concerns and before focusing on others involved in the conflict, we need to follow the counsel of Matt 7:3-5.

*** Matt. 7:3-5 ***

In other words, it's time to _____ and _____ our own contributions to the controversy. It's time to scrutinize our _____ attitudes and motives.

Discover Underlying Beliefs

When we face a conflict, the way we _____ about it will, to a great degree, determine how we _____ to it. Two people can experience the exact same thing and, because they _____ differently about it, react in almost _____ ways. The way we see things can make a _____ difference!

*** Proverbs 23:7a ***

*** Proverbs 4:23 ***

"If the _____ are wrong the _____ will be wrong, and the thoughts and feelings combined make up the moral _____." Testimonies to the Church, 5:310.

"Demandingness"

"Demandingness" turns _____ into _____. When our desires become demands, they very often become unhealthy, selfish and controlling.

Notice how Jesus stayed away from "demandingness" thought patterns. Here are a few examples:

*** Matthew 5:11,12a *** (He didn't demand _____)

*** Matthew 23:37 *** (He didn't demand _____)

*** Luke 22:42 *** (He didn't demand _____ from the cross).

Many of our demands are unstated understandings. When demands are stated, words like "_____", "_____", and "_____" are commonly used. Here are a few illustrations of "demandingness":

1. "I must never appear foolish."
2. "No member of my family should ever criticize me."
3. "My son must not use alcohol or other drugs."
4. "My husband ought to meet all of my needs."
5. "I must not lose this job."
6. "My wife should never get a job."
7. "There should never be a conflict in our marriage."
8. "Others must never know that there is conflict in our marriage."

"Demandingness" puts great _____ on emotional and spiritual health. It warps or _____ countless relationships. It ignites and fuels _____ of damaging conflicts.

"Exaggerated badness"

When people are unfair to us, reject us, or stop us from getting something we want, there are basically _____ ways of responding. A reasonable way is to look at the situation as a _____ or an inconvenience. A second response is to consider the situation a terrible, _____, awful catastrophe. This way of thinking is called "exaggerated badness," or "awfulizing."

"Awfulizing" often accompanies "demandingness." Both are self-centered. A few illustrations of "awfulizing" thought are:

1. "It would be terribly humiliating if I ever appeared foolish."
2. "When someone in my family criticizes me, it is dreadful."
3. "It would be a shameful disgrace if my son started using alcohol or other drugs."
4. "If my husband doesn't meet all of my needs, it will unbearable."
5. "If I lose this job, it will be catastrophic."
6. "It is horrible that my wife got a job."
7. "If there is conflict in our marriage, our relationship is a failure."
8. "If others discover that there is conflict in our marriage, I will be forever mortified."

"Awfulizing" can be used as leverage to _____ and _____ the behavior of others. When this happens, the targets of control often become quite _____.

"Awfulizing" contributes negatively to conflicts in another way as well. When a situation is perceived irrationally as awful, catastrophic, or irreparable, it is not surprising that resolutions are _____ to reach.

Notice how Paul responded to difficulties that some might have considered horrible or awful.

*** 2 Corinthians 4:7-9, 16 ***

"Perfectionism"

"Perfectionism" has roots in "demandingness" and in "exaggerated badness." Perfectionists cannot endure their own _____ and _____, nor can they tolerate the imperfections of others. "Perfectionism" focuses on a person's own behavior, on the behavior of others. It demands that certain standards be _____ and maintained. When these demands are not reached, perfectionists tend to consider the situation to be _____.

"Perfectionism" is often associated with high moral and religious standards. People caught up in "perfectionism" tend to be dogmatic, _____, and controlling. They relate to behavior in terms of "always," "never," "_____ " and "_____."

Perfectionistic thought patterns are intolerant. They lead directly to intrapersonal (inner) conflict and frequently to conflict with others. "Perfectionism" alienates people from each other. Frequently the perfectionist is so inflexible that healthy conflict resolution is virtually impossible.

Perfectionist Christians need to discover that Godliness is not an inward-looking spiritual _____. They need to understand that a forced bending of others toward "righteousness" is _____.

Godliness is an upward- and outward-looking completeness to which God _____ people. Gradually, without _____ or demands, God nurtures those who accept His invitation to this joyful wholeness.

SIGNIFICANT VERBS AND OTHER KEY WORDS IN
PSALM 37:1-11

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

7. _____

8. _____

9. _____

10. _____

11. _____

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

"Demandingness"

You have a character to form, and you are accountable to God for the character that you develop. You have a controlling influence and possess a dictatorial spirit, which is not in accordance with the will of God. Testimonies for the Church, 3:245.

In many of our homes there is a hard, combative spirit manifested. Critical words and unkind actions are offensive to God. Dictatorial commands and haughty, overbearing manners are not acceptable to Heaven. The reason there are so many differences existing between brethren is that they have failed to add brotherly kindness. Peter's Counsel to Parents, 20.

My brother, be kind, patient, forbearing. Remember that your wife accepted you as her husband, not that you might rule over her, but that you might be her helper. Never be overbearing and dictatorial. Do not exert your strong will power to compel your wife to do as you wish. Remember that she has a will and that she may wish to have her way as much as you wish to have yours. Remember, too, that you have the advantage of your wider experience. Be considerate and courteous. "The wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits." James 3:17. Testimonies for the Church, 7:48.

Your course since your marriage, in taking possession of and controlling the means of her [whom] you had made your wife, shows your motives to be wrong. All these things are against you and show on your part very deep selfishness and a dictatorial spirit which God would not have her submit to. Her marriage does not make null and void her stewardship. It does not destroy her identity. Her individuality should be preserved if she would glorify God with her body and spirit, which are His. Her individuality cannot be submerged in you. Testimonies on Sexual Behavior, Adultery, and Divorce, 29.

"Awfulizing"

When you see iniquity all around you it makes you all the more glad that He is your Saviour, and we are His

children. Then shall we look at the iniquity around us and dwell upon the dark side? You cannot cure it; then talk of something that is higher, better, and more noble....

Now we may go into a cellar and stay there and look around into its dark corners, and we can talk of the darkness and say, "Oh, it is so dark here," and keep talking about it. But will it make it any lighter? Oh no! What are you going to do? Come out of it; come out of the dark into the upper chamber where the light of God's countenance shines brightly.

You know our bodies are made up of the food assimilated. Now, it is the same with our minds. If we have a mind to dwell on the disagreeable things of life, we will not have any hope, but we want to dwell on the cheery scenes of heaven. Says Paul, "Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory" (2 Corinthians 4:17).-- MS 7, 1888. Mind, Character, and Personality, 2:490.

Perhaps one or more commit errors or are unruly. The case is exaggerated in his mind, and he becomes unjust and is severe and cutting in reproof, even taunting the one whom he considers at fault. This same injustice afterward prevents him from admitting that he has not taken the proper course. To maintain the dignity of his position, he has lost a precious, golden opportunity to manifest the spirit of Christ, perhaps to gain a soul for heaven. Testimonies for the Church, 4:421.

But while you have fully realized your husband's faults, you have failed to mark your own. You have erred in talking of his failings to others, thus cultivating a love for dwelling upon disagreeable topics, and keeping your disappointments and trials constantly before you. You have thus fallen into the habit of making the most of your sorrows and difficulties, many of which you create by exaggeration and by talking to others. Testimonies for the Church, 4:137.

The punishment which your daughter received in school for willful disobedience was exaggerated in your mind till it became so heinous an offense as to lead you to seek the protection of the law. The deception you there practiced, your exaggeration of the truth, was a lesson most dangerous to morals. These things stand registered

against you in the books of heaven. You have a stubborn disposition and will not humble your heart to confess a wrong, but will justify your course before men without reference to how it appears in the sight of God. Can you wonder that under such deceptive training your daughter has become what she is? What influence could such a course of training have upon the youthful mind but to make her feel that no one had a right to control her perverse will? The seed sown by your own hand has blossomed and borne fruit which is most bitter. Testimonies for the Church, 4:137.

Do not allow the perplexities and worries of everyday life to fret your mind and cloud your brow. If you do, you will always have something to vex and annoy. Life is what we make it, and we shall find what we look for. If we look for sadness and trouble, if we are in a frame of mind to magnify little difficulties, we shall find plenty of them to engross our thoughts and our conversation. But if we look on the bright side of things, we shall find enough to make us cheerful and happy. If we give smiles, they will be returned to us; if we speak pleasant, cheerful words, they will be spoken to us again.

When Christians appear as gloomy and depressed as though they thought themselves friendless, they give a wrong impression of religion. In some cases the idea has been entertained that cheerfulness is inconsistent with the dignity of the Christian character, but this is a mistake. Heaven is all joy; and if we gather to our souls the joys of heaven and, as far as possible, express them in our words and deportment, we shall be more pleasing to our heavenly Father than if we were gloomy and sad.

It is the duty of everyone to cultivate cheerfulness instead of brooding over sorrow and troubles. Many not only make themselves wretched in this way, but they sacrifice health and happiness to a morbid imagination. There are things in their surroundings that are not agreeable, and their countenances wear a continual frown that, more plainly than words, expresses discontent. These depressing emotions are a great injury to them healthwise; for by hindering the process of digestion, they interfere with nutrition. While grief and anxiety cannot remedy a single evil, they can do great harm; but cheerfulness and hope, while they brighten the pathway of others, "are life unto those that find them, and health to all their flesh." The Adventist Home, 430.

Some are always fearing and borrowing trouble. Every day they are surrounded with the tokens of God's love; every day they are enjoying the bounties of His providence; but they overlook these present blessings. Their minds are continually dwelling upon something disagreeable which they fear may come; or some difficulty may really exist which, though small, blinds their eyes to the many things that demand gratitude. The difficulties they encounter, instead of driving them to God, the only source of their help, separate them from him because they awaken unrest and repining. Steps to Christ, 121.

In trusting in God continually there is safety; there will not be a constant fear of future evil. This borrowed care and anxiety will cease. We have a heavenly Father who careth for His children, and will and does make His grace sufficient in every time of need. Testimonies to the Church, 2:469.

We are so anxious, all of us, for happiness, but many rarely find it because of their faulty methods of seeking, in the place of striving. We must strive most earnestly and mingle all our desires with faith. Then happiness steals in upon us almost unsought. . . . When we can, notwithstanding disagreeable circumstances, rest confidently in His love and shut ourselves in with Him, resting peacefully in His love, the sense of His presence will inspire a deep, tranquil joy. This experience gains for us a faith that enables us not to fret, not to worry, but to depend upon a power that is infinite. --Lt 57, 1897. Mind, Character, and Personality, 2:472.

"Perfectionism"

You may create an unreal world in your own mind and picture an ideal church where the temptations of Satan no longer prompt to evil, but perfection exists only in your imagination. The world is a fallen world, and the church is a place represented by a field in which grow tares and wheat. They are to grow together until the harvest. It is not our place to uproot the tares, according to human wisdom, lest under the suggestions of Satan, the wheat may be rooted up under the supposition that it is tares. The wisdom that is from above will come to him who is meek and lowly in heart, and that wisdom will not lead him to

destroy but to build up the people of God.--Lt 63, 1893.
Mind, Character, and Personality, 2:636.

You mark little deviations from what you think is right, and you sternly seek to correct them. While you are thus overbearing and dictatorial, quick to observe a brother's faults, you do not closely search your own heart to see the evils existing in your life. . . . You require much of others; . . ." Testimonies for the Church, 4:257.

Those who have such high ideas of the married life, whose imagination has wrought out an air-castle picture that has naught to do with life's perplexities and troubles, will find themselves sadly disappointed in the reality. When real life comes in with its troubles and cares, they are wholly unprepared to meet them. They expect in each other perfection, but find weakness and defects; for finite men and women are not faultless. Then they begin to find fault with each other, and to express their disappointment. Instead of this, they should try to help each other, and should seek practical godliness to help them to fight the battle of life valiantly. Letters to Young Lovers, 31.



DEVOTIONAL SECRETS

In the mountains of India there is a sunlit glade known only to God and me. It speaks to me still of unhurried communion with the Creator, of healing and wholeness.

Noelene and I went straight from Avondale College to India. After a few months in language school, we joined the staff of Vincent Hill School, nearly 7,000 feet up in the Himalayas. There we were "parents" for boys aged 8 to 18. I taught a full load of classes, took morning and evening worships, supervised the chicken industry and the woodcutting detail, guided the MV Society, planned ball games and social programs, and went to town (we walked) only on boys' day. We had no assistant dean; we served for more than a year before we had a weekend free from the dormitory.

How did we survive? Because of that sunlit glade. I would go there regularly—between classes, whenever I could find a spare slot. I would be alone: only trees, sunlight, mountains, and God. And I would come back refreshed to carry on.

I last saw that glade many years ago—more years than I can grasp. They tell me the glade is gone now, victim to timber-getters.

But I have found a new sunlit glade. In fact, since leaving the mountains 26 years ago, I have found it in Pune, India, at Spicer Memorial College; in Berrien Springs, Michigan; and for the past nine years in Silver Spring, Maryland.

My living room in the early morning makes the Himalayan glade seem like a time warp. But the two are joined, are one. The one Creator,

my Lord, comes to me now as He came to me then.

Any day that I don't go to that glade is never the same for me. I need that time of quiet communion, of unhurried prayer, of meditation on the Word, of freedom from telephones and TV.

I believe Ellen White was absolutely right: "Consecrate yourself to God in the morning; make this your very first work. Let your prayer be, 'Take me, O Lord, as wholly Thine. I lay all my plans at Thy feet. Use me today in Thy service. Abide with me, and let all my work be wrought in Thee'" (*Steps to Christ*, p. 70). We are to give our all: all our hopes, dreams, fears, tasks; and we are to receive His all: all His grace, love, strength, wisdom.

Starving Adventists

The Lord spreads a banquet for His people every morning, but Adventists are starving. We are weak and sickly, uncertain about God, burdened with cares, worried about the future, flabby in faith, lukewarm about the church, sluggish in mission.

God's path of healing is the same as it has ever been: in quiet communion with Him, in feeding on His Word. Listen! The Saviour of the world, when He came to earth, found it necessary to go aside for frequent talks with the Father. Do we think we are stronger than He is? Do we think we can make it on our own?

We don't need any spiritual gimmicks, any new programs to help us to pray or to study the Bible.

Prayer? We simply open our heart to God as we would to our best friend. We tell Him everything. And

then we stop and listen to what He has to say to us.

The Bible? Simply read it. Read it all. Read it right through. Then start reading it again. Many excellent modern translations are available—I like the New International Version, but one can find plenty of others in the Adventist Book Center or another Christian bookstore.

For many years I taught religion classes, the New Testament in particular. Perhaps that background led me to the pattern of personal Bible study that I fell into way back. Starting January 1, I begin reading the New Testament in the original Greek. By early April I have finished it, then I switch to the Old Testament—but in English (my Hebrew has rusted out!). By late September I complete Malachi and go back to cover the New Testament once more in the original before the old year closes.

Enriching Life

That is my "devotional secret." It works for me, enriching my life day by day and year by year. But we each must find our own secret. For example, my wife has a completely different pattern for continually reading through the entire Bible.

We desperately need revival and reformation. Individually. Corporately. This is our greatest need.

But there will be no revival or reformation without a return to personal prayer and Bible study. However, when we *do* get back to the individual devotional life, God will renew us. He will come to us like the dew on the new-mown grass; He will come like the dawn; He will come in the marvel of the gift of Himself.

The sunlit glade still waits.

Do you have a devotional secret to share with readers, something that enriches your devotional life? Send it to: Devotional Secrets, Adventist Review, 12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, MD 20904-6600.

WILLIAM G. JOHNSON

DEVOTIONAL

How to Be a Spiritual Athlete

Devotional secrets that can change your life

BY STEVE WILLSEY

When he was in high school, my son Mark was on the varsity basketball team. He especially enjoyed the advantage he had over the other fellows on the team because of his height—six feet five (196 centimeters).

That advantage, however, did not exempt him from the very strict training program instituted by his coach: laps around the gym, weight lifting, and endless hours perfecting the skills of guarding, dunking, and dribbling. Mark had to make basketball a priority during that season. Other things he enjoyed doing had to be sidelined. It taught him the relationship of discipline to the achievement of one's goals.

In the Spiritual Sphere

Perhaps the spiritual goal of all of us is to develop a Christ-centered life. How shall we achieve this? The answer is obvious. We must practice those spiritual disciplines that contribute to relationship building. We must give priority to developing intimacy with God. As we do this, we put ourselves in a position where God can replace the normal sinful character traits with the fruit of the Spirit.

Jesus cultivated intimacy with His Father. This prepared Him for the final crisis of His ministry. When He left the upper room after the Last Supper, He knew that that crisis was beginning. And although He'd come into the world precisely for this purpose, the pain of the approaching showdown was so great that He was tempted to abandon the mission. But as Jesus cried out to God for help in that desperate hour, it was with the assurance that He was calling on One with whom He was on very intimate terms.

Telling the story of what happened after that last Passover, Luke says that "Jesus went out as usual to the Mount of Olives" (Luke 22:39). That's the place to which He often resorted, to find comfort and strength from God. Notwithstanding a grinding daily schedule of teaching, preaching, and healing, "Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed" (Luke 5:16).

To a high-powered type A executive it would probably seem like a copout to withdraw from the bustle of activity for prayer. Few of us with as many pressing responsibilities would give such high priority to things of the Spirit. Working against deadlines and with pressure

building, most of us put everything else on hold. In a world that usually measures us by what we accomplish rather than by what we are inside, we try to drive ourselves to succeed through more and more activity. But Jesus did not change His practice of communion with God even under the pressure of the most demanding schedule.

The disciples, by contrast, discovered too late that they had neglected to spend valuable, strength-building time with God. They slept through Jesus' agony in Gethsemane, a time when He longed for understanding from His closest friends. "Could you men not keep watch with me for one hour?" He asked them. "Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation" (Matt. 26:40, 41).

Here was a reference to spiritual discipline, a mode of living that would have prepared them for that crisis. How much easier for them would have been the events of that night had they cultivated the discipline of watching and prayer! Lacking this, they were in no position to offer help. Instead Jesus found Himself all alone. Yet He was not completely alone, for as He said, "My Father is with me" (John 16:32).

Strength Through Communion

Jesus spent time alone with His Father because He loved being with Him. Seldom did He find understanding from among His disciples. Rarely did those He healed think to thank Him. The Jewish leaders tried desperately to discredit Him. Only One understood. Only One really cared. Only One fully accepted and encouraged Him, giving Him the needed strength to face rejection.

Jesus ended His ministry just as He began it—in special communion with His Father. At the beginning, He'd undertaken a 40-day retreat for solitude and prayer, bracing Himself through the Spirit for this infinitely difficult assignment. Many in today's world would have questioned the wisdom of a 40-day fasting retreat as proper preparation for a new job. Many would have advised instead an intensive course in leadership or public speaking. But Jesus, who, more than any other leader alive or dead, has made an impact on the world,

prepared Himself through quiet communion with God.

To experience the kind of intimacy with God that Jesus knew is really what it means to be a Christian. It is inspiring to listen to conversion stories. To experience God's forgiveness on the basis of the atonement made at Calvary brings assurance and hope. But salvation also includes victorious living in union with the heavenly Father. Jesus said to Peter and the other disciples, "Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation." What He gave them was the key to victory. Through the exercise of the devotional discipline, the way is opened to full fellowship with the Lord. And we grow to be like Him!

The apostle Paul described the effects of that fellowship in 2 Corinthians 3:18: "And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory." New birth begins the Christian's life; but growth takes place as we feed the soul with the appropriate spiritual nutrient. The old lifestyle gives way to one of holiness.

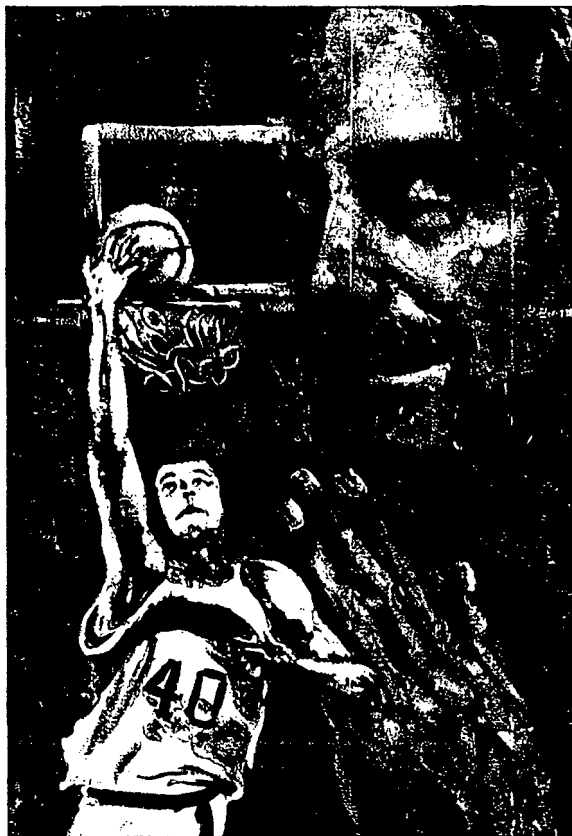
Not by Force

For thousands of Christians this process has been totally misunderstood. They think they can grow by forcing new attitudes and values in place of the old ones. They become rigid, conscience-stricken, miserable.

No, the secret of the Christian life lies in the time spent alone with God. Ellen White often reminded her readers that "by beholding we become changed." That it is through watching and prayer—the discipline of spiritual exercise—that relationship grows and we take on the character of the Lord. Spending time with God is what Jesus referred to in His parable as remaining

attached to the vine as a branch. Life-giving power comes from the vine and beautiful fruit results.

These are relationship-building activities. Watching and prayer. But why do I refer to them as "discipline"? That's because they constitute what might be called intentional and regular actions,



calculated to develop spiritual intimacy.

The apostle Paul made such discipline his highest priority. He said, "I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. . . . I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death" (Phil. 3:8-10).

"Not that I have already obtained all this," he says, emphasizing the element of discipline, ". . . but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. . . . I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has

called me heavenward in Christ Jesus" (verses 12-14). "In Christ" was Paul's formula for victory. He was ever pressing onward, maintaining his centeredness in his Lord.

Quaker professor Richard Foster, in *The Celebration of Discipline*, makes the following statement: "The discipl-

ines are God's way of getting us . . . where He can work within us and transform us. By themselves the spiritual disciplines can do nothing; they can only get us to the place where something can be done. They are God's means of grace. The inner righteousness we seek is not something that is poured on our heads. God has ordained the disciplines of the spiritual life as the means by which we place ourselves where He can bless us."

Use Variety

A variety of devotional practices may become God's means of grace for us. Ellen White mentions three: prayer, study, and meditation. It may be surprising that meditation should be on the list. The meditation she suggests, however, aims at an *attachment* to Christ rather than the *detachment* from reality that is the goal of Eastern-type meditation. Christian meditation allows

prayer and Bible study to become more devotionally rewarding. It's a little like savoring a delicious morsel of food. In Christian meditation the mind is allowed to dwell on every possible facet of a word or phrase until it becomes fully developed in the imagination. All three of the disciplines mentioned above—as well as others you may devise—will require solitude, as well as a regular time and place.

Keeping of a spiritual journal could be an important devotional discipline. Such a journal might record our personal prayers and the story of our spiritual pilgrimage. Foster adds the outward

ILLUSTRATION BY SHAHE REISING

disciplines of simplicity, solitude, submission, and service. He also identifies four corporate disciplines: confession, worship, guidance, and celebration.

Just here, a warning is in order. We must ever guard against allowing the disciplines to become laws. This would be to abuse them, as happened in some medieval monasteries. The disciplines should never be seen as ends in themselves, but only as means of building intimacy with God. It is through this intimacy that the spirit triumphs over the flesh.

Sometimes it may be beneficial to seek out some person who evidences spiritual maturity to serve as a spiritual guide or mentor. Such a person could play a supporting role—not only by praying with the individual concerned but also by helping to hold him or her

accountable for the goals agreed to. Moreover, sharing together on a regular basis how the Lord is guiding can become a strength for both.

So this is the point: Becoming a spiritual athlete does not happen by accident. "Remain in me, and I will remain in you," Jesus said (John 15:4). Living in union with the Lord is a life of joy. But it requires deliberate relationship-building disciplines—not the occasional offering of a quick prayer, or opening the Bible just to read a favorite text.

Following the strict training program the coach demanded made my son a good member of the team, leading to a trophy at the end of the season. But the greater lesson was the importance of discipline in human experience—both for secular pursuits and for the Christian

life. Let's not neglect the spiritual disciplines. Says Mrs. White: "Our growth in grace, our joy, our usefulness—all depend upon our union with Christ. It is by communion with Him, daily, hourly—by abiding in Him—that we are to grow in grace."²

* Bible texts in this article are from the New International Version.

¹ Richard J. Foster, *The Celebration of Discipline*, rev. ed. (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1988), p. 7.
² *Steps to Christ*, p. 69.



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The Trouble With Reading

BY RUTH PETERSON-WATTS

Jeremy was in the third grade and he hated reading class! He could not make heads or tails of the words in his book. Because he had trouble with reading, he also had trouble with spelling and science and English and anything else that he had to read. Not only did he hate reading; he was beginning to hate the whole idea of school.

His dad said, "If you would just try harder, Jeremy; just try!"

His mother said, "Jeremy, you must concentrate on your work!"

His teacher said, "Take your book home and practice."

Some of the good readers in his class said, "Dummy!"

Nothing helped. He *did* try harder; he *did* concentrate; he *did* take his book

home and try to practice. But the fact remained that he simply couldn't read.

Now, Jeremy and his parents were Christians, and they believed in prayer. So every night when Mother tucked him into bed, she would ask Jesus to help with the problem.

One day during school his teacher called him up to her desk.

"Jeremy," she said, "today you are going to a special class with some other children. I know you will like the teacher. Come, and I will take you there."

She took his hand and walked with him to the room.

As the other boys and girls came into the room, they quickly found seats and sat waiting to see what would happen next.

Each child was given a special test, and then the new teacher stood at the front of the class and smiled at them.

"You are here because you are all having problems with your reading," she said. "But I am going to help you. There are many different things to do here in this room. There are games to play that will teach you the sounds of letters, sandboxes to trace letters in, and sandpaper letters to feel. I will help each one of you choose the activity that you will do."

The children were soon busy with the various activities. Jeremy was one of the children who did not know the sounds of the letters. So he, along with three other children, was shown how to play a game that would help him learn the sounds.

In a few weeks Jeremy began to sound out simple words. Soon he was reading road signs and the back of his cereal box, and by the time school was out he had caught up with the rest of his class.

How proud he and his parents were when he was chosen to read the scripture for worship at church one morning and didn't make a single mistake! You can be sure that they all thanked Jesus for answering their prayer by sending someone to help him.

WHAT TO DO WITH YOUR ANGER

Deal with Anger

*** Proverbs 16:32 ***

There are a number of unproductive and even harmful ways of dealing with anger.

1. Lots of angry Christians _____ that they are angry while they seethe inside.
2. Others consciously _____ angry feelings, pushing them into dark corners of their minds.
3. And some even _____ anger subconsciously.

There are two major factors which could result in these responses to anger. Many Christians consider anger to be a weakness and/or a _____. (Most of us are quite reluctant to display our weaknesses and sins.) Messages embedded in their belief systems are telling them, "It is disgraceful and/or wicked for me to be angry." "I must never be angry."

Another reason people commonly deny or suppress anger is because they _____ the emotional _____ and devastation which might result. Here the belief system message is "If I display or communicate my anger, the results will be unbearable."

Intrapersonal conflict, sometimes of major proportions, is commonly caused when angry feelings are blocked by denial, suppression, or repression.

4. Some people feel that anger needs to be _____ quickly so it will not emotionally damage them. While it's true that internalized rage can eventually produce harmful physical and/or psychological symptoms, impulsive _____ of anger are not a good solution.

When anger is allowed to erupt spontaneously, some tension is released, but at the same time the flames of

wrath are fanned even higher. Resentment is _____, energy is wasted, little or nothing is solved, and the conflict is intensified.

Understand Anger

In order to relate to anger in a healthy way, it is essential to understand that anger is not necessarily _____.

*** Ephesians 4:26 ***

But, like someone has said, "Anger is one letter short of _____." This results from our _____.

Handling our anger is like working with dynamite or boiling milk. These are supposed to be positive experiences, but they can easily and quickly become very negative.

When it comes to dealing with anger, trusting God and staying close to Him is so essential! With God's guidance in our lives, anger can make positive contributions instead of being a curse.

Accept and Acknowledge Anger

Instead of denying or suppressing anger, it is crucial to _____ and _____ our anger. There can be no positive way to deal with our anger when we won't even admit it exists.

When we feel angry, it's important for us to take responsibility for that anger. Angry feelings are not caused by other _____, no matter what they say or do. Angry feelings are not caused by outside circumstances. When we are angry, we have _____ the emotional response of anger. There are many other emotional responses available to any given situation. For an example, consider the story of Namaan (2 Kings 5:9-14.)

Analyze and Evaluate Anger

Angry feelings are like a _____ light signaling that something may be wrong. Anger is often an emotional response to what we see as unreasonable _____ being made upon us. Our anger can also accompany demands that we make, demands upon ourselves or upon other people.

The demands underlying anger need to be recognized and _____. Many of them are all out of proportion to the situation. Experts suggest that at least _____ of the demands underlying angry feelings are unreasonable.¹ When these demands are restated as _____ or _____ altogether, emotional energy can be channeled away from destructive rage to more positive emotional responses.

Irrational Anger Sequence

According to Paul Hauck, anger based upon unreasonable demands happens in a predictable five- or six-step _____.²

Step 1: "I _____ something." Obviously wanting something is not a problem by itself.

Step 2: "I didn't get what I wanted and I am _____." When we are blocked from achieving a desire, frustration is normal. But how we choose to relate to the frustration is crucial in determining whether we will follow a reasonable or an unhealthy emotional path.

Step 3: "It is _____ not to get what I want." This "awfulizing" response sets us up for irrational anger.

¹Augsburger, When Caring Is Not Enough, 88.

²Hauck, 43-54.

Step 4: "You _____ frustrate me! I _____ have my way." When we make the initial desire into a requirement, "demandingness" becomes our mode of thinking. Unmet demands result in rising indignation.

Step 5: "You are _____ for frustrating me." Just because someone else's behavior blocks us from obtaining a desire does not mean that the person is bad. Now the pattern of thinking is becoming quite irrational and destructive. Here we are rejecting the possibility of disapproving of a person's actions or attitudes without disapproving of that person.

Sometimes this is the end of the irrational anger sequence. At other times there is one more step.

Step 6: "Bad people should be _____." When we reach this stage of irrational anger, we will probably inflict pain of some sort on the "bad people" if it is within our power.

David Augsburger suggests that only about _____ of the demands which underlie angry feelings are both rational and important enough to call for a strong anger response.¹ For example, in the face of injustice, cruelty, and the rejection or devaluation of people, a controlled angry and assertive stand is both reasonable and necessary.

*** 1 Samuel 11:1,2,6 ***

*** Mark 3:1-6 ***

Direct the Energy of Anger

When we are able to accept and analyze angry feelings, we are in good shape to handle anger constructively. With God's guidance, anger connected with reasonable demands can be _____. Anger arising from irrational _____

¹Augsburger, When Caring Is Not Enough, 88.

demands can be _____ and dealt with wisely.

Numerous negative conflicts could be averted or _____ in this way. And the surge of energy which anger generates could be directed more consistently to glorify God and to benefit others and ourselves.

When a confrontation is necessary, it is vitally important that anger be directed against _____ and not against _____.

For positive confrontation, we need to direct the energy of anger like a surgical _____ beam which brings healing, not like a _____ blast which cripples or destroys. Criticizing, belittling, labeling, or blaming other people can be carefully avoided. (See the Ellen G. White Comments in Handout D.) The aim is to utilize clear and pointed but caring communication. This communication is designed, not to _____ or _____, but to slice cleanly through emotional barriers and to reach toward an over-arching solution. (We'll talk about communication next week).

Weigh the Situation

One more thing before we move on to the "Confront the Other" phase. Early in a conflict we need to take a careful look at the issues to decide whether they are really _____ "fighting" about. If the conflict is minor or short term, avoiding it may be the best route to take.

*** Proverbs 17:14 ***

*** Ephesians 4:32 ***

Answering these questions can help us decide whether avoiding is wise:

1. Has this situation separated me from someone?

2. Has this situation harmed someone's reputation?
3. Has this situation harmed God's reputation?
4. Is complete forgiveness possible without confrontation?

Confront the Other

Only after God's concerns have been identified, personal contributions to the conflict have been considered, and it has been determined that the situation can not simply be overlooked, is it time for the Christian to confront others involved.

"To _____ is easy. . . . To confront is hard."¹
We can dodge a lot of negative fallout from conflict by learning effective confrontation skills.

All too often, instead of confronting the people involved, we tell _____ parties just how we think we've been mistreated. The Bible makes it clear that we have no _____ widening the conflict in this way.

*** Matthew 18:15-16a***

The original confrontation needs to be kept between those who were originally involved. The field of participants is only to be widened _____ an honest attempt at reconciliation at a lower level. (See the Ellen G. White Comments on this area in Handout D.)

When possible it's a good idea to make a _____ for the confrontation. Careful preplanning can go a long way toward insuring that the encounter moves participants toward peace instead of deeper hostility.

Planning the confrontation includes choosing the right _____ and _____, deciding how to invite others to participate, thinking through the main _____ of _____

¹Augsburger, Caring Enough to Confront, 51.

discussion, and considering how to relate to possible negative responses.

Confess Willingly

As a part of confronting others about what we think are their faults, we need to be willing to _____ our own failings. As we seriously consider the conflict, looking for "beams in our own eyes", chances are good that we will find _____ we need to confess. In this case _____ repentance and confession are in order.

*** Proverbs 28:13 ***

Sincere confession is very often an appropriate way to begin a confrontation. Ken Sande lists seven essential "A's" in effective confession:¹

1. _____ everyone involved. If you have hurt more than one person, confess your sin to each one.

2. _____ "if," "but," and "maybe" when making the confession. Any attempt to shift the blame to others or to minimize or excuse guilt destroys a confession.

Consider these examples:

- "I'm sorry if I did something to upset you."
- "I guess I was wrong when I said those things about you; I only did it because you made me so angry."
- "If I offended you, will you forgive me?"
- "I shouldn't have lost my temper, but I was tired."
- "I'm sorry I hurt your feelings, but you really upset me."
- "I should have kept my mouth shut, but she asked for it."
- "I know I was wrong, but so were you!"

3. _____ specifically your wrong attitudes and actions. This shows that you are honestly facing up to _____

¹Sande, 93-109, 136-137.

what you did and makes it much easier for others to forgive you.

4. _____, expressing sincere sorrow and regret for hurting others. "You must have been very embarrassed when I said those things about you in front of everyone. I'm very sorry I hurt you so deeply."

5. _____ the consequences and make restitution. Communicate that this will be done. Otherwise the person you have offended may assume that you are just trying to be released from the consequences. "Starting this evening, I'll call all the people I talked to. I'll explain that what I said about you was not true."

6. _____ the offending behavior and explain how it will be changed. This is another way to demonstrate sincerity.

7. _____ for forgiveness without applying any pressure to move the person(s) to forgive you. It takes some people time to work through their thoughts and feelings. Some may choose not to forgive and that is their privilege.

WORK SHEET: ELLEN G. WHITE AND IRRATIONAL THOUGHT

Directions: Circle irrational thought patterns exhibited by people to whom Ellen G. White is writing. Use the space between the lines to identify the irrational thinking we discussed last week by writing a "D" for "Demandingness", an "A" for "Awfulizing" and a "P" for "Perfectionism."

He (the husband) may even quote texts of Scripture to show that he is the head, and that he must be obeyed in all things. He feels that his wife belongs to him, and that she is subject to his order and dictation. But who gives him the right to thus dictate and condemn? Is it the law of God, which commands him to love God with all his heart, and his neighbor as himself? No; there is no moral or religious defense for such unjust authority. "Unwise Marriages," Advent Review and Sabbath Herald, February 2, 1886, 7.

Sister F, you have an inclination to dictate to your husband, your sister, and to all around you. . . . You would better err, if you err at all, on the side of mercy and forbearance than that of intolerance.

Mild measures, soft answers, and pleasant words are much better fitted to reform and save, than severity and harshness. A little too much unkindness may place persons beyond your reach, while a conciliatory spirit would be

the means of binding them to you, and you might then establish them in the right way. You should be actuated by a forgiving spirit also, and give due credit to every good purpose and action of those around you. Speak words of commendation to your husband, your child, your sister, and to all with whom you are associated. Continual censure blights and darkens the life of anyone.

Testimonies for the Church, 4:64,65

Though their present needs are supplied, many are unwilling to trust God for the future, and they are in constant anxiety lest poverty shall come upon them, and their children shall be left to suffer. Some are always anticipating evil, or magnifying the difficulties that really exist, so that their eyes are blinded to the many blessings which demand their gratitude. The obstacles they encounter, instead of leading them to seek help from God, the only Source of strength, separate them from Him because they awaken unrest and repining. Patriarchs and Prophets, 293, 294.

I am satisfied that you are wandering in mist and darkness. You do not see things in the right light. You blind your eyes in regard to your own case by excusing

yourself thus: "I would not have done this or that if it had not been for certain influences of others which led me to that course of action." . . . You are continually casting about for somebody or something to answer the place of a scapegoat, upon which you can lay the blame of having brought you into a position to feel and speak unworthy of a Christian. . . .

You sometimes pass along days and weeks without developing the spirit of evil which I have named impatience, and a dictatorial spirit, a desire to control your husband. Your loving to rule and to bring others to your ideas has nearly ruined yourself and him. You love to suggest and to dictate to others. You love to have them feel and see that you have the very best light, and are especially led of God. If they do not, you begin to surmise, to become jealous, to feel a spirit of unrest; you are dissatisfied and exceedingly unhappy.

Nothing so readily arouses the evil traits in your character as to dispute your wisdom and judgment in exercising your authority. Your strong, overbearing spirit, which has appeared to slumber, is roused to its fullest energy. Self then controls you, and you are no more governed by candid reason and calm judgment than is an insane person. Testimonies for the Church, 2:571-573.

I'VE HAD IT!¹

"Yesterday, while I was trying to stop the washing machine from leaking all over the basement floor, fluffy had her puppies--on the yellow carpet in the living room. About the time I discovered Fluffy's puppies, Jimmy's teacher called from school stating that he had thrown-up and was running a fever. She was most eager for me to pick him up as soon as I could. I rushed out to the car only to find that the battery was as dead-as-a-doornail. Fortunately, my neighbor was home and was kind enough to let me use her car. Unfortunately, on our way home from the school, the car had a flat tire.

"When I finally arrived home, Bill's mother called from the airport, announcing a surprise visit, and asking whether someone was there who could pick her up. Hoping to reach Bill before he left his office, I called. His secretary politely told me that he had left a bit early. He was bringing two visiting salesmen out to the house for dinner so that they could wrap up a deal."

How do you think Martha feels?

- Irritable
- Angry
- Depressed
- Amused
- Infuriated
- Exhausted
- Other _____

What are the demands that circumstances and people are making upon Martha?

Imagine and discuss the results if Martha directs her emotional energy through:

- Impatience and temper at Jimmy.
- Irritated sarcasm at Bill's mother.
- Angry resentment at Bill.

What feelings and responses might Martha choose which could help her whole family deal well with this crisis?

¹Adapted from John and Millie Youngberg, Marriage Commitment Curriculum Resources for Marriage Enrichment Seminars (Berrien Springs, Mich.: n.p., 1978), H-27.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

Anger

One class have come up without self-control; they have not bridled the temper or the tongue; and some of these claim to be Christ's followers, but they are not. . . . Some are nervous, and if they begin to lose self-control in word or spirit under provocation, they are as much intoxicated with wrath as the inebriate is with liquor. They are unreasonable, and not easily persuaded or convinced. They are not sane; Satan for the time has full control. They will be continually troubled so long as they think so much of self. They carry the heaviest load a mortal can lift, that is self, unsanctified and unsubdued. But there is hope for them. Let this life, so stormy with conflicts and worries, be brought into connection with Christ, and then self will no longer clamor for the supremacy. . . .

Many look at things on their darkest side; they magnify their supposed grievances, nurse their wrath, and are filled with revengeful, hateful feelings, when in truth they had no real cause for these feelings. Shall we cut ourselves loose from the rest of humanity, remaining solitary and alone, because everything in our association with others does not move smoothly? No, indeed; the change must take place in your own soul. Resist these wrong feelings, and you will experience a great change in your association with your fellowmen. "The Importance of Self-Control," The Youth's Instructor, November 10, 1886. (For parts of this quotation see: Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary, 3:1161; Mind, Character, and Personality, 2:523.)

I hope you will go over the ground carefully and consider your first temptation to depart from the rules of the college. Study critically the character of the government of our school. The rules which were enforced were none too strict. But anger was cherished; for the time being reason was dethroned and the heart was made a prey to ungovernable passion. Before you were aware, you had taken a step which a few hours previous you would not have taken under any pressure of temptation. Impulse had overcome reason, and you could not recall the injury done to yourself nor to an institution of God. Our only safety under all circumstances is in being always master of

ourselves in the strength of Jesus our Redeemer.
Testimonies to the Church, 4:431.

Criticism, Gossip, and Matthew 18:15-18

None who continue to cherish a querulous, fault-finding disposition can enter heaven; for they would mar its peace and harmony. They will be left outside the city of God, with all who stir up strife. Nor should they be permitted to remain in the church to prevent unity and destroy its usefulness. Let them be reprov'd, and if they do not change their course, let them be separated from the church. But all may, if they will, conquer these evil traits. The members of the church should pledge themselves to walk together in harmony. Each should set a guard over his own heart, not permitting himself to think evil of his brethren, but giving them credit for all the good qualities they possess. We should store the mind with the precious promises and instructions of God's word. When Satan seeks to divert the attention to things of no profit, then we should think and talk of these heavenly promises, and the tempter will be vanquished. Historical Sketches of the Foreign Missions of the Seventh-day Adventists, 214.

Ministers and lay members of the church displease God when they allow individuals to tell them of the errors and faults of their brethren. They should not open their ears to these reports. They should inquire, "Have you strictly followed the injunction of your Saviour? Have you told him his faults between you and him alone? And then if he refused to hear, have you carefully and prayerfully taken two or three others and labored with him in tenderness, in humility, in meekness, your heart throbbing in love for his soul?" If you failed here, there was only one more step you could take--tell it to the church, and let action be taken in the case according to the Scriptures. Then it is that heaven will ratify the decision made by the church in cutting off the offending member. Manuscript Releases, 12:280.

Let every member of the church try to save the souls of others, and not seek to discourage or destroy them through criticism or evil reports. How many and how great evils would be extinguished in the church if men would follow Christ's rule of dealing with the erring instead of

following the impulses and passions of their unsanctified hearts. If matters of difficulty between brethren are not laid open to others, but frankly spoken of between themselves in the spirit of Christian love, the difficulty would in nearly every case be healed and the offending brother won. Misunderstandings have arisen that have been thus explained, in Christian tenderness, and the breach has been healed. Manuscript Releases, 15:153.

Whatever the character of the offense, this does not change the plan that God has made for the settlement of misunderstandings and personal injuries. Speaking alone and in the spirit of Christ to the one who is in fault will often remove the difficulty. Go to the erring one, with a heart filled with Christ's love and sympathy, and seek to adjust the matter. Reason with him calmly and quietly. Let no angry words escape your lips. Speak in a way that will appeal to his better judgment. Remember the words: "He which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins." James 5:20. Testimonies to the Church, 7:261.

Floating rumors are frequently the destroyers of unity among brethren. There are some who watch with open mind and ears to catch flying scandal. They gather up little incidents which may be trifling in themselves, but which are repeated and exaggerated until a man is made an offender for a word. Their motto seems to be, "Report, and we will report it." These tale-bearers are doing the devil's work with surprising fidelity, little knowing how offensive their course is to God. If they would spend half the energy and zeal that is given to this unholy work in examining their own hearts, they would find so much to do to cleanse their souls from impurity that they would have no time or disposition to criticize their brethren, and they would not fall under the power of this temptation. The door of the mind should be closed against "they say" or "I have heard." Why should we not, instead of allowing jealousy or evil-surmising to come into our hearts, go to our brethren, and, after frankly but kindly setting before them the things we have heard detrimental to their character and influence, pray with and for them? While we cannot love and fellowship those who are the bitter enemies of Christ, we should cultivate that spirit of meekness and love that characterized our Master,--a

love that thinketh no evil and is not easily provoked.
Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers, 504.

All differences, all fault-finding must be put away through the grace of Christ which you receive through faith. All envy, all jealousy, all evil surmising, is of the enemy. All evil-speaking, all bitterness, all impatience, all malice, must be purged from the soul temple, and kindness, compassion, forbearance, meekness, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, hope, love, must be cherished every day in order that you may fulfil the prayer of Christ to His Father that His disciples might be one as He is one with the Father. The harmony and the unity of the church are the credentials that must be presented to the world to prove that God has sent His Son into the world to give grace and light and truth.
Testimonies to South Africa, 30.

Confession

The speaker turned to those who had been praying, and said: "We have something to do. We must confess our sins, and humble our hearts before God." He made heartbroken confessions and then stepped up to several of the brethren, one after another, and extended his hand, asking forgiveness. Those to whom he spoke sprang to their feet, making confession and asking forgiveness, and they fell upon one another's necks, weeping. The spirit of confession spread through the entire congregation. It was a Pentecostal season. God's praises were sung, and far into the night, until nearly morning, the work was carried on. Testimonies to the Church, 8:105.

Confession of sin, whether public or private, should be heartfelt and freely expressed. It is not to be urged from the sinner. It is not to be made in a flippant and careless way, or forced from those who have no realizing sense of the abhorrent character of sin. The confession that is the outpouring of the inmost soul finds its way to the God of infinite pity. The psalmist says, "The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit." Psalm 34:18.
Steps to Christ, 37,38.

True confession is always of a specific character, and acknowledges particular sins. They may be of such a

nature as to be brought before God only; they may be wrongs that should be confessed to individuals who have suffered injury through them; or they may be of a public character, and should then be as publicly confessed. But all confession should be definite and to the point, acknowledging the very sins of which you are guilty. Steps to Christ, 38.

Confession will not be acceptable to God without sincere repentance and reformation. There must be decided changes in the life; everything offensive to God must be put away. Steps to Christ, 39.

His confessions are not sincere and in earnest. To every acknowledgment of his guilt he adds an apology in excuse of his course, declaring that if it had not been for certain circumstances he would not have done this or that for which he is reproved. Steps to Christ, 40.

Confront the Other (Continued)

There are three steps in successful confrontation:

1. Treat the other person with _____.
2. _____ until we really understand the other side.
3. State our _____ and feelings briefly and clearly.

Respect and Trust

Respect and trust are _____ to human relationships and to the resolution of conflict.

During conflict, people who believe they are not trusted are likely to feel insecure, threatened, or fearful. These feelings make it hard to _____ clearly, let alone _____ clearly. When people involved in conflict are not thinking or communicating effectively, it's not difficult to predict that the results will almost certainly be negative.

For this reason it is wise to strengthen the position of opponents in conflict by making a determined effort to show sincere respect for them.

The most common attitude during confrontation is a _____ certainty that we are certainly right. The case is closed. This attitude tends to destroy trust.

A much better attitude is a conviction that we are _____ right mixed with an openness to the possibility that there could be a better way of understanding the situation. This attitude builds trust and paves the way to reconciliation.

Building trust isn't easy during conflict, especially if we feel that we are being treated _____. Then we are sorely tempted to show just the opposite of respect. How are we to show respect for people who don't _____ it?

Basic respect finds its roots in the fact that God _____ our opponents. He _____ those rascals, He cares about them, and He wants to save them. No matter what they may be saying or doing, this fact remains a constant basis for respect. Knowing this, we can _____ to treat them as people of worth and as equals no matter how we feel about them.

During conflict, there's a powerful _____ toward disrespect which commonly leads to rudeness, threats, and blame. The best way to counter this nearly irresistible force is by having a trusting friendship with God, then by praying to your heavenly friend right through the time of conflict, and finally, as God enables you to do so, by exerting your _____ to make the right choices.

When we have chosen to give our opponents respect, it can be communicated by the way we listen, with good eye contact, and with healthy verbal messages.

Listen Intently

Good communication is vital to the success of confrontation. Keith Huttenlocker suggests, "Whenever communication has transported us into conflict, we need to reverse the trolley and _____ to oneness."¹

*** James 1:19 ***

By listening caringly to someone, you can communicate on a very deep level. David Augsburger explains, "Being heard is so close to being _____ that for the average person they are almost indistinguishable."²

¹Huttenlocker, 65.

²David Augsburger, Caring Enough to Hear, 12.

Careful listening communicates acceptance by saying, "I don't have all the answers." "I _____ your ideas."

During conflicts the quality of listening usually decreases seriously. To overcome this tendency we need to make a conscious _____ to listen carefully. Effective listening calls for regular _____ contact along with other verbal and nonverbal expressions of interest and understanding. (See Handout F for more information on nonverbal signals.)

A major goal of listening during conflict is to come to a clear understanding of the opposing viewpoints. This listening process includes an accurate restatement of the positions and feelings we have just heard. Only when others are satisfied that we understand them correctly are we in a position to make a response.

During harsh attacks, if we choose to resist the temptation to strike out in _____ and choose instead to _____ the other person's points and feelings, it's amazing how soon effective and courteous communication becomes possible.

Speak Carefully

*** James 1:19 ***

1. Keep messages short, _____, and to the point. It's easy to be misunderstood during conflict.
2. Speak courteously. Discourteous remarks, whether harsh or insulting, tend to enrage or intimidate others. Either way, effective communication is usually _____.
3. Speak _____. Don't distort or exaggerate the truth. Dishonesty nurtures mistrust.
4. Avoid _____. During conflict humor is most often a sneaky way to make an under-cover attack.

5. Avoid _____. During confrontations questions are commonly utilized to criticize, punish, coerce, or manipulate others. Here are some examples: "Wouldn't you rather . . . ?" "Why did you . . . ?" "When will you do something about . . . ?" "What are you waiting for?" "What do you mean by that?" Use only the most simple requests for information.

6. Don't recruit _____. Christians in conflict sometimes claim God for their side. Quotations from the Bible or other Christian sources are used to attack or control others. Even prayer is misused. Lynn Buzzard explains:

"So often prayer is used to say, 'I don't think you're understanding what I'm saying, and surely it must be because the Lord isn't making it clear to you. So let's stop and call upon him, so you can understand how right I am.'"¹

7. Make liberal use of _____ messages and avoid "you" messages. "You" messages are usually attempts to accuse, blame, control, criticize, or shame others. "You always . . ." "You never . . ." "You didn't . . ." When "You" messages are used, conflict situations tend to deteriorate.

In contrast, "I" messages _____. "I" messages say something about the self without criticizing or blaming the other person.

A formula for "I" messages is: "I feel [] when you [], because []."

Here are some examples: "I feel upset when you don't clean your room, because it's your job and you promised to keep it clean." "I feel angry when you drive so fast on the ice, because it's not just your life being

¹Buzzard, 27.

threatened." "I feel furious and hurt when you come home an hour late after work without a call, because it completely disrupts the dinner hour for all of us."

Sincere "I" messages share from the _____ and get straight to the _____. The use of "I" messages is crucial during a confrontation, especially at its beginning.

Later in a confrontation, when all parties agree on the basic issues of the conflict, the person who gave the original "I" message can make a _____ (not a demand) for _____.

Reasonable requests for the "I" message examples given above might be: "I want you to keep your room neat without being told." "I want to do the driving when the roads are icy, or I need to know that you can turn or stop safely." "Would you please call me as soon as you know that you will be more than 20 minutes late?"

Unexpected Negative Confrontations

Sometimes a person responds to being confronted with a vicious attack. At other times this sort of attack comes completely unexpectedly. Since our first response to these attacks greatly influences the outcome, it is a good idea to have a general response plan ready.

The foundation for a positive response to unexpected assaults is an ongoing decision to bring glory to God. Next, we need to realize that during an attack, defending ourselves or trying to show attackers where they are wrong will almost always bring negative results.

Instead of taking the attack personally and becoming defensive, see the situation as another problem to be solved.

Depending upon the nature of the attack, a combination of some of the following response strategies may be appropriate:¹

1. Listen carefully. During the initial outburst it is best to focus on listening. This listening includes reflecting back the gist of what was said, and perhaps asking simple questions to communicate interest and to increase understanding.

2. Invite concrete details. "Maybe you're right. Could you tell me what I did that . . ."

3. Solicit criticism. "I'm not sure I understand. What's wrong with . . . ? How do you think the situation could be improved?"

4. Treat ideas respectfully. "I'd like to look at your idea a little more closely."

5. Agree where possible. This is not giving in. It is finding common ground.

6. Ignore some statements. This can give the other an opportunity to rethink a hasty remark and perhaps move on to more positive issues.

7. Ask for a break. It is best to end the initial confrontation by arranging for another meeting to discuss the issues. This gives time for emotions to cool down. "I'm feeling a bit bewildered right now. I need some time to think so that I can be more sensitive to your needs. Could we meet next Monday to discuss the issues you raised?"

¹Margolis, 34-38.

EXERCISE ON TRUST¹

Do not share these instructions with the other person in your pair.

Your task for the next five minutes is to talk as positively and warmly as you can to the other person. Say only positive and friendly things, showing especially that you want to cooperate and work effectively with him or her in the future.

Your conversation is to concentrate on the other person about your impression of him or her; and the need for cooperation between the two of you. Don't talk about yourself.

No matter what happens, you say only positive things. Keep the conversation moving along quickly.

You are to speak first.

¹David Johnson, 246, 300.

EXERCISE ON TRUST

Do not share these instructions with the other person in your pair.

Your task for the next five minutes is to talk with the other person in a way that shows distrust of him or her. Whatever the other person says, say something in return that communicates suspicion, distrust, disinterest, defiance, disbelief, or contradiction.

Talk only about the things the other person talks about, and avoid starting the conversation or bringing up new topics. Try not to help the other person out in any way. As an example, should your partner comment, "Say, I like the shirt you're wearing," you might respond, "What do you say that for? It's ugly. I don't like it at all. What are you trying to accomplish by complimenting my shirt?"

The other person will speak first.

TRUST - DISTRUST

Questions for Discussion

1. Did you feel trusted by your exercise partner?
2. Did you feel like trusting your exercise partner?
3. When you think someone distrusts you, how does it affect the way you act?
4. When you feel distrusted what other feelings result?
5. When you are in conflict, how can you minimize your feelings of distrust for the other person?
6. During conflict situations, how can you minimize your opponent's feelings of distrust for you?

CONFRONTATION METHOD¹

1. Treat the other person with respect to encourage trust.
2. Listen until you really understand the other side.
3. Briefly state your own views, needs and feelings.

Illustration Setting

Meg, a student at a communication's skills course, used this method in a discussion with her boyfriend, Don. They often got into verbal battles about religion. Meg was a Protestant while Don was a Catholic. One day, when she found herself in the beginnings of another conflict, she decided to try her new communication skills. Later she wrote out the dialogue. (Note that in the first few interchanges, she was not using the conflict resolution method.)

Dialogue

- Don: You sure spend a lot of hours helping at your church. Wouldn't you rather do other things?
- Meg: Our church is really great. I do a lot for it because I get a lot out of it--and I get a good feeling from it.
- Don: I'll take my church anytime. In the Catholic Church, you don't have to do anything and you still reap the benefits.
- Meg: Do you like anything else about the Catholic Church besides the lack of work?
- Don: Isn't that enough? Look at your church--two hundred families are working their heads off and you're still in the red! I'd never waste my time like that. Besides, the Protestant Church demands all that work and you're forced to do something you really don't want to spend time doing. (Talks at length about this.)

¹Adapted from Bolton, 222-224.

- Meg: Don, it sounds like we have a very different point of view here. I just took a communication-skills course that describes a healthy way to express your own opinions and still listen to understand the other person's opinion. Here's the method. While you make a statement I listen carefully, then restate your views. That way you know I fully understand what you've just said. Then we'll switch--OK?
- Don: (Laughing): You're trying to slow me down! OK, go ahead.
- Meg: You think that spare time is important and you'd rather spend it doing something other than volunteer work for a church.
- Don: Right. Especially when . . .
- Meg: Wait--my turn. I enjoy doing volunteer work for my church. I think it's a worthwhile service and not a waste of time.
- Don: You do it because you want to, not because the church makes you feel obligated.
- Meg: (Nods, meaning "yes.")
- Don: The Catholic Church is better than the Protestant Church because you don't have to pledge money or be accounted for all the time. Besides, the Catholic Church has made a lot of good changes recently--like you don't have to eat fish on Friday anymore.
- Meg: You believe the Catholic Church is more desirable than the Protestant because of healthy changes and no demands.
- Don: (Nods affirmatively.)
- Meg: I prefer the Protestant Church because of close fellowship with friends working together and the church service which always includes excellent music and helpful sermons.
- Don: You like the music and the messages. I'll admit they may be better than in the Catholic Church, but

I wouldn't listen to that anyway. I'd daydream. When I'm in my church I feel I'm worshipping God just by being there. That's all I need.

Meg: It sounds like you and I are happy in our own churches because we look for different things.

Meg's Evaluation

I feel so good about this conversation. When we talk about these kinds of things, it usually gets real bad. I think this is the first time Don listened to my side when we had a strong disagreement. It helped me, too. Without the skills, I'm sure I would have gotten preachy and holier-than-thou. By using the skills I avoided using the roadblocks. And though we've had talks on this topic before, this was the first time I understood where Don was coming from.

I MESSAGES¹

1. Divide into groups of 3 to practice "I" messages.
2. Each person selects one of the situations below.
3. The person who takes situation A uses an "I" messages to confront the person who has B. The person who has situation B confronts the person who has C. The person who has situation C confronts the person who has A.
4. After each confrontation, briefly discuss how the "I" message worked and how it could be improved.
5. If you have time, try formulating a reasonable request based on your situation. Begin your request with the phrase "I need you to . . ." or "I want you to . . ."

The formula for "I" messages is: "I feel [] when you [], because []."

SITUATION A.

You have been taking a course in order to be eligible for a significant increase in salary at work. The final test is tomorrow morning. It's around 8:00 in the evening and you have a lot of studying left to do. The TV is loud and it disturbs you no matter where you go in the house. What can you say to your spouse/friend/child so that she/he will be willing to turn it down or completely off?

SITUATION B.

Your spouse is reading a book. You are rushing to get a meal prepared by a certain time when the telephone rings. The baby starts crying and your spouse continues reading. You are becoming irritated. What "I" message can you use so that your spouse will help and so that neither of you will become unduly angry?

SITUATION C.

You are a student. When your teacher becomes unhappy with you, he or she comes right up close and shakes a finger in your face during the confrontation. You find this behavior disgusting. It happened again just yesterday and you were especially offended. What "I" message can you use to bring up the issue without getting into another finger-pointing confrontation.

¹Adapted from John and Millie Youngberg, D-37 and H-36.

POSSIBLE NEGATIVE NONVERBAL SIGNALS
WHILE LISTENING

1. Tapping foot or finger.
2. Looking around.
3. Folded arms.
4. Leaving the radio or TV on or allowing other distractions.
5. Leaving the door open when privacy is desired.
6. Leaning away or turning away from the speaker.
7. Unfriendly, rigid, or bored facial expression.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

Respect and Trust

In cases of difficulty with the ones who have them in charge, go directly to those in authority and learn the truth. Bear in mind that the managers of the various departments understand much better than others can what regulations are essential. Manifest confidence in their judgment and respect for their authority. Teach your children to respect and honor the ones to whom God has shown respect and honor by placing them in positions of trust. Testimonies to the Church, 7:186.

The idea that one man's mind and judgment can mold and direct important interests, and that he can be regarded as a voice for the people, is a great evil, and has [endangered], and still continues to endanger, the one who is placed in a position of responsibility, and those also who cooperate with him. God has not given to any one man all the wisdom, and wisdom will not die with him. Those placed in positions of trust should modestly regard the opinions of others as worthy of respect and likely to be as correct as their own. They should remember that God has made other men just as valuable as they are, and that God is willing to teach and guide these men. Manuscript Releases, 9:151.

On the other hand, the leaders among God's people are to guard against the danger of condemning the methods of individual workers who are led by the Lord to do a special work that but few are fitted to do. Let brethren in responsibility be slow to criticize movements that are not in perfect harmony with their methods of labor. Let them never suppose that every plan should reflect their own personality. Let them not fear to trust another's methods; for by withholding their confidence from a brother laborer who, with humility and consecrated zeal, is doing a special work in God's appointed way, they are retarding the advancement of the Lord's cause. Testimonies to the Church, 9:259.

When to Avoid Confrontation

If other people do not agree with you, do not make a mountain [out] of a mole-hill and feel that you can no longer be united with them in the Lord Jesus. Do not lose

your affection and love for those who do not wholly agree with you. Let not the little differences that arise be made an occasion to break up the unity that should exist among brethren. Manuscript Releases, 19:67.

If you differ with your brethren as to your understanding of the grace of Christ and the operations of His Spirit, you should not make these differences prominent. You view the matter from one point; another, just as devoted to God, views the same question from another point, and speaks of the things that make the deepest impression on his mind; another viewing it from a still different point, presents another phase; and how foolish it is to get into contention over these things, when there is really nothing to contend about. Let God work on the mind and impress the heart. Notebook Leaflets from the Elmshaven Library, 1:112.

Many people may be brought together in a unity of religious faith whose opinions, habits, and tastes in temporal matters are not in harmony; but if they have the love of Christ glowing in their bosoms, and are looking forward to the same heaven as their eternal home, they may have the sweetest and most intelligent communion together, and a unity the most wonderful. Testimonies for the Church, 4:65.

Brethren and sisters, we have no time to dwell on little differences. For Christ's sake, to your knees in prayer! Go to God, and ask Him to give you a clean heart. Ask Him to help you to stand where He wants you to be. Labor in harmony with one another, even though you are not alike. Do you not know that of the leaves on a tree there are no two exactly alike? From this God would teach us that among His servants there is to be unity in diversity. "Lessons from the Sending Out of the Spies," The General Conference Bulletin, March 30, 1903.

Little differences dwelt upon lead to actions that destroy Christian fellowship. Let us not allow the enemy thus to gain the advantage over us. God's Amazing Grace, 210.

We should not allow our feelings to be easily wounded. We are to live not to guard our feelings or our reputation, but to save souls. As we become interested in the salvation of souls, we cease to mind the little differences that so often arise in our association with

one another. Evangelism, 630.

One man may be conversant with the Scriptures, and some particular portion of the Scripture is especially appreciated by him because he has seen it in a certain striking light; another sees another portion as very important; and thus one and another presents the very points to the people that appear of highest value. This is all in the order of God. One man blunders in his interpretation of some portion of the Scripture, but shall this cause diversity and disunion? God forbid. We cannot then take a position that the unity of the church consists in viewing every text of Scripture in the very same shade of light. Manuscript Releases, 15:149.

Confrontation

To practice the principle of love will not prevent us from dealing plainly with our brethren, in kindness pointing out wrongs and shortcomings when it is necessary to do so. But we must do this in harmony with the directions of Christ. when you are yourself connected with God you may speak plainly to those who by their crooked steps are turning the lame out of the path. The apostle directs, "If a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted" (Galatians 6:1). Manuscript Releases, 15:156.

Those who love Jesus and the souls for whom He has died will follow after the things which make for peace. But they must take care lest in their efforts to prevent discord they surrender truth, lest in warding off division they sacrifice principle. True brotherhood can never be maintained by compromising principle. As Christians approach the Christlike model and become pure in spirit and action they will feel the venom of the serpent. The opposition of the children of disobedience is excited by a christianity that is spiritual. . . . That peace and harmony which are secured by mutual concessions to avoid all differences of opinion are not worthy of the name. On points of feeling between man and man, concessions should sometimes be made; but never should one iota of principle be sacrificed to obtain harmony. Mind Character and Personality, 244.

All this trouble can be saved if each of you brethren and sisters is frank and open-hearted, and when you feel any brother errs, [you will] go to him and tell him your trials and fears; tell him in love, and perhaps he can make things that you have not understood plain, so that you will be relieved. Manuscript Releases, 17:342.

Learn as never before that you must be meek and lowly in heart. You must not bring a railing accusation against any, whether individuals or churches. Learn to deal with minds as Christ did. Sharp things must sometimes be spoken; but be sure that the Holy Spirit of God is abiding in your heart before you speak the clear-cut truth; then let it cut its way. You are not to do the cutting. Selected Messages, 2:370,371.

Let the soul be drawn out and upward that God may grant us a breath of the heavenly atmosphere. We may keep so near to God that in every unexpected trial our thoughts will turn to Him as naturally as the flower turns to the sun. Steps to Christ, 99,100.

Why should we not, instead of allowing jealousy or evil surmising to come into our hearts, go to our brethren, and after frankly but kindly setting before them the things we have heard detrimental to their character and influence, pray with and for them? Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers, 505.

Listen

When one tells us of our faults, and points out our mistakes, showing us a better way, we should receive the correction gratefully and try to profit by it. We should put away the temptation to feel hurt, to show our so-called dignity, and to claim our independence. God will reward the humble. In due time he shall be exalted.

When we go to the Lord and earnestly plead for wisdom; when we truly long for His guidance in all things, not wishing our own way, but earnestly desiring to walk in His way, then we are glad to advise with those of experience, those who desire to see us do good work for the Master. After we have earnestly sought the Lord for light, often our duty is made plain to us as we counsel with others. When we feel sure that we know the right way, and will listen to nothing unless it agrees with our ideas, we are in no condition to be shown the true path,

and are in danger of making mistakes. "True Independence," Pacific Union Recorder, December 5, 1901.

He should kindly point out their errors, and they, in turn, should be grateful for a friend so faithful as to tell them their faults and how to correct them. . . .
Medical Ministry, 211.

Humility is the constant attendant of true wisdom. Those who have this grace will patiently listen to the advice and counsel of others and give it due weight. They will not give up their own judgment for another's, but if advice and counsel bear the recommendation of age and experience, they will carefully weigh the matter and incorporate it into their own experience and mind because they see the force of the counsel and advice given. . . .
Manuscript Releases, 15:126.

Christ knew that Satan was a liar from the beginning, and it required strong self-control to listen to the propositions of this insulting deceiver, and not instantly rebuke his bold assumptions. Satan expected to provoke the Son of God to engage in controversy with him; and he hoped that thus, in His extreme weakness and agony of spirit, he could obtain advantage over Him. He designed to pervert the words of Christ and claim advantage, and call to his aid his fallen angels to use their utmost power to prevail against and overcome Him. Selected Messages, 1:278.

Remember that your child has rights which should be respected. Be very careful never to bring against him an unjust charge. Never punish him without giving him an opportunity to explain. Listen patiently to his troubles and perplexities. Never tell others in his hearing of his faults, or of his clever sayings or doings. Even in the presence of his brothers and sisters these things should not be spoken of. By speaking of his bright words and acts, you encourage self-confidence. By speaking of his faults, you humiliate him without softening him. Hatred springs up in his heart against your course, which he regards as cruel and unjust. "Child-Training," The Signs of the Times, April 23, 1902.

Speak

The voice and tongue are gifts from God, and if

rightly used, they are a power for God. Words mean very much. They may express love, devotion, praise, melody to God, or hatred and revenge. Words reveal the sentiments of the heart. They may be a savor of life unto life or of death unto death. The tongue is a world of blessing, or a world of iniquity. Sons and Daughters of God, 180.

My brother, your overbearing words hurt your children. As they advance in years, their tendency to criticize will grow. Faultfinding is corrupting your life and is extending to your wife and to your children. You children are not encouraged to give you their confidence or to acknowledge their faults, because they know that your stern rebuke is sure to follow. Your words are often as a desolating hail which breaks down tender plants. It is impossible to estimate the harm thus done. Your children practice deception in order to avoid the hard words you speak. They will evade the truth to escape censure and punishment. A hard, cold command will do them no good. The Adventist Home, 439.

Often the question arises, Why, then, are there so many, claiming to believe God's word, in whom there is not seen a reformation in words, in spirit, and in character? Why are there so many who cannot bear opposition to their purposes and plans, who manifest an unholy temper, and whose words are harsh, overbearing, and passionate? . . . Christ's Object Lessons, 99.

Rash, overbearing expressions do not harmonize with the sacred work that Christ has given His ministers to do. When the daily experience is one of looking unto Jesus and learning of Him, you will reveal a wholesome, harmonious character. Soften your representations, and let not condemnatory words be spoken. Learn of the great Teacher. Words of kindness and sympathy will do good as a medicine, and will heal souls that are in despair. The knowledge of the word of God brought into the practical life will have a healing, soothing power. Harshness of speech will never bring blessing to yourself or to any other soul. Gospel Workers, 163.

Your labors were not in love, but in sternness and severity. You were exacting and overbearing. You did not strengthen the sick and bind up the lame. Your injudicious harshness pushed some out of the fold who can never be reached and brought back. Words fitly spoken are

like apples of gold in pictures of silver. Words unfitly spoken are the reverse. Their influence will be like desolating hail. Testimonies to the Church, 3:109.

Severe tests will come to you. Put your trust in the Lord Jesus Christ. Remember that by vehemence you will wound yourself. If under all circumstances you will sit in heavenly places in Christ, your words will not be charged with bullets that wound hearts and that may destroy life. Mind, Character, and Personality, 2:578.

While our words are ever to be kind and tender, no words should be spoken that will lead a wrongdoer to think that his way is not objectionable to God. This is a kind of sympathy that is earthly and deceiving. No license is given for undue manifestation of affection, for sentimental sympathy. Wrongdoers need counsel and reproof, and must sometimes be sharply rebuked. Mind, Character, and Personality, 2:579.

Be Reconciled

For reconciliation, two things need to happen. First, _____ issues, differences, and offenses must be laid to rest through confession and forgiveness. Then, if there are _____ issues, they need to be negotiated and resolved. We'll talk about negotiating the substantive issues first.

Solve Substantive Differences Together

Examples of substantive conflicts are conflicts over:

1. What color of carpet to put in a home or church.
2. What the content of a business contract means.
3. How to compensate for damage caused by an accident.

Conflict participants who are collaborating need to view each other as _____. They are _____ who have come together to solve a mutual problem. The problem is the _____ which they attack together.

Before participants get together for a problem-solving session, it's a good idea to make careful preparations:

1. Look to _____ to discover his wisdom on the situation through Bible study and prayer.
2. Gather _____ and identify the _____ involved.
3. Try to discover what motivates each participant, including _____.
4. Get _____ from people you trust.
5. Begin considering various solution _____.
6. Select a meeting _____ and time.
7. Carefully plan opening remarks.
8. Consider what the most positive options might be if the negotiations break down.

Early in the problem-solving session it is important to:

1. Make sure the others involved understand the problem-solving _____ (outlined below).
2. Do your best to convince them that this method is superior to other alternatives because:
 - a. It aims at meeting the needs of _____ concerned.
 - b. Other methods so commonly produce the _____ results of resentment, rage, and frustration.

Identify needs and define the problem

As a starting point in problem-solving, all parties need to agree on a clear definition of the problem.

*** Phil 2:4 ***

There's a great advantage to understanding the problem in terms of each person's _____. This is far superior to what usually happens. Antagonists dig into positions and insist on specific solutions!

When we take positions, we tend to defend them strongly and become entrenched. We usually become deadlocked in opposing positions. But when we focus on _____, we are increasingly able to see mutual interests surfacing.

We often realize that there are positive solutions we haven't even considered. The interests and needs which motivate us are frequently much more _____ than the positions we are prone to defend.

Identifying participants' needs can be difficult. Here careful _____ is an essential tool.

Sometimes it's hard even to identify _____ needs. We may be very used to defending strong positions,

but not at all proficient at identifying the _____ which lead us to take those positions. One way to discover our own needs is to answer these questions:

1. "Why do I want to defend this position?"
2. "Why am I pushing for this solution?"

Once we've identified our own needs, we can simply and clearly _____ them. The liberal use of "I" messages is essential at this stage.

When all agree that the others involved understand their needs, the collection of needs can be formulated into one statement of the _____. Because of the stress often associated with conflict, this process may take quite a bit of time. However, it is essential that we have _____ to work thoroughly through this stage, because it lays the foundation for success.

Brainstorm

The goal of brainstorming is to come up with numerous solution _____. We must resist the temptation to criticize suggestions. In fact, _____ the suggestions at all. That activity comes after brainstorming.

Welcome and write down all suggestions, even the most _____. The proposals that seem silly at first glance, may turn out to be quite useful. Some of the best settlements can be developed by combining parts of different solution ideas.

Select a solution

After brainstorming it's time to select the solution or combination of solutions which best meets the _____

of all involved. Don't waste time and _____ others by criticizing unacceptable options. Instead, look for common ground, areas of _____. Focus on aspects of suggestions which are favored by participants.

If the needs have been well-defined at the beginning, both sides may discover that they are comfortable with some of the _____ solutions. On the other hand, during negotiations at this stage, it may be necessary for participants to _____ their positions. Perhaps some creative trade-offs can be made. When this happens it's important to recognize and communicate _____ for any concessions.

Remember, when those in the opposing camp are satisfied with the agreement, they will be _____ to see that it is carried out. Don't forget this important point.

If negotiations seem to come to a stalemate, don't give up too soon. Here are some ways to break an impasse:

1. Back up in the process and carefully go through the earlier steps again.
2. Summarize what has been accomplished and what still needs to be accomplished. Take a _____ from negotiations for a few hours or even days.
3. Agree that unresolved issues be settled with the help of one or more _____.

When a solution has been agreed to, the settlement needs to be clearly formalized. _____ agreements are more likely to be broken, rekindling the conflict.

At the simplest level, an agreement contract may be verbally rehearsed by all involved. Usually, however, it's wise to _____ an agreement.

Agreements need to include _____ like:

1. Who is responsible for what.
2. Timetables.
3. Other particulars detailing how the solution will be implemented.

Implement and evaluate the solution

If a participant becomes dissatisfied with a settlement, it is much better to _____ for renegotiation than to break the agreement. In fact, it's wise to include a clause in the agreement which calls for a later evaluation and which specifically notes the possibility that the settlement will need to be adjusted somewhat.

Forgive as the Lord Has Forgiven You

Reconciliation can not happen without confession and forgiveness. (We discussed confession in session #3). Almost always each participant in a conflict has _____ to confess and/or an opportunity to forgive.

*** Col 3:12-14 ***

What forgiveness is not

Forgiveness is not _____. Forgetting is something that happens to you as time goes on. Forgiveness is active, not passive. It involves a deliberate choice.

Forgiveness is not _____. It's the opposite of excusing. If there's an excuse, there's no need to forgive. Forgiveness is granted in spite of the wrong.

Forgiveness is not _____. If we approved, there would be no need of forgiveness.

Forgiveness is not a _____. Charizomai, a Greek word translated to forgive in the Bible, means to give favor freely or unconditionally. Forgiveness can't be earned, it can't be deserved. It's a _____ (Charis = grace). Giving forgiveness is done regardless of the other person's worthiness.

Forgiveness is not _____ for the wrongdoer to _____ the same. While forgiveness is given with the knowledge that the wrongdoer may not change, we forgive, hoping that the other person will grow. And often forgiveness stimulates and enables change.

What forgiveness is*** Eph. 4:31,32 ***

Forgiveness is a _____. Forgiveness is a _____. Forgiveness is an _____ of the _____.

Because forgiveness is a decision, it's possible to forgive _____, even though the deep pain of wounded feelings often takes a much longer time to heal completely.

When the person who has wronged us has repented, our choice to forgive _____ that person from _____. *Aphiemi*, a Greek word often translated "forgive" in the Bible means "to let go," "to release." At times this word is used to refer to debts that have been cancelled.

*** Matt. 6:12 ***

When the person who has wronged us has repented, forgiveness may be described as our _____ to make _____ promises to that person:

1. "I will not _____ on this incident."

2. "I will not use this incident to _____ you."
3. "I will not _____ to others about this incident."
4. "I will not _____ this incident to _____ between us or hinder our relationship."¹

By choosing to make and keep these promises, we are opening the door to the restoration of a healthy relationship. This is exactly what Jesus has done for us, and it's what He calls us to do for others.

Under God's guidance, true forgiveness is demonstrated in thought, word, and action--especially in _____. Actions do speak louder than words!

Loving actions toward the offender can bring two wonderful results:

- 1 They erase any doubt in the offender's mind as to the genuineness of our forgiveness. _____ to our sincerity, the offender will probably find it easier to reach out again, to work hard in order to rebuild the relationship.
2. They will help the _____ to gradually overcome negative thoughts and feelings toward the offender.

When an offense against us is serious and the offender is not yet repentant, we still need to make the first _____ forgiving commitments to _____. Part of trusting God includes choosing not to dwell upon the conflict event which has brought us injury and choosing not to attack our offender.

_____ about how we have been wronged and then acting out our inflamed feelings separates us from _____.

¹Adapted from Sande, 164.

At the same time this way of thinking and behaving separates us from _____ and, ultimately, from _____.

It is not appropriate to make the last _____ promises of forgiveness until the wounder has come to repentance. Making the first 2 promises does not mean that we will not bring up the incident again as we seek reconciliation. If private confrontation does not resolve the conflict, it is likely that we will need to carefully bring _____ into the process. (See Matt. 18:15-17).

Overcoming unforgiveness

It can be very difficult to forgive. Forgiveness is frequently _____ by beliefs that the offender:

1. Should be _____ and made to suffer.
2. Ought to _____ forgiveness.
3. Must guarantee that the offense will not happen again.

These attitudes, are in direct opposition to God's directions to forgive (Matt 6:14,15; Mark 11:25,26).

One reason it's often difficult to forgive is that an offender's confession has not been clear and specific or that it is flawed in some other way (see the 3rd session of "Peacemaking"). When this happens, it might be helpful to _____ explain the difficulty to the offender.

One of the greatest helps in overcoming unforgiveness is to _____ how God forgives. The Bible says that while we were His _____, Christ died for us (Romans 5:8-10).

Let's allow God to help us learn how to truly forgive. Let's let Him show us what love is all about. Let's ask Him to teach us the fine art of peacemaking.

CONFLICT CASE STUDY¹

What principles of good conflict-resolution practice are violated in this case study? Underline problems you see and identify or describe them in the far right column.

1 Bill and Susan are about to go out _____

2 to a concert which begins at 8:30. _____

3 Susan is running late on getting ready _____

4 (as usual). Bill is all ready to go _____

5 (as usual) and waving his arms wildly _____

6 in the air. Bill shouts, "Susan, _____

7 hurry up, we aren't going to make it _____

8 in time. You know it takes a good 30 _____

9 minutes to drive to the auditorium." _____

10 I'm doing my best," Susan returns. _____

11 "Instead of standing there bellowing _____

12 like a bull, why don't you run around _____

13 and check the house and make sure _____

14 everything is ready so we can leave!" _____

15 Susan finally comes down and they _____

16 leave, shouting instructions to the _____

17 baby-sitter as they go out the door. _____

18 In the car Bill is coldly silent _____

19 as they drive toward the auditorium. _____

20 "Well, what's the matter with _____

21 you?" Susan asks. _____

22 "You know what's the matter. Here _____

23 we are in heavy traffic. We're going _____

24 to miss the first section, and this is _____

25 about the best concerts of the season. _____

¹Adapted from John and Millie Youngberg, H-35.

26 I've had it! I want you to know I'm
27 sick of being late. We're late to the
28 concert, we're late to Home and School
29 meetings, we're late to church, we'd
30 be late to our own funeral."

31 "Well, I can't help it. I've got
32 to do everything most of the time as
33 far as the house is concerned. I've
34 got to take care of the kids all day,
35 cook dinner and all the rest of the
36 meals, and arrange for the babysitter.
37 Tonight I even had to go pick up the
38 sitter while you were in the shower.
39 just can't do everything, Bill . . ."

40 "Don't give me that. You're never
41 on time. We're always late and we
42 always will be late. I might as well
43 start scheduling everything two hours
44 ahead and then maybe you'd make it."

45 By this time Susan's eyes are red
46 and she is beginning to cry. Bill
47 roars into the parking lot of the
48 auditorium, jumps out of the car, and
49 doesn't bother to open Susan's door.

50 "Well, come on, let's get in there and
51 hear the last section, anyway. With
52 all the time you took to get ready, it
53 seems to me that you could have picked
54 out a better-looking dress than that.

55 Let's go!"

Now discuss this situation. What positive principles for dealing with conflict could be applied here?

"SOLVING CONFLICT PROBLEMS"¹

(The following story was told by H. Norman Wright at a Christian Marriage Enrichment Seminar.)

It was their wedding night. When the new bride came out of the bathroom in her lovely new gown, she looked on the floor in front of her and said, "What is that?"

"Oh, nothing, just my shorts," replied the groom.

"What are they doing on the floor?" she questioned.

"I always leave my clothes on the floor and Mom picks them up in the morning," he stated matter-of-factly.

The new bride looked him squarely in the eye and said, "Well, I'm not your mother, and I'm not going to pick them up, either!" And she didn't.

Every day another pair of briefs was added to the pile until, one day, he ran out of shorts. The groom had \$300 in the savings so he withdrew \$200 and went shopping for more shorts.

When both the shorts and money were running out, the couple decided to visit a marriage counselor.

1. Identify the needs of the husband and the wife.
2. Define the problem.
3. Brainstorm for solutions.
4. Select a solution.

¹Adapted from John and Millie Youngberg, C-32, 33, K-10.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

Reconciliation and Matthew 18:15-16

All this trouble can be saved if each of you brethren and sisters is frank and open-hearted, and when you feel any brother errs, [you will] go to him and tell him your trials and fears; tell him in love, and perhaps he can make things that you have not understood plain, so that you will be relieved. Manuscript Releases, 17:342.

"There is a betrayal of sacred trust. The things spoken in brotherly confidence are repeated and misrepresented; and every word, every action, however innocent and well-meaning, is scrutinized by the cold, jealous criticism of those who were thought too noble, too honorable, to take the least advantage of friendly association or brotherly trust. Hearts are closed to mercy, judgment, and the love of God; and the cold, sneering, contemptuous spirit which Satan manifests toward his victim is revealed. Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers, 504.

Human beings are Christ's property, purchased by Him at an infinite price, bound to Him by the love that He and His Father have manifested for them. How careful, then, we should be in our dealing with one another! Men have no right to surmise evil in regard to their fellow men. Church members have no right to follow their own impulses and inclinations in dealing with fellow members who have erred. They should not even express their prejudices regarding the erring, for thus they place in other minds the leaven of evil. Reports unfavorable to a brother or sister in the church are communicated from one to another of the church members. Mistakes are made and in justice is done because of an unwillingness on the part of some one to follow the directions given by the Lord Jesus.

"If thy brother shall trespass against thee," Christ declared, "go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone." Matthew 18:15. Do not tell others of the wrong. One person is told, then another, and still another; and continually the report grows, and the evil increases, till the whole church is made to suffer. Settle the matter "between thee and him alone." This is God's plan. "Go not forth hastily to strive, lest thou know not what to do in the end thereof, when thy neighbor hath put thee to

shame. Debate thy cause with thy neighbor himself; and discover not a secret to another." Proverbs 25:8, 9. Do not suffer sin upon your brother; but do not expose him, and thus increase the difficulty, making the reproof seem like a revenge. Correct him in the way outlined in the word of God.

Do not suffer resentment to ripen into malice. Do not allow the wound to fester and break out in poisoned words, which taint the minds of those who hear. Do not allow bitter thoughts to continue to fill your mind and his. Go to your brother, and in humility and sincerity talk with him about the matter.

Whatever the character of the offense, this does not change the plan that God has made for the settlement of misunderstandings and personal injuries. Speaking alone and in the spirit of Christ to the one who is in fault will often remove the difficulty. Go to the erring one, with a heart filled with Christ's love and sympathy, and seek to adjust the matter. Reason with him calmly and quietly. Let no angry words escape your lips. Speak in a way that will appeal to his better judgment. Remember the words: "He which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins." James 5:20.

Take to your brother the remedy that will cure the disease of disaffection. Do your part to help him. For the sake of the peace and unity of the church, feel it a privilege as well as a duty to do this. If he will hear you, you have gained him as a friend.

All heaven is interested in the interview between the one who has been injured and the one who is in error. As the erring one accepts the reproof offered in the love of Christ, and acknowledges his wrong, asking forgiveness from God and from his brother, the sunshine of heaven fills his heart. The controversy is ended; friendship and confidence are restored. The oil of love removes the soreness caused by the wrong. The Spirit of God binds heart to heart, and there is music in heaven over the union brought about.

As those thus united in Christian fellowship offer prayer to God and pledge themselves to deal justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with God, great blessing comes to them. If they have wronged others they continue the work of repentance, confession, and restitution, fully set to do good to one another. This is the fulfilling of the law of Christ.

"But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established." Matthew 18:16. Take with you those who are spiritually minded, and talk with the one in error in regard to the wrong. He may yield to the united appeals of his brethren. As he sees their agreement in the matter, his mind may be enlightened. Testimonies to the Church, 7:260-262.

I write to you to love one another. Try the art of forgiving one another even as God for Christ's sake has forgiven your sins.--Letter 29, 1889. (Written November 8, 1889, from Battle Creek, Michigan, to Brother and Sister Buckner.)

Let every member of the church try to save the souls of others, and not seek to discourage or destroy them through criticism or evil reports. How many and how great evils would be extinguished in the church if men would follow Christ's rule of dealing with the erring instead of following the impulses and passions of their unsanctified hearts. If matters of difficulty between brethren are not laid open to others, but frankly spoken of between themselves in the spirit of Christian love, the difficulty would in nearly every case be healed and the offending brother won. Misunderstandings have arisen that have been thus explained, in Christian tenderness, and the breach has been healed.

When brethren come together in harmony with the directions of Christ, Jesus Himself is a witness to the scene, and the whole universe looks with intense interest upon those who not only believe but do the words of Christ. The Spirit of God will move upon the heart of him who has erred, when Christ's words are carried out, and the one at fault will be convicted of his error. But if he is too proud, too self-sufficient, to confess his mistake and heal the wrong, other steps are to be taken in order to follow out the complete directions of the Word. "But if he will not hear thee (in that private interview), then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established" (Matthew 18:16). The matter of difficulty is to be confined to as small a number as possible. But two or three are to labor with the one who is in error. They should not only talk with him but bow in prayer, and with humble hearts seek the Lord.

"And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church"--if he persists in his unreasonable course, and will not be corrected, then there is only one more step to be taken, and that is a very sorrowful one--"Let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican" (Matthew 18:17). "Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven" (Matthew 18:18). When every specification which Christ has given has been carried out in the true, Christian spirit, then and then only, Heaven ratifies the decision of the church, because its members have the mind of Christ, and do as He would do were He upon the earth. . . .

We are not to be blind; we may see the prejudices which are cherished by those with whom we associate, we may see the errors that hinder their religious growth, we may discern their instability of opinion, their partiality of action; but because we see this, we should not feel that we are superior to them, measuring ourselves among ourselves, and leaning to our own understanding. As we see the deficiencies of others, it should lead us to be less self-confident, to be jealous of our own spirit and action. No living man should come in to take the place of God in our mind. . . .

I know of nothing more injurious to the souls than this habit of talking of one another's errors, of reporting every unfavorable tale that is brought to your ears, and of magnifying the mistakes of a brother. When a brother's fault comes to your notice, how much better it would be to go to him with it, following out the Bible rule that has been given by Him who owns the souls of all men. An infinite price has been paid to ransom the souls of men from the power of the enemy, and how terrible it is for one who professes to love God to set forth the mistakes and errors of his brethren in high colors. He is doing a wicked work against Jesus in the person of His saints. The rebuke of God is upon all who engage in such work; they are doing the work of Satan. The Lord has declared, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me" (Matthew 25:40).

When Christians accuse and condemn their brethren, they show themselves to be in the service of the accuser of the brethren. When they talk of the faults and failings of others, they plant roots of bitterness, whereby many will be defiled. It is through this kind of

work that brother becomes suspicious of brother. Confidence is unsettled, and variance arises in the church. Love cannot exist where the conversation is largely upon the errors and mistakes of others. The words of Christ are thus treated with indifference and contempt, as though frail, erring man had found some other way to heaven than that appointed by the Lord--the path of obedience to His commandments. Manuscript Releases, 15:153-156.

Forgiveness

Some of you seem to be earnestly seeking for forgiveness of sins, for freedom in God. Do you deserve the pardon that you are seeking?--No, you do not; nevertheless, God is willing to grant it freely. And dare you withhold from your brethren the forgiveness and affection of which you do not think them worthy? Would you have God deal thus with you? Deal with your brethren as you wish God to deal with you. If we expect our prayers for forgiveness to be heard, we must offer them in a forgiving spirit. We must forgive others in the same manner, and to the same extent, that we ourselves hope to be forgiven. The hard-heartedness that professed Christians manifest toward one another is not Christ-like, but savors of the satanic. We must every one of us open our hearts wide to the love of Jesus, and encourage pity and affection for our brethren. Gospel Workers, 430.

It is not Christ's follower that, with averted eyes, turns from the erring, leaving them unhindered to pursue their downward course. Those who are forward in accusing others, and zealous in bringing them to justice, are often in their own lives more guilty than they. Men hate the sinner, while they love the sin. Christ hates the sin, but loves the sinner. This will be the spirit of all who follow Him. Christian love is slow to censure, quick to discern penitence, ready to forgive, to encourage, to set the wanderer in the path of holiness, and to stay his feet therein. Desire of Ages, 462.

Years ago, when the company of believers in the soon coming of Christ was very small, the Sabbathkeepers at Topsham, Maine, met for worship in the large kitchen in the home of Brother Stockbridge Howland. One Sabbath morning Brother Howland was absent. We were surprised at

this, because he was always so punctual. Soon he came in, his face aglow, shining with the glory of God.

"Brethren," he said, "I have found it. I have found that we can pursue a course of action regarding which the guarantee of God's word is: 'Ye shall never fall.' I am going to tell you about it."

He then told us that he had noticed that one brother, a poor fisherman, had been feeling that he was not as highly respected as he ought to be and that Brother Howland and others thought themselves above him. This was not true, but it seemed true to him; and for several weeks he had not attended the meetings. So Brother Howland went to his house and knelt before him, saying: "My brother, forgive me. What is it that I have done?" The man took him by the arm and tried to raise him to his feet. "No," said Brother Howland, "what have you against me?" "I have nothing against you." "But you must have," said Brother Howland, "because once we could speak to one another, but now you do not speak to me at all, and I want to know what is the matter."

"Get up, Brother Howland," he said. "No," said Brother Howland, "I will not." "Then I must get down," he said, and he fell on his knees, and confessed how childish he had been and how many evil surmisings he had cherished. "And now," he said, "I will put them all away."

As Brother Howland told this story, his face shone with the glory of the Lord. Just as he had finished, the fisherman and his family came in, and we had an excellent meeting.

Suppose that some of us should follow the course pursued by Brother Howland. If when our brethren surmise evil, we would go to them, saying, "Forgive me if I have done anything to harm you," we might break the spell of Satan and set our brethren free from their temptations. Do not let anything interpose between you and your brethren. If there is anything that you can do by sacrifice to clear away the rubbish of suspicion, do it. God wants us to love one another as brethren. He wants us to be pitiful and courteous. He wants us to educate our selves to believe that our brethren love us, and to believe that Christ loves us. Love begets love.

Testimonies to the Church, 9:191-193.

Men are slow to learn the lesson that the spirit manifested by Jehu will never bind hearts together. It is not safe for us to bind our interests with a Jehu

religion; for this will result in bringing sadness of heart upon God's true workers. God has not given to any of His servants the work of punishing those who will not heed His warnings and reproofs. When the Holy Spirit is abiding in the heart, it will lead the human agent to see his own defects of character, to pity the weakness of others, to forgive as he wishes to be forgiven. He will be pitiful, courteous, Christlike (RH April 10, 1900).
Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary, 2:1038.

CONFLICT ATTITUDE TEST

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PLEASE READ BEFORE YOU BEGIN

The following questions are designed to examine how you perceive conflict.

Read each question thoughtfully, then circle the number that indicates the **DEGREE** to which you **AGREE** or **DISAGREE**.

It is important that you circle a number for **EVERY** question.

If you always or completely agree, circle 1.

If you usually or mostly agree, circle 2.

If you occasionally or partially agree or disagree, circle 3.

If you usually or mostly disagree, circle 4.

If you always or completely disagree, circle 5.

Please be honest and candid. There are **NO** right or wrong answers.

QUESTION:	AGREE		DISAGREE		
1. Conflict occurs because of sin in the human heart.	1	2	3	4	5
2. I feel ill at ease when someone disagrees with me in public.	1	2	3	4	5
3. I avoid people who have made me angry.	1	2	3	4	5
4. Conflict arises because people view situations differently.	1	2	3	4	5
5. It is best not to bring sensitive issues to the surface because it only seems to increase conflict.	1	2	3	4	5
6. When in a conflict, I feel compelled to win.	1	2	3	4	5
7. It is best to avoid a situation that may result in conflict.	1	2	3	4	5
8. It is possible for conflict to have a positive effect on church life.	1	2	3	4	5

Peacemaking

Session V

Page 2

Handout E

QUESTION:	AGREE		DISAGREE		
9. The church should allow people to express their differing opinions.	1	2	3	4	5
10. Conflict is out of place in the church.	1	2	3	4	5
11. I worry that if I get angry in a conflict I may say things that I'll regret.	1	2	3	4	5
12. I get irritated with people who express ideas that conflict with mine.	1	2	3	4	5
13. Conflict closes the lines of communication.	1	2	3	4	5
14. To love others is to avoid conflict with them.	1	2	3	4	5
15. If a person is agitated on some issue in the church, he should be allowed to express his opinion.	1	2	3	4	5
16. Conflict is the opposite of caring for people.	1	2	3	4	5
17. If church members were converted, they would not be in conflict.	1	2	3	4	5
18. The less said when people are in disagreement the better.	1	2	3	4	5
19. Conflict occurs most often in congregations in which there is a deep commitment to the church.	1	2	3	4	5
20. An open expression of differences of opinion is good for the church.	1	2	3	4	5
21. I feel frustrated and upset when someone gets angry with me.	1	2	3	4	5
22. The church functions best when conflict is not present.	1	2	3	4	5

Peacemaking

Session V

Page 3

Handout E

QUESTION:	AGREE		DISAGREE		
	1	2	3	4	5
23. I feel confident in dealing with people who are angry with me.	1	2	3	4	5
24. If there is conflict over an issue in a business meeting, it is best to limit discussion and vote before people lose control of their tempers.	1	2	3	4	5
25. In an argument, it may be to my advantage to point out my opponent's spiritual weaknesses.	1	2	3	4	5
26. Conflict is normal and unavoidable whenever people come together in organizations (including the church).	1	2	3	4	5
27. In a conflict, it is best to disregard people's personal feelings about the issue and stick to the facts of the issue.	1	2	3	4	5
28. Conflict in the church should be suppressed.	1	2	3	4	5
29. One reason there is so much conflict is because people hold such unusual ideas.	1	2	3	4	5
30. It is not possible for an organization to go through change without also experiencing conflict.	1	2	3	4	5
31. In a conflict, I might have to reveal some unrelated but embarrassing information about the other person if it would help truth prevail.	1	2	3	4	5
32. Conflict leads to positive results.	1	2	3	4	5
33. Date of your birth.	_____				
34. Number of years of education.	_____				

Peacemaking

Session V

Handout F

EVALUATION

Directions: Please take a few moments to evaluate "Peacemaking." Circle your responses with 1 being the most positive evaluation and 5 the most negative. Your specific written comments are much appreciated.

- | | HELPFUL | | NOT HELPFUL | | |
|--|---------|---|-------------|---|---|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 1. Opening devotionals.
Comments: | | | | | |
| 2. Lectures.
Comments: | | | | | |
| 3. Lecture notes handouts.
Comments: | | | | | |
| 4. Further information handouts.
Comments: | | | | | |
| 5. Ellen G. White handouts.
Comments: | | | | | |
| 6. Group activities.
Comments: | | | | | |
| 7. Number of classes (5).
Comments: | | | | | |
| 8. Length of each session.
Comments: | | | | | |
| 9. Overall usefulness of classes.
Comments: | | | | | |
| 10. Other comments or suggestions. | | | | | |

APPENDIX 3
EVALUATIVE TEST EXHIBITS

TABLE 7

CONSIDERATION OF THE QUESTIONS USED
IN THE CONFLICT ATTITUDE TEST¹

#	Question	Cat.	(+, -)
1.	Conflict occurs because of sin in the human heart.	A	-
2.	I feel ill at ease when someone disagrees with me in public.	E	-
3.	I avoid people who have made me angry.	E	-
4.	Conflict arises because people view situations differently.	A	+
5.	It is best not to bring sensitive issues to the surface because it only seems to increase conflict.	B	-
6.	When in a conflict, I feel compelled to win.	E	-
7.	It is best to avoid a situation that may result in conflict.	E	-
8.	It is possible for conflict to have a positive effect on church life.	C	+
9.	The church should allow people to express their differing opinions.	B	+
10.	Conflict is out of place in the church.	C	-
11.	I worry that if I get angry in a conflict I may say things that I'll regret.	E	-
12.	I get irritated with people who express ideas that conflict with mine.	E	-
13.	Conflict closes the lines of communication.	D	-
14.	To love others is to avoid conflict with them.	C	- #
15.	If a person is agitated on some issue in the church, he should be allowed to express his opinion.	B	+
16.	Conflict is the opposite of caring for people.	A	-
17.	If church members were converted, there would be no conflict.	A	-

¹The information in this table is based on data from Johnson, 328-330.

Question	Cat.	(+, -)
18. The less said when people are in disagreement the better.	B	-
19. Conflict occurs most often in congregations in which there is deep commitment to the church.	A	+
20. An open expression of differences of opinion is good for the church.	C	+
21. I feel frustrated and upset when someone gets angry with me	E	+
22. The church functions best when conflict is not present.	D	-
23. I feel confident in dealing with people who are angry with me.	E	+
24. If there is conflict over an issue in a business meeting, it is best to limit discussion and vote before people lose control of their tempers.	B	-
25. In an argument, it may be to my advantage to point out my opponent's spiritual weakness.	B	-
26. Conflict is normal and unavoidable whenever people come together in organizations (including the church).	C	+
27. In a conflict, it is best to disregard people's personal feelings about the issue and stick to the facts of the issue.	B	-
28. Conflict in the church should be suppressed.	B	-
29. One reason there is so much conflict is because people hold such unusual ideas.	A	-
30. It is not possible for an organization to go through change without also experiencing conflict.	D	+
31. In conflict, I might have to reveal some unrelated but embarrassing information about the other person if it would help truth prevail.	E	-
32. Conflict leads to positive results.	D	+

Note: # = The question number as it appears on the test.
 Cat. = The subject category.
 A = The sources of conflict.
 B = The resolving of conflict.
 C = The morality of conflict.
 D = The results of conflict.
 E = A self-appraisal in conflict.
 (+, -) = Indicates a positively- or negatively-phrased question.

SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH

BOX 211 • HAZELTON, BRITISH COLUMBIA V0J 1Y0 • (604) 842-5596

February 17, 1994

Wolfgang Hessel
3772 Shane Crescent
Prince George, B.C. V2N 4N1

Dear Wolfgang:

Thanks for helping me out with my project. Please give these envelopes out at random to ten of your members who are at least twenty years old. Give them out on or immediately after Thursday, February 24. You will probably see the most people on Sabbath, February 26.

Each envelope contains a letter explaining my request for assistance, a copy of the "Conflict Attitude Test, and a stamped and addressed envelope. Copies of the letter and test are enclosed for your information.

May God bless your ministry.

Your brother in Christ,

Bruce B. Boyd, Pastor
Hazelton Seventh-day Adventist Church

BBB:bb

SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH

BOX 211 • HAZELTON, BRITISH COLUMBIA V0J 1Y0 • (604) 842-5596

February 17, 1994

Dear Friend,

Thank you for taking time to read this letter.

Your pastor gave it to you because I asked for and received his assistance. I am also asking for your assistance. Should you decide to help me, it will take you about fifteen minutes to complete the enclosed test.

Besides being the SDA pastor in Hazelton, I also serve churches in Smithers and Kitwanga. I am working on a Doctor of Ministry degree through Andrews University and my project/dissertation deals with conflict management. The enclosed testing instrument relates to what I am trying to accomplish in this project.

I am requesting that you complete this test and return it to me in the enclosed and stamped envelope. If possible, please send it back on the next day Canada Post is open for business. In approximately five weeks I will send you a second copy of the test to retake. It will also be important that you complete and return the second test quickly.

Please do not confer with anyone else as you fill out this test. The answers must be your own.

Thank you for your help. By completing the two tests, you are making a valuable contribution to my study which is dedicated to helping SDA Christians learn to deal more constructively with the conflict which breaks out so frequently among us.

Sincerely,

Bruce B. Boyd, Pastor
Hazelton Seventh-day Adventist Church

BBB:bb

P.S. Your test will be held in the strictest confidence. Following tabulation of the data, all tests will be destroyed.

SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH

BOX 211 • HAZELTON, BRITISH COLUMBIA V0J 1Y0 • (604) 842-5596

March 20, 1994

John Doe
4321 Blastoff Road
Prince George, B.C. V2N 1N6

Dear John,

Thank you for participating in the first testing of the "Conflict Attitude Test." The time and effort you invested in this project is very much appreciated.

I now need you to take the test a final time in order to compare the results with the first test. Enclosed you will find a fresh copy of the test. Please answer the questions as described in the instructions. Remember, do not confer with anyone else; the answers must be your own. Please return the test as soon as possible in the enclosed envelope.

Be assured that your test will be held in the strictest confidence. Following tabulation of the data, all tests will be destroyed.

Thank you for your help!

Sincerely,

Bruce B. Boyd, Pastor
Hazelton Seventh-day Adventist Church

BBB:bb

P.S. One test came back without an address on it. If you hear of someone who took this test once and then didn't get a second copy, that's probably the reason.

APPENDIX 4
PARTICIPANT EVALUATIONS OF "PEACEMAKING"

Peacemaking

Session V

=====

Handout F

EVALUATION

Directions: Please take a few moments to evaluate "Peacemaking." Circle your responses with 1 being the most positive evaluation and 5 the most negative. Your specific written comments are much appreciated.

- | | HELPFUL | | NOT HELPFUL | | |
|--|---------|---|-------------|---|---|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 1. Opening devotionals.
Comments: | | | | | |
| 2. Lectures.
Comments: | | | | | |
| 3. Lecture notes handouts.
Comments: | | | | | |
| 4. Further information handouts.
Comments: | | | | | |
| 5. Ellen G. White handouts.
Comments: | | | | | |
| 6. Group activities.
Comments: | | | | | |
| 7. Number of classes (5).
Comments: | | | | | |
| 8. Length of each session.
Comments: | | | | | |
| 9. Overall usefulness of classes.
Comments: | | | | | |
| 10. Other comments or suggestions. | | | | | |

PEACEMAKING EVALUATION FORM RESPONSES

1. Devotionals
 Rating scale results: 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 3 5
 Comments:
 -Biblical conflicts help me see that God uses conflict for good.
 -I missed 90% of them! (Time organization?? Ha)
 -Very interesting
 -Very good examples of the idea covered each evening.
 -Non-christian. Who is this person???

2. Lectures
 Rating scale results: 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 2 2
 Comments:
 -Enjoyed the humor!!
 -Informative, educational, and very helpful. I liked the fill in the blanks.

3. Lecture note handouts
 Rating scale results: 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 2 2
 Comments:
 -Very clear and easy to follow.
 -Kept your attention.
 -Can't wait for spring to read them all. The ones I read have been useful.
 -I found it distracting of my attention to have to fill in the blanks. Would prefer to read only. (Negative value to fill in for me). Also your comments sort of half followed the handout text on occasion. [I was] weaving from following written handouts, to listening, to searching for missing words on overhead projector. Would be easier to follow if lecture were more separated from handout or read more closely.

4. Information handouts
 Rating scale results: 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 2 4
 Comments:
 -Helpful I'm sure you couldn't tell by me.
 -Thank you for all of them!

5. EGW handouts
 Rating scale results: 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 3 5
 Comments:
 -They would help more if I really read them!!!
 -I will be reading at some point.
 -The ones I read have been useful.
 -Do not respect E.G.W.

6. Group activities
 Rating scale results: 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 2 2 2 3
 Comments:
 -Helpful and entertaining.
 -Great fun and interesting.
 -Fun and educational. Helpful in remembering what we learn.
7. Number of sessions
 Rating scale results: 1 1 1 1 1 1 2 2 2 2 ? ?
 Comments:
 -Not too long so not too hard to delegate time.
 -Longer (more sessions) would have been difficult.
 -Don't remember how many (well, well, there were 5 classes).
 -Would like to have had more.
 -Could have had maybe more!
 -A couple more would have been about right.
 -Wish it were double.
8. Length of sessions
 Rating scale results: 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 2 3 ?
 Comments:
 -Great break from home.
 -Longer session would help me digest what was discussed.
 -Some more time would have been very helpful in open discussion with time for questions and discussion!!
 -Need more discussion afterwards, more real life situations in participants lives.
9. Overall usefulness
 Rating scale results: 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1
 Comments:
 -I hope to be able to use the things I've learned in dealing with conflicts in my life.
 -Now I can argue well!
 -Good material, B.B. and valuable information.
 -Our communication (between spouses) has never been better. [It is] much improved as we put into practice what we learn, especially listening skills.
 -Will be helpful if and when I apply it.
10. Other comments
 Comments:
 -Was great. Bruce, your delivery is good.
 -Thank you, Bruce for all the time and effort put into this seminar. We enjoyed it immensely!
 -Classes have been a blessing!
 -My favorite saying of the seminar is: "People feel

loved if they are listened to." I think of that every time someone speaks to me now. Excellent seminar, especially since I believe you practice (or are learning to) what you preach. It must have been great if you could get my husband to attend each class. Good work, Bruce! I'm proud of you! Thank you for letting us attend.

- Would be fun to have the overhead pictures in the handouts to chuckle over later.
- [Have] another session on each topic in these sessions!
- These sessions were very helpful and informative. I would like more time to digest, discuss, and apply this information (to specific situations or scenarios). Could we have a session after spring break to do these things?
- Very good seminar but found so much material put into each session that felt we could of used more time.
- If more sessions would have been more time for discussion. Appreciated the promptness of beginning and ending sessions.
- I wish some time could have been devoted to further exploration of several crucial points touched on throughout the course. A few spin-off questions arose that I wish [there] could have been time to deal with, ask, discuss etc. For example (one of many) what happens when both partners do listen, do care, etc. etc. but the positions and ideas are 180 degrees opposed. I think the course was of high value, but it also just opened the door to wanting to explore ideas. I wish more time could have been included for everyone's pursuit of specific questions and problems. Thanks for your presentation and research. Good bibliography. One can gain from reading the books (ie Augsburg, etc.) but more discussion and feedback were on my wish list.

APPENDIX 5

QUOTATIONS FROM ELLEN G. WHITE ON CONFLICT

Topical Index of the Ellen G. White
Quotations in Appendices 2 and 5

<u>Ellen G. White Quotation Topic</u>	<u>Appendix 2</u>	<u>Appendix 5</u>
One + One = Conflict		
The importance of learning right thinking	156	
God created "unity in diversity"	156-159	250
Satan works to incite negative conflict		250-251
Training for conflict situations needed		252
The benefits of conflict	159	252-253
Before Reacting, Look Up and Look In		
Unity with God needed to resolve conflict	155	251
Common irrational thinking patterns	168-172, 185-187	
What to Do With Your Anger		
Anger	189	253-255
Criticism and gossip	190-192	255
Confession	192-193	
Confrontation, a Doorway to Harmony		
Respect and Trust	208	
When to avoid confrontation	208-210	
Confrontation	210-211	
Listening	211-212	
Speaking	212-214	
Finding Reconciliation and Peace		
Reconciliation and Matthew 18:15-16	226-230	
Forgiveness	230-232	

CONFLICT-RELATED STATEMENTS BY ELLEN G. WHITE

Introduction

In this project the largest number of the Ellen G. White conflict-related quotations are to be found in the handouts for each of the five sessions of "Peacemaking." These are located in appendix 2. The quotations located here are offered in addition to the others.

Quotations

God Created "Unity in Diversity"

By the figure of the vine and the branches Christ illustrated not only the relation that should exist between Him and His followers but also the union between every believer and his fellow-believer. The branches of the vine are related to each other; but they are not alike. Each has its own individuality, which cannot be merged into that of another, but all have a special connection with each other. The root that supplies nourishment to one branch supplies nourishment to every other branch. Each must depend alike on the vine for sustenance; all must be joined to the parent stalk. The life and growth and faithfulness of each depend alike on the parent vine. In obedience to the laws of nature, their common hold of the true vine makes them one; in their diversity there is unity. Manuscript Releases, 5:362.

If they draw nourishment from the same source they draw nourishment from the same spirit. They drink in the same life-giving properties. Thus unity is preserved, and there is love one for another. But this does not make the branches an identity although it constitutes them a unity, nor does this mean uniformity in everything. Christian unity consists in the branches being in the same parent stock, the vitalizing power of the Center supporting the grafts that have united to the Vine. Manuscript Releases, 6:354.

This chapter [John 15] is very simple in its illustrations, and every one should seek to understand its lessons. They should bear in mind that the branches in the true Vine are the believers who are brought into oneness by being connected with the Vine stock. There must be unity in their diversity. Individuality is preserved; for one branch cannot blend into another in the same stock; yet every individual branch must be in fellowship with the other if they are united to the parent stock. Manuscript Releases, 6:354.

Satan Works to Incite Negative Conflict

The evidence that the world cannot withstand and controvert, that God has sent Jesus into the world as its Redeemer, is in the oneness of the church. Their unity and harmony is the convincing argument. Satan is therefore constantly at work to prevent this harmony and union, that in witnessing the bickerings, strifes, and dissension, unbelievers shall become disgusted with Christianity and fastened in unbelief and infidelity. God is dishonored by those who

profess the truth while they are at variance with one another. Manuscript Releases, 12:293.

Do not strive to have your own way. If other people do not agree with you, do not make a mountain [out] of a mole-hill and feel that you can no longer be united with them in the Lord Jesus. Do not lose your affection and love for those who do not wholly agree with you. Let not the little differences that arise be made an occasion to break up the unity that should exist among brethren. This is the work of Satan. When you quarrel with your brethren, when you are selfish and are jealous if you do not get your own way, you show that you are not meek and lowly. Manuscript Releases, 19:67.

Unity is the strength of the church. Satan knows this, and he employs his whole force to bring in dissension. He desires to see a lack of harmony among the members of the church of God. Greater attention should be given to the subject of unity. What is the recipe for the cure of the leprosy of strife and dissension? Obedience to the commandments of God. Selected Messages, 159.

Unity with God is Needed to Resolve Conflict

All misunderstandings and controversies may be happily and successfully adjusted by the living testimonies of the word of God. One of the greatest hindrances to our spiritual success, is the great want of love and respect evidenced for one another. We should seek most earnestly, by every word and action, to answer the prayer of Christ, and to encourage that unity which is expressed in the prayer of Christ, that we may be one as he is one with the Father. Every feeling of indifference for one another should be strenuously overcome, and everything that would tend to variance with brethren should be put away from us. The love of Jesus Christ existing in the heart will consume these little things, or greater things, which tend to divide hearts. Satan sees that in unity there is strength; that in variance and dis-union there is weakness. Heaven's enlightenment is what is needed, so that when we look upon the faces of our brethren, we may consider: "These are they that have been purchased by the price of the blood of Christ. They are precious in his sight. I must love them as Christ has loved me. These are my fellow-laborers in the harvest field. I must be perfectly united with them; I must speak only words that will tend to encourage and advance them in their forward movement. The Ellen G. White 1888 Materials, 198.

Nothing can perfect a perfect unity in the church but the spirit of Christlike forbearance. Satan can sow discord; Christ alone can harmonize the disagreeing elements. . . . When you as individual members of the church love God supremely and your neighbor as yourself, then there will be no labored efforts to be in unity, there will be a oneness in Christ, the ears to report will be closed, and no one will take up a reproach against his neighbor. The members of the church will cherish love and unity and be as one great family. Then we shall bear the credentials to the world that will testify that God has sent His Son into the world. Christ has said, "By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples if ye have love one for another." Manuscript Releases, 5:371.

Training for Conflict Situations Is Needed

God's people are not to be in confusion, lacking order, harmony, consistency, and beauty. The Lord is greatly dishonored when unity does not exist among His people. I have been sensibly impressed with the strife, discord, and emulation in society. Those who believe the truth for this time must know that truth is a unit. Spasms of feeling are not inspiration. The unity that God requires must be cultivated day by day; the lips must be sanctified, the tongue, the voice, must be trained to do the right kind of service if we would answer the prayer of Christ. The disunion that has existed among those who claim to believe the last message of mercy to be given to our world is a great hindrance to the advancement of our work. All are to be united in one as Christ is one with the Father, their powers illuminated, inspired, and sanctified, making a complete whole. God is dishonored by the variance existing among His people. Those who love God and keep His commandments are not to draw apart but press together. Manuscript Releases, 2:342.

Here are the credentials we are to bear to the world, that the Lord hath sent His Son, Jesus, "that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." When so much importance is attached to the unity of believers, why is there so little effort to preserve unity? Why are not the words of our Saviour more decidedly practiced? Why is not greater caution exercised that differences should not exist; and if there are differences of opinion, why swell them to as large proportions as possible, and make the breach as wide as possible? Why present these differences conspicuously before the world? Manuscript Releases, 5:366.

Benefits of Conflict

One man may be conversant with the Scriptures, and some particular portion of the Scripture may be especially appreciated by him; another sees another portion as very important, and thus one may present one point, and another, another point, and both may be of highest value. This is all in the order of God. But if a man makes a mistake in his interpretation of some portion of the Scripture, shall this cause diversity and disunion? God forbid. We cannot then take a position that the unity of the church consists in viewing every text of Scripture in the very same light. The church may pass resolution upon resolution to put down all disagreement of opinions, but we cannot force the mind and will, and thus root out disagreement. These resolutions may conceal the discord, but they cannot quench it and establish perfect agreement. Nothing can perfect unity in the church but the spirit of Christlike forbearance. Satan can sow discord; Christ alone can harmonize the disagreeing elements. Then let every soul sit down in Christ's school and learn of Christ, who declares Himself to be meek and lowly of heart. Christ says that if we learn of Him, worries will cease and we shall find rest to our souls. Manuscript Releases, 11:266.

Christ prayed that His disciples might be one, even as He and His Father are one. In what does this unity consist? That oneness does not consist in everyone having the same disposition, the very same temperament, that makes all run in the very same channel. All do not possess the same degree of intelligence. All have not the same experience. In a church there are different gifts and varied experiences. In temporal matters there is a great variety of ways of management, and yet none of these variations in manner of labor, in

exercise of gifts, need to create dissension and discord and disunion. One man may be conversant with the Scriptures, and some particular portion of the Scripture is especially appreciated by him because he has seen it in a certain striking light; another sees another portion as very important; and thus one and another presents the very points to the people that appear of highest value. This is all in the order of God. One man blunders in his interpretation of some portion of the Scripture, but shall this cause diversity and disunion? God forbid. We cannot then take a position that the unity of the church consists in viewing every text of Scripture in the very same shade of light. Manuscript Releases, 15:149.

On the other hand, the leaders among God's people are to guard against the danger of condemning the methods of individual workers who are led by the Lord to do a special work that but few are fitted to do. Let brethren in responsibility be slow to criticize movements that are not in perfect harmony with their methods of labor. Let them never suppose that every plan should reflect their own personality. Let them not fear to trust another's methods; for by withholding their confidence from a brother laborer who, with humility and consecrated zeal, is doing a special work in God's appointed way, they are retarding the advancement of the Lord's cause. Testimonies for the Church, 9:259.

Anger

When you are obliged to correct a child, do not raise the voice to a high key. . . . Do not lose your self-control. The parent who, when correcting a child, gives way to anger is more at fault than the child. Child Guidance, 246.

I never allowed my children to think that they could plague me in their childhood. I also brought up in my family others from other families, but I never allowed those children to think that they could plague their mother. Never did I allow myself to say a harsh word or to become impatient or fretful over the children. They never got the better of me once--not once, to provoke me to anger. When my spirit was stirred, or when I felt anything like being provoked, I would say, "Children, we shall let this rest now; we shall not say anything more about it now. Before we retire, we shall talk it over." Having all this time to reflect, by evening they had cooled off, and I could handle them very nicely. . . . Child Guidance, 253.

If impatient words are spoken to you, never reply in the same spirit. Remember that "a soft answer turneth away wrath." And there is wonderful power in silence. Words spoken in reply to one who is angry sometimes serve only to exasperate; but anger met with silence, in a tender, forbearing spirit, quickly dies away. Gospel Workers, 475.

It is true there is an indignation that is justifiable, even in the followers of Christ. When they see that God is dishonored, and His service brought into disrepute, when they see the innocent oppressed, a righteous indignation stirs the soul. Such anger, born of sensitive morals, is not a sin. But those who at any supposed provocation feel at liberty to indulge anger or resentment are opening the heart to Satan. Bitterness and animosity must be banished from the soul if we would be in harmony with heaven. The Desire of Ages, 310.

He who is under the control of the enemy of all good exerts an influence wholly for evil. He has strong passions, which should be controlled, but he feels under no holy restraint, and his manifestations of envy and jealousy, his outbursts of anger, and his evil surmisings make him a demon in his home. He will not do the will of God. He needs to be taken in hand, and like a rebellious child disciplined and chastened, for he is ruining himself. His course is downward. Manuscript Releases 9:320.

I must state to you that I have been shown that the best methods have not always been practiced in dealing with the errors and mistakes of students, and the result has been that souls have been imperiled and some lost. Evil tempers in the teachers, unwise movements, self-dignity have done a bad work. There is no form of vice, worldliness, or drunkenness that will do a more baleful work upon the character, embittering the soul, and setting in train evils that overbear good, than human passions not under the control of the Spirit of God. Anger, getting touched [being aroused], stirred up, will never pay. Mind, Character, and Personality, 1:192.

God has a tender regard for the children. He wants them to gain victories every day. Let us all endeavor to help the children to be overcomers. Do not let offenses come to them from the very members of their own family. Do not permit your actions and your words to be of a nature that your children will be provoked to wrath. Yet they must be faithfully disciplined and corrected when they do wrong, but never in anger. Mind, Character, and Personality, 2:518.

How Satan exults when he is enabled to set the soul into a white heat of anger! A glance, a gesture, an intonation, may be seized upon and used as the arrow of Satan to wound and poison the heart that is open to receive it. Mind, Character, and Personality, 2:520.

Christ treats anger as murder. . . . Passionate words are a savor of death unto death. He who utters them is not cooperating with God to save his fellowman. In heaven this wicked railing is placed in the same list as common swearing. While hatred is cherished in the soul there is not one iota of the love of God there. Mind, Character, and Personality, 2:520.

There is a wonderful power in silence. When impatient words are spoken to you, do not retaliate. Words spoken in reply to one who is angry usually act as a whip, lashing the temper into greater fury. But anger met by silence quickly dies away. Let the Christian bridle his tongue, firmly resolving not to speak harsh, impatient words. With the tongue bridled, he may be victorious in every trial of patience through which he is called to pass. Mind, Character, and Personality, 2:522.

"Blessed are the peace-makers; for they shall be called the children of God." Our Heavenly Father is a God of peace. When he created man he placed him in an abode of peace and security. All was unity and happiness in the garden of Eden. Those who are partakers of the divine nature will love peace and contentment; they will cultivate the virtues that insure those results. They will seek to allay wrath, to quiet resentment and fault finding, and all the evil passions that foster quarrels and dissensions. The more men unite with the world, and fall into its ways, the less they have of the true elements of peace in their hearts, and the more they are leavened with the bitterness of worldly strife, jealousy, and evil

thoughts toward each other, which only needs certain circumstances to develop them into active agents for evil. Those whose anger kindles at slight provocations, and those who watch the words and acts of others to secretly report them where they will stir up enmity, are the direct opposite of the peace-makers who are called the children of God. The Spirit of Prophecy, 2:209.

As Moses came down from the mountain with the two tables of the testimony in his hand, he heard the shouts of the people, and, as he came near, beheld the idol and the reveling multitude. Overwhelmed with horror and indignation that God had been dishonored, and that the people had broken their solemn covenant with Him, he cast the two tables of stone upon the ground and broke them beneath the mount. Though his love for Israel was so great that he was willing to lay down his own life for them, yet his zeal for the glory of God moved him to anger, which found expression in this act of such terrible significance. God did not rebuke him. The breaking of the tables of stone was but a representation of the fact that Israel had broken the covenant which they had so recently made with God. It is a righteous indignation against sin, which springs from zeal for the glory of God, not that anger prompted by self-love or wounded ambition, which is referred to in the scripture, "Be ye angry, and sin not." Such was the anger of Moses. Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers, 100.

As you go to the one you suppose to be in fault, see that you speak in a meek and lowly spirit, for the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God. The erring can in no other way be restored than in the spirit of meekness and gentleness and tender love. Be careful in your manner of speaking. Avoid everything in look or gesture, word or tone of voice, that savors of pride or self-sufficiency. Guard yourself against word or look that would exalt yourself or set your goodness and righteousness in contrast to their failings. Beware of the most distant approach to disdain, overbearing, or contempt. With care, avoid every appearance of anger, and though you use plainness of speech, yet let there be no reproach, no railing accusation, no token of warmth, but that of earnest love. This Day with God, 105; Testimonies, 2:52.

Criticism and Gossip

After man has cost such an infinite price as the Son of God, that He might make him a being of His throne, how tenderly should man deal with his fellow men. How fearful should brethren and sisters in the church feel lest they shall hurt the oil and the wine, and push and destroy one of God's little ones. How patiently, kindly, and affectionately should they deal with the purchase of the blood of Christ. How faithfully should they labor, and how earnestly, to lift up the desponding, the discouraged, and those whose surroundings may not be as favorable as their own. How tenderly should they treat those who, while seeking to obey the truth, have no encouragement at home, but have constantly to breathe the atmosphere of unbelief. Manuscript Releases, 12:278.

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