

Conflict Resolution In the local church



Dr. Isaías Espinoza

Onset of Conflict

And there was war in heaven:
Michael and his angels fought against the
dragon;
and the dragon and his angels fought back; but
he was
was not strong enough, and they lost their place
in heaven.
Revelations 12:7,8.

Definition

Conflict resolution is the set of knowledge to understand and intervene in the peaceful and non-violent resolution of conflicts. It's a conflict between two or more people.

Likewise, a conflict can exist between options of the same person (internal conflict) and not necessarily between two different adversaries (external conflict).

Consequences of some Unresolved conflicts in World History

Vietnam; disagreement between north and south,
United Nations and U.S. interference.

Result: war, more than 5.7 million people
died.

Germany; disagreement between West and East.
Result, Berlin wall for almost 30 years.

A conflict that marked the SDAC

J. H. Kellogg: (1905)

Consequences: Apostasy, loss of
properties, crisis in leadership.

Types of Conflict in the local church

1. RELATIONAL OR BEHAVIORAL
2. LEADERSHIP
3. GROWTH
4. DOCTRINAL
5. EXTERNAL FORCES

Two positions for Conflict Resolution

Traditional

1. Need "felt", identification of the problem.
2. Analysis of the causes
3. Analysis of possible solutions
4. Action Plan/Treatment

Appreciative dialogue

1. Start
2. Asking a question
3. Imagine
4. Innovate

Biblical position

So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets. Mathew 7:12

But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you. Mathew 5:44

If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over.

But if he will not listen,, take one or two others along, so that every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.

If he refuses to listen them, tell it to the church, treat him as you would a pagan or a tax collector.

I tell you the truth, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.

Again, I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything you ask for, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven.

For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them.

Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, “Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother when he sins against me? Up to seven times?”

Jesus answered, “I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times.”

Mathew 18:15-22

For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins. Mathew 6:14,15

1. Put yourself in each other's shoes. Empathy
2. Love sincerely.
3. Discuss the issue with the right person, with the right words, in the right place and with the right attitude.
4. Forgive to be forgiven.

Position of the Church Manual

1. Make every effort to settle differences following the advice of Matthew 18:
 2. It advises against going to court to settle conflicts. P. 58.
 3. Limit only the problems that fall within the legal scope to go to court. P. 58.
 4. Use the same principles of resolution among members, for conflicts between the church or organizations of the church and its members.
- Page 59.

5. It is advisable to use discipline when the case warrants it. Page 61.
6. Discipline may be by censorship or expulsion. Page 61
7. There must be promptness in the disciplinary process. Page 62.
8. Discipline must be done at a duly convened meeting. Page 63.
9. Discipline must be by majority vote.
10. The board of directors cannot exclude members. P. 63.
11. Members may not be represented by attorneys on the church board. Page 64.

Board of Directors



Board Authority and Limitations

- Has definite running time (One or two years)
- Has a broad agenda
- Is limited only by the constitution of the organization (Church Manual)



Board Authority and Limitations (2)

- Has more authority than administration (Pastor, Elders, Secretary and Treasurer)
- May remove or replace directors and other directors.
- The administration cannot unhear or unrecognize the Board.
- Board decisions are final
 - There is an appeal process to the higher organizations (local field)

Board of Directors

Committee



Committees

- They have less authority than the Boards of Directors.
- They are commonly appointed by the administration or the Executive Board.
- They work for and answer to the administration or the body that constituted them.
- They may be dismissed
- They have a limited agenda, and once their agenda is finished, they cease to exist.



Governing Board

Committee

Commission

Commissions

- Commissions are like committees.
- They are usually made up of fewer people.
- They have a more restricted agenda than a committee.
- They have no authority of their own.
- They commonly assist the administration and the Board in specific areas, such as conflict resolution.

Governing Board

Committee

Commission

Task Force

[Task Force]



Task force (Crash group)

- A group of people who receive a specific task. (2 or 3)
- It is used to advance a difficult task and thus pave the way for a commission, administration or Board.

Tips from The Spirit of Prophecy

“No church officer should advise, no committee should recommend, nor should any church vote, that the name of a wrongdoer shall be removed from the church books, until the instruction given by Christ has been faithfully followed. When this instruction has been followed, the church has cleared herself before God. The evil must then be made to appear as it is, and must be removed, that it may not become more and more widespread. The health and purity of the church must be preserved, that she may stand before God unsullied, clad in the robes of Christ’s righteousness.” {3TT 3, 202.5}

This statement holds its force in all ages. On the church has been conferred the power to act in Christ's stead. It is God's instrumentality for the preservation of order and discipline among His people. To it the Lord has delegated the power to settle all questions respecting its prosperity, purity, and order. Upon it rests the responsibility of excluding from its fellowship those who are unworthy, who by their un-Christlike conduct would bring dishonor on the truth. Whatever the church does that is in accordance with the directions given in God's word will be ratified in heaven. {3TT 203.3}

“The word of God does not give license for one man to set up his judgment in opposition to the judgment of the church, neither is he allowed to urge his opinions against the opinions of the church.” {1TT 390.2}

Church responsibility. “God holds His people, as a body, responsible for the sins existing in individuals among them. If the leaders of the church neglect to diligently search out the sins which bring the displeasure of God upon the body, they become responsible for these sins.” {3T 269.2}

“If there were no church discipline and government, the church would go to fragments; it could not hold together as a body.” {1JT 391.2}

“If, when our brothers harbor bad suspicions, we were to tell them: “Forgive me the evil that I could do to you,” Satan's spell would be broken and our brethren would be delivered from their temptations.

Do not let anything come between you and your brothers. If there is anything you can do to dispel suspicions, even at the price of a sacrifice, don't hesitate to do so.

God wants us to love one another as brothers He wants us to be compassionate and kind He wants everyone to get used to thinking that their brethren love them and that Jesus loves them.” Love begets love. (*Testimony Treasures, page 362*).

“If the one who erred repents and submits to the the discipline of Christ, he is to be given another opportunity. And even if he doesn't repent, even when out of the church, the servants of God still have a work to do in their lives. They must fervently see to it that they repent. And no matter how grave your offense may ha if he yields to the supplications of the Holy Spirit and confessing and forsaking his sin, gives signs of repentance, he must be forgiven and welcomed back into the fold.”

{3TT 189.}

Bibliography

- Alzate, R. *Análisis y resolución de conflictos*. Una perspectiva psicológica. Bilbao: Universidad del País Vasco, 1998.
- Burton, J. *Conflict: Resolution and Provention*. Virginia: Center Conflict Analysis and Resolution, George Mason University, The Macmillan Press, 1990.
- Cornelius, H. *Tú ganas, yo gano: Cómo resolver conflictos creativamente*. Madrid: Gaia Ediciones, 2003.
- Fisas, V. *Alternativas de defensa y cultura de paz*. Madrid: Editorial Fundamentos, 1994.
- Fisas, V. *Cultura de paz y gestión de conflictos*. Barcelona, España: Icaria Editorial, 1998.
- Fisher, R.; Kopelman, E.; Kupper Schneides, A. *Más allá de Maquiavelo: Herramientas para afrontar conflictos*. Barcelona, España: Granica, 1996.
- González-Capitel, C. *Mediación x 7*. Barcelona, España: Atelier, 2001.
- Kilman, R. H.; Thomas, K. W. *Thomas-Kilman Conflict Mode Instrument*. New York: Xicom, Inc., 1974.
- Krishnamurti, J. *Sobre el conflicto*. Madrid: EDAF, 1995.
- Lederach, J. P. *Construyendo la paz: Reconciliación sostenible en sociedades divididas*. Bilbao: Bakeaz, Red Gernika, 1998.
- Lederach, J. P. *La imaginación moral: el arte y el alma de la construcción de la paz*. Bilbao: Bakeaz, Red Gernika, 2007.
- Miller, G. R.; Steinberg, M. *Between People: A New Analysis of Interpersonal Communication*. Chicago: Science Research Associates 1974.
- Munné, M.; Mac-Cragh, P. *Els 10 principis de la cultura de mediació*. Barcelona, España: Editorial Graó 2006.
- Pastor, X. et al. *Guia pràctica de gestió de conflictes al teixit associatiu i de voluntariat*. Barcelona, España: Editorial Mediterrània, 2008.
- Vinyamata, E. *La conflictologia*. Barcelona: Editorial UOC, 2007.
- White, Ellen Gould Harmon. *Joyas de los Testimonios, t 3*. Puebla, México: GEMA Editores, 2008.