Improving Family Satisfaction Through Conflict-Management Training for the Immanuel Seventh-day Adventist Church in Toronto, Canada

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ABSTRACT

IMPROVING FAMILY SATISFACTION THROUGH CONFLICT-MANAGEMENT TRAINING FOR THE IMMANUEL SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH IN TORONTO, CANADA

by

Anthony M. Reid

Adviser: Curtis Fox
ABSTRACT OF GRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH

Project Document

Andrews University
Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

Title: IMPROVING FAMILY SATISFACTION THROUGH CONFLICT-MANAGEMENT TRAINING FOR THE IMMANUEL SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH IN TORONTO, CANADA

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Date completed: March 2019

Problem

The Immanuel Seventh-day Adventist Church is a multiracial congregation with members from over 35 countries, with approximately 200 families in regular attendance. Twenty percent of these families are interracial families, while 80% are a balanced mix of ethnic makeup. Reports from leaders and members, as well as pastoral observation, led us to the conclude that many families were affected by family squabbles and separation due to unresolved conflict. Consequently, there was a high level of stress and family dissatisfaction. This resulted in declining participation in ministry and mission.
Methods

A 10-hour conflict-management education-training program was developed and implemented. The Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument and the Family Satisfaction Scale survey were used to determine family members’ conflict styles and levels of satisfaction within their families, respectively; the Family Satisfaction Scale survey was used for pre- and post-evaluation. A series of four conflict-management seminars were conducted, using the Conflict Workshop Facilitator’s Guide. The participants’ responses to a set of study questions and the survey instruments were used in order to evaluate the impact of the education program on the participants’ experiences.

Results

Twenty-six participants enrolled in the 10-hour conflict-management education program. Participants reported that their most frequently used conflict mode when handling conflict in the family were avoiding (38%) and accommodating (38%). In addition, family satisfaction levels experienced an overall growth of 41%. Moreover, responses to the research questions show that the conflict-management seminars had a positive impact overall. Participants indicated that an improvement to the program would be to have more time and role playing.

Conclusion

This study revealed that family members who are intentional and equipped to manage conflict using the skills and modes of the Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument can positively affect conflict management, which leads to improved family
satisfaction. Therefore, implementing this educational seminar in other settings has merit and benefits, and I would recommend it.
Andrews University

Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

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CONFLICT-MANAGEMENT TRAINING FOR
THE IMMANUEL SEVENTH-DAY
ADVENTIST CHURCH IN
TORONTO, CANADA

A Project Document

Presented in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Ministry

by

Anthony M. Reid

March 2019
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A project document presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree Doctor of Ministry

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CWFG  CONFLICT WORKSHOP FACILITATORS GUIDE
FSS   FAMILY SATISFACTION SCALE
ISDAC IMMANUEL SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH
TKI   THOMAS–KILMANN CONFLICT MODE INSTRUMENT
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Conflict-management education is critical to the peace-building and reconciliation process so often necessary in the course of human interactions. Learning to manage the natural and inevitable existence of conflict improves our personal and social lives. Conflict management has the aim of bringing about transformation of the conflict situation. Literature on conflict reveals that several scholars and practitioners in the field of conflict are investing in the development of applicable strategies that families could appropriate for productive growth (Leas, 2001; Sande & Johnson, 2011; Sande & Raabe, 2002; Poirier, 2006). However, only a handful of researchers and professionals within the Seventh-day Adventist denomination have studied (with singleness of purpose) the pervasive subject of conflict (Ennis, 2016; McSwain & Treadwell, 1997; Richards, 1987). Nevertheless, Christian families could be well served from valuable research on the subject of conflict, a matter that is so often avoided.

This chapter provides a preview into the structure and components that address the important matter of conflict and its management in families of the Immanuel Seventh-day Adventist Church. The process that was undertaken in this project included a description of the ministry context—situation in which the study was done—a statement of the problem to be addressed, the statement of task, a statement of limitations in the
study, phases in the organization of the project, definition of specialized terms used throughout the paper, and a summary.

Description of the Ministry Context

The Immanuel Seventh-day Adventist Church (ISDAC) can be described as a multiethnic, multiracial congregation with over 35 nationalities, representing five continents. This church is located in the northern part of the Greater Toronto Area in the Willowdale community of North York, Canada. At the time of this study, Immanuel was considered to be the most multi-ethnic and multi-racial congregation in the Seventh-day Adventist faith community in Toronto. Immanuel was started in 1985, resulting from a merger of two small churches: Toronto North and Maranatha. At the time of the implementation of this project, Immanuel had a membership of 432, with approximately 50% active.

My tenure at this congregation started in December 2013 as the associate pastor. Upon arrival in this pastorate, my intention was to immerse myself into knowing and understanding the idiosyncrasies and uniqueness of the congregation. This would inform my approach in ministry to the families. Subsequently, as associate pastor, I assumed the responsibility for supervising young adults, youth, children, Sabbath School, Family Ministries, and a few other departments. Part of our (ISDAC’s) primary ministry focus as a church to the community included elderly programs, a homework assistance program, food handlers’ certification, and a first aid program.

The present project entailed developing a conflict-management program to equip families of the ISDAC. Preliminary assessment of the Immanuel congregation indicated its desire for a conflict enhancement program. The summary of a membership
questionnaire corroborated the desire for conflict-management empowerment. Members (57% females, 30% males, and 13% no designated gender) were asked to state whether they believed the following:

1. Conflict was present in families in the Immanuel congregation (92%).
2. It was important to address conflict when it arose (83%).
3. Conflict-management training was necessary to help families (79%).
4. Family members were open to attending a training program that would provide a strategy for dealing with conflict (62%).
5. Family satisfaction or happiness could be negatively affected if conflict was not addressed (64%).
6. Ministry involvement of families in the church and community could be negatively impacted if conflict were not addressed (79%). The results of the survey show an admission of conflict in and among church families, and a desire for it to be addressed.

As the researcher and implementer of the project, it is important that I describe myself personally and professionally. I am a married, Black Caribbean male, born and raised in Jamaica, West Indies. I earned a Bachelor’s degree in religion from Northern Caribbean University and a Masters in Pastoral Theology from the Inter-American Adventist Theological Seminary. I was ordained on January 26, 2002. After $13\frac{1}{2}$ years of serving the Central Jamaica Conference as a pastor, Family Ministries, Public Affairs, and Religious Liberty director, and adjunct teacher at one of the Northern Caribbean University extension campuses, I immigrated to Canada with my family in 2009. At the time of the implementation of the project, I was two years into my second pastoral assignment at the Immanuel Seventh-day Adventist Church, Ontario Conference.
Statement of the Problem

Reports from leaders and members, as well as pastoral observation during the period of 2013-2016 led to the conclusion that many families were affected by internal family squabbles and separation, due largely to unresolved conflicts. Consequently, there was a high level of stress and low level of family satisfaction, resulting in a decline in participation of these families in the ministry and mission of the church. Since conflict was present and families were experiencing dissatisfaction, something needed to be done in order to improve the situation.

Statement of the Task

The task of this present project was to develop, implement, and evaluate an educational conflict-management training strategy to equip families of the Immanuel Seventh-day Adventist Church to manage and resolve conflicts. Conflict is a pervasive subject and one that needs to be navigated by families, even in the Adventist Christian community. This project solicited the insights of participating families in order to draw conclusions about the perceived spiritual and relational value of a conflict-management education program that serves the larger congregation and intensifies family satisfaction.

Delimitations of the Project

This project was delimited in three ways. First, the participants were baptized members of the Immanuel Seventh-day Adventist Church, who were 16 years of age and above. Second, while still incorporating the wider subject of conflict and its management from the perspective of theory and practice, the project was cast within a biblical
framework suited for the Immanuel Church context. Third, it should be observed that the desire to have a sample group of 30 participants did not materialize. Nevertheless, though it would have been desirable to have more participants, this did not adversely affect the findings of the study.

**Organization of the Project Process**

The project process necessitated and included building a theological foundation of conflict, reviewing recent literature, developing a methodology for the intervention, sharing the narrative of the implementation, and an evaluation of the outcome of the initiative. Each section will guide the reader of this text into the intricacies of this study.

**Theological Foundation**

Every family in one way or another has been affected by conflict of some kind. In order to provide a suitable faith based strategy for managing conflict, it was necessary to understand the theological underpinning and dynamics of conflict. The case for the original conflict is best grounded and understood through portions of the biblical narratives of Genesis 3:1-21 and Revelation 12:7-12. These two biblical accounts were selected as they are foundational to the framework and discussion of conflict. Three ideas are inherent in the theological foundation. First, the passages show how the cosmic conflict entered the universe, what the consequences have been, and that the cosmic conflict has been the causative factor for all other conflicts, no matter the source. Second, the biblical stories or paradigms used to demonstrate the microcosmic impact of conflict on the social and familial levels are innate with conflict-management lessons. The paradigms conveyed when conflict is salvageable and when it may not be. Third, the
primary passages of the “foundation” reveal some strategies on how the phenomenon of conflict can be handled. These areas are explained in Chapter 2.

Review of Literature

The review of literature in this project primarily covered selected works within the last 10 years. However, considering the fact that studying the motif of conflict and its management is not new, reviewing selected literature prior to this period in order to establish its historical connection was essential. The review was explored in three ways. First, the review reported some perspectives of conflict, its management, and its history. The way conflict is viewed, what it means, its types, and its outcomes are aspects unveiled in this research. Whenever possible, literature from the religious field was used. Second, the impact of conflict within various family developmental stages or family types was explored. The literature showed that conflict can have adverse, longstanding effects on all members of the family in diverse ways. Finally, addressing conflict requires different approaches. In this regard, the review examined some assessment and conflict-management strategies that are relevant to addressing the dynamics of conflict.

Development of the Intervention

One goal of families in society and the church is to experience peace and satisfaction. However, one hindrance to the achievement of this goal is the inability to understanding and manage the dynamics of conflict (Mayer, 2012). The lack of skills in how to manage conflict that may emerge as a result of any relational breakdown needs to be addressed. When the stimuli which cause conflict is not addressed, the impact can be dissatisfaction and distress.
The intervention was developed to equip the participants of the study with conflict-management skills that were focused on handling negative conflict behaviors. Since negative behaviors can lead to destructive conflict or negative outcomes, a holistic conflict-management program was developed. The program incorporated themes from the theological foundation. These perspectives of a peace and reconciliation strategy were unearthed from the principal text of Genesis 3:1-21. In addition, the conflict-management factors of the TKI behavioral conflict modes of the literature review were added to strengthen the theoretical appeal. These undergirding components, along with elements of the research design such as recruiting participants, selecting the sample for the study, selecting and creating the seminar format, formed the faith-based educational program at the center of this project.

Narrative of the Intervention

The narrative of the intervention recounted the description of the procedures in succinct detail. The first phase of the intervention that was implemented was the preliminary elements of the initiative. These elements established the project and secured the commitment of 26 participants (11 families) to be a part of the study. After securing permission from various approval bodies, a promotional plan for the project was executed. Documents were signed by both the participants and myself and data forms were distributed and collected, establishing the path for the next tier of the project. The second phase of the implementation process addressed the training initiative. The initiative was comprised of four one and one half to two-hour conflict mode seminars, interspersed with illustrative activities to reinforce the conflict mode concepts and skills. The core of the learning cycle was based on the use of the Thomas-Kilmann conflict
modes. The third stage of the implementation process included the post-seminar measures. Three activities were undertaken that solicited from the participants their views on the impact of the intervention.

Evaluation of the Intervention

In order to evaluate the outcome of the entire intervention, it was necessary to have a clear purpose for the research. I decided to examine the participants’ perspectives on the spiritual and relational value of developing the skill to manage conflict. A qualitative study (with some quantitative data used for descriptive reasons) was chosen for this study. This method was used essentially because it shares the insights and experiences of the small group of participants.

After collecting data from the participants by using two self-reporting surveys, a group assessment questionnaire (which provided data to interpret the three core research questions of the project), and my notes, an overall evaluation of the present project outcome was done. The impact of the project process on my ministry and professional life was conveyed as several lessons were learned. The project ended with offering some recommendations based upon overall analysis of this exploratory study.

Definitions of Terms

While every effort has been made to define specialized terms used throughout this paper, it is recognized that there is value in defining and situating these essential terms at the outset of this text.

*Conflict Management* describes a process of acknowledging, identifying, assessing, and applying approaches or activities intended to influence the course or
outcome of conflict. This is in an attempt to make the conflict process more productive and less costly. It is one of the approaches used to handle differences or problems.

*Conflict-Management Style* is an individual’s preferred or habitual response when confronting conflict situations while trying to achieve a constructive outcome. It describes an individual’s behavior pattern and attitudinal approach in dealing with conflict.

The *Conflict Workshop Facilitators Guide* describes the manual that was used to teach the skills of the Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument (TKI). How to manage conflict according to the five conflict-management styles or modes was the key element of the facilitator’s guide.

*Constructive Conflict* is conflict that moves towards positive outcome in the conflict process (McCorkle & Reese, 2010).

*Destructive Conflict* is conflict that moves towards negative outcome in the conflict process (McCorkle & Reese, 2010).

*Distributive Outcome* is one in which there is a fixed resolution that is either taken wholly by one party or somehow divided between the parties (Ryan & Castro, 2004).

The *Family Ministries Department* is a ministry arm of the Seventh-day Adventist Church responsible for organizing, planning, training, and executing programs and activities relevant to the different stages of the family members of the Adventist church throughout all its organizational levels of existence.

*Family Satisfaction* is a clinical term that defines “the degree to which family members feel happy and fulfilled with each other. The operational definition includes the
three dimensions that are related to the Circumplex Model—cohesion, flexibility and communication” (Olson, 2010, p. 1).

*Family Satisfaction Scale* is a 10-item questionnaire that was designed to evaluate overall family satisfaction including the two main dimensions of the Circumplex Model—cohesion and flexibility (Olson, 2010).

*Immanuel Seventh-day Adventist Church* is one of the local congregations of the sisterhood of Seventh-day Adventist Churches worldwide. It is located in the region of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Canada at 418 Drewry Avenue in the city of North York, Toronto, Canada.

An *Integrative Outcome* is one in which the parties create an arrangement in which both parties are able to achieve their goals fully or significantly in resolving the conflict (Ryan & Castro, 2004).

*Seventh-day Adventist Church* describes a worldwide Protestant body of more than 20 million evangelical Christians who observe Saturday as the Sabbath and expect Jesus’ second coming (Vyhmeister, 2000).

The *Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument* is a 30 paired items questionnaire that “helps people discover how the ways they handle conflict—their conflict style—affect performance” (Thomas & Kilmann, 2009, p. 1). It assesses an “individual’s behavior in conflict situation—that is, situations in which the concerns of two people appear to be incompatible” (Thomas & Kilmann, 2007, p.7).

**Summary**

This introduction has offered a preview into the steps, colloquium, intervention methodology, and mechanism undertaken to assess the project. Throughout the project
process, the intention was to educate and equip the participants regarding how to navigate conflict while constructively handling it for gains in the family. The exploratory analysis of this study offered insights into how the conflict-management intervention implemented in the project impacted the participants’ family satisfaction while enrolled in the study. It is my hope that the exposure of the participants to the conflict-management processes will serve to empower and enhance family happiness on a long-term continuum.
CHAPTER 2

THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATION OF CONFLICT

Reconciliation and peace as an outcome of conflict management is a formidable theme of the holy writ. Prior to and since the fall recorded in Genesis 3, there has been a persistent and intentional attempt by God to address this universal dilemma. This comes against the background that the universe and its numerous constructs were created to function in synchrony and harmony. The earth was made to reflect the relational and symbiotic interconnectedness active between the Creator and the created. Human relationships were to model the divine connection existent within and amongst the Godhead and its creation. Such was the order of operation. However, tragedy struck and conflict became a part of the cosmos with cascading effects upon all.

Before the intrusion of conflict in the universe and the social order in particular, the plan of reconciliation announced in Ephesians 1:4 has been actuated. This plan is referenced throughout Scripture, but particular evidence is found in Genesis 3, a passage that will be investigated for conflict-management strategies. Managing conflict for growth and reconciliation begins with understanding its origin, knowing how it functions in the social order, and practicing biblical strategies.

In this chapter, the theological response to managing conflict will be explored along a three-fold dimension. First, attention will be given to the universality of the cosmic conflict. It is important to understand how conflict entered the universe, the
consequences it has had relationally, and what that means vertically and horizontally. Second, biblical paradigms of family conflicts will be surveyed. These paradigms will illustrate the reality that conflict functions at various levels of the family system; however, they share valuable lessons relevant to the conflict-management process. The third dimension will investigate a biblical premise that conveys principles useful for a constructive and productive approach when managing conflict for reconciliation. The chapter will end with a conclusion.

**Universality of the Cosmic Conflict**

The author, in the creation account of the book of Genesis, reports that everything the Creator made was “good” (Gen 1:9, 21, 25) and “very good” (Gen 1:31). The Hebrew terms *tobe* (“good” or “agreeable”) and *me’od* (“very good” or “abundantly good”) reveal that there was perfect or complete satisfaction. Inferentially, even from the sparse information in the creation account of Genesis 1 and 2, it was observed that harmony pervaded the entire universe. Throughout this period, relationships (vertical and horizontal) were intact and unhindered by conflict or discord of any type. Old Testament commentators Keil and Delitzsch (1866) explain that the use of the term “good” and its repetition with the emphasis “very” denies any claim that evil was fettered; rather, everything was in perfect harmony and without difference. In other words, when God created the universe, perfection and harmony were the golden thread upon which everything was preserved. This pervasive harmony was subsequently disrupted by a mysterious act of conflict that became ubiquitous on planet earth. Consequently, the entire universe and all its systems and subsystems suffered a state of imbalance and brokenness. This disruption continues to manifest itself in the great controversy or
cosmic conflict in various shapes and forms, including human interactions. However, God in mercy effected His plan for handling conflict, thus making reconciliation possible.

The Cosmic Conflict in the Old Testament

The Scriptures make reference to the great controversy or conflict theme throughout its pages as the basis for the problems in human relationships and the reason reconciliation is necessary. Two of these clarifying foundational references are in the Old Testament, and one in the New. They form the theological explanation for conflict in both divine and human interactions.

The Old Testament passages of Isaiah 14:12-14 and Ezekiel 28:12-19 intimate the motif of why and how conflict entered the cosmos. Even though the primary application of these passages address the activities surrounding the “king of Babylon” (Isa 14:12-14) and the “king of Tyre” (Ezek 28:12-19) in their kingly functions of malevolence, symbolically, these passages have broader and more far-reaching implications. These Bible loci have dual application. They apply ultimately to Lucifer, leader of the atrocities, whose “character and policies” were accomplished by these kings.

Portentously, this is a reference to the entrance of conflict into a perfect economy by a decision described as the mystery of iniquity. In other words, there is no reasonable explanation that can be tendered to justify this action effected by Lucifer, the angel, who was created next to Christ, as his name, “light of the morning,” “bright star,” “bringer of the dawn,” or “brilliant one” suggests (Nichol, 1977, p. 170). While there is no rationale for Lucifer’s action, careful examination of these two Old Testament transcripts reveals a misuse of his free will.

The Isaiah and Ezekiel passages intimate that the first misuse of freewill
responsible for the cosmic controversy entering the universe is pride. Pride, which can be described as inordinate self-esteem and an unreasonable conceit of one's own superiority in talents, beauty, wealth, accomplishments, rank or elevation in office, and which often manifests itself in contempt of others ("Pride," 1994) was the motive for the great cosmic controversy. Both the Isaiah and Ezekiel texts specify persistently that Lucifer was unhappy with his role of being second in command. White (2006b) remarked that Lucifer was at the helm of all created beings, foremost in manifesting the purposes of God to the universe, yet he wanted to displace and replace Christ (p. 758). Isaiah reveals five dissatisfactions of Lucifer: (a) he desired to ascend into a higher position in heaven, (b) he wanted to exalt his throne above the stars of God, (c) he craved sitting on the holy mountain of the congregation—representing God’s government, (d) he desired to ascend above the heights of the clouds, and (e) he wanted to be like the Most High God (14:13, 14). These all demonstrate an attitude of dissatisfaction on the part of Lucifer.

Commenting on this prideful quintet, Berkhof (2003) acknowledges that while little is said in the biblical account about the conflict of sin that caused the disruption, Paul’s instruction to Timothy to avoid appointing a novice as a bishop is instructive. He pointed out that a similar fate of falling into condemnation as the devil (1 Tim 2:6) could befall such an inexperienced appointee. Put differently, in all probability, it seems the conflict of sin entered the universe as a consequence of pride—“aspiring to be like God in power and authority” (p. 221). On this, White (2006b) agrees that conflict was the outcome of Lucifer’s personal desires and selfishness, which was contrary to God’s plan. The mysterious emergence of pride was a resistance to the Creator’s love as well. This love was the foundation of the government of God. The happiness and fulfilment of all
creatures depended upon embracing it through obedience, but when Lucifer desired to possess God’s glory and throne, he did so in rejection of God’s government and character of love, as well as His perfection which He “eternally moved to self-communicate” (Berkhof, 2003. p. 71). Ewall (2013) states that Lucifer became the opponent of God’s kindness and love when he desired His power. Refusing to honor the God of love, unbelief, and distrust was incited for the character of God.

Thus, when Lucifer rejected God and hence the moral law which is based on God’s love, he was in essence rebelling, flaunting, and spurning the Creator Himself (Holbrook, 2000, p. 976). Solomon summarized Lucifer’s attitude by saying, “Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall” (Prov 16:18).

The Cosmic Conflict in the New Testament

The New Testament passage that identifies the locus of conflict as original controversy is Revelation 12:7-12. The text declares in part:

And war broke out in heaven: Michael and his angels fought with the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought, but they did not prevail, nor was a place found for them in heaven any longer. So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him. (vv. 7-9 NKJV)

As in the Old Testament, the scenario of how the original conflict entered the perfectly created universe is described in laconic terms. Its description is candid, “And war broke out in heaven” (v. 7), but lacks details of the war. The Greek word for “war” is polemos, from which are derived words such as “polemics,” “hostility,” “struggle,” or “conflict.” This brief narrative provides numerous meanings that are useful to the understanding of divine and human conflict today. Inferentially, the details in this passage suggest that Lucifer mysteriously initiated conflict in heaven, and through this
accidental phenomenon (Rice, 1997), the entire universe was contaminated.

Further analysis of Revelation 12:7-12 reveals additional information about the cosmic conflict other than its prophetic application. First, the text infers that because the great dragon (Lucifer) experienced intra-psychic conflict—with self, he expressed opposition to God, in heaven. The implication is that because Lucifer had this conflict within himself, it triggered conflict that can feed the next level of conflict which is interpersonal. Second, conflict can and often moves from the personal to the interpersonal. There was some kind of incompatibility (clashing of ideas) that was more on the part of Lucifer. Consequently, Michael, the Archangel (Son of God) against whom Lucifer (the serpent or dragon) had contention was brought into the struggle (v. 7b).

A third feature of this dyadic construct is that conflict can arise from the need for power and control. This incompatibility between Michael and the “dragon” (Lucifer) is symbolic of two different philosophies or power structures called good and evil. Conflict can sometimes be over the issue of power, about who is in control or has the greater influence. In this case, Christ had the greater power over Lucifer, something the “dragon” was not pleased with. This posture has been deleterious to harmony and peace.

The passage presents a fourth fact about conflict. It reveals that some conflicts are unresolvable. Although God’s desire for people is that they live at peace with one another (Rom 12:18), this text demonstrates that it was not always possible. This reality is evident in the encounter between Christ and Lucifer, where eventually, Lucifer lost his place in heaven and was exiled to earth (Rev 12:8). The conflict spread from the supernatural to the natural realm where the battle continues. Consequently, some earthly conflicts are unresolvable and therefore not reconcilable just as it was not for God and Lucifer in
heaven. Lucifer’s attitude of impenitence made conflict unresolvable as some humans’ attitude makes conflict in the social arena unresolvable.

The Consequences of Cosmic Conflict

The cosmic conflict which entered the universe via pride and distrust, has had far-reaching consequences for the universe and the process of reconciliation. The consequences can be divided into two areas—the vertical and the horizontal.

The first consequence of conflict in the universe impacts the vertical order. The vertical impact is a disconnection in relationship between humankind and God. This commenced in the Garden of Eden. Yielding to the “serpent’s” deception, the progenitors of humanity initiated a disconnection that would challenge their relationship with God. This vertical collapse impugned the face-to-face interaction which was a feature in their Edenic experience (Gen 3:8). Since then, the relationship with God has never been the same. Humankind has struggled to embrace and enjoy the presence of the holy due to the alienation brought about by Adam and Eve’s action. Enjoying the presence of God was no more a delight as they were ashamed (Gen 3:10). Commenting on this predicament, Berkhof (2003) indicates that this disruption in the relationship with God revealed itself in humanity’s “spiritual inability” (p. 226) to connect with God. Subsequently, the vertical relationship with God remained ever challenged and a continuous work in progress.

The second consequence of the original or cosmic conflict has a horizontal implication. In other words, the impact of the Edenic disruption did not only affect the human to divine relationship, but human to human interactions, as well. For instance, the impact of the cosmic conflict was observed in the strained interaction between Adam and
Eve when they refused to take responsibility for their actions and blamed one another.

Both of them, when approached by God, resorted to an attitude of shifting responsibilities (Gen 3:9, 12, 13). Subsequently, they entered into the blame game and denial of personal responsibility in an effort to appease their guilt, an attitude that affects social interactions throughout successive generations. Again, Berkhof (2003) comments that this is a consequence of the contamination of human nature by the original conflict.

Paradigms of Conflict and Reconciliation

Since the cosmic conflict is operating not only at the macrocosmic level, but also at the microcosmic level, the original conflict expresses itself in personal and interpersonal human relationships. Families in conflict moving towards reconciliation are found in both the Old and New Testaments.

Paradigms in Old Testament Families

Marital Snag: Abraham and Sarah

The husband and wife dyad proffers profound lessons regarding how things can go wrong in human relationships, but on the other hand, demonstrates that the conflicts experienced can be used as agents of transformation and reconciliation. This is seen in the narrative of Abraham and Sarah. When God selected Abraham to leave his country to go to a strange place, He promised him that he would become the progenitor of “the families of the earth” (Gen 12:1-3). For this promise to become a reality, the culture of the time required that a male offspring undertake the heirship. However, Abraham’s childlessness posed a challenge to the fulfilment of this promise, thus eliciting the
assuring words from God that his descendants would be as the luminary bodies of the skies; he responded to this by believing (Gen 15:1-6).

Notwithstanding the promise of blessing, the faith of Abraham met a precarious snag ten years later when Sarah discovered she was infertile. Consequently, Abraham was encouraged to cohabit with Hagar, Sarah’s helper. Hagar became the supposed surrogate of Abraham’s promised offspring and legitimate heir (Gen 16:1-3). This decision was informed by the practice of a legal code from their homeland of Mesopotamia, where if a wife was unable to bear children, her maid would be given to the husband (Nichol, 1978, p. 317). Abraham accepted the offer; Hagar became Abraham’s second wife and gave birth to a son (Ishmael). The situation, however, escalated into a conflict of far-reaching proportions that moved beyond their circle to include nations. Abraham, it was said, reflected Adam’s decision in Eden. The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary says:

In complying with Sarai’s rash suggestion, Abram followed in the footsteps of Adam. In both instances the result was suffering and disappointment, and the imagined blessing proved to be a curse. By listening to Sarai’s suggestion Abram created for himself difficulties far reaching in their consequences. There ensued domestic trouble and heartache, and hatred between the future offspring of both wives. Again, in the present day, how bitterly the modern representatives of Sarai’s and Hagar’s descendants, the Jews and the Arabs. (Nichol, 1978, p. 317)

The faithlessness of both Abraham and Sarah produced an epic conflict that needed an intervention—a counter action that would set the course of the promise back on track. Subsequently, the narrative records Abraham’s support of Sarah’s request to put Hagar away after a much bitter episode. The angel received a directive for Hagar to comply with Abraham’s rightful wife, but not without a blessing on her and Ishmael (Gen 16:6-12; 18:9-20). A great truth is demonstrated in this narrative that reconciliation may
be possible when persons are prepared to confront and collaborate on their issues.

Abraham, Sarah, and Hagar decided to make a peace pact, and reconciliation between Abraham and his wife became a reality. This does not discount the possible aftermath of negative emotions that might have been present.

**Parent-Child Conflict: David and His Children**

Ineffectively avoiding or ignoring conflict because one is uncomfortable with it (Kilmann, 2011) can be debilitating and problematic to the quality of parent/child relationships. Such was the case with David and his children, as we see in one of the most dramatic narratives of unresolved conflicts in sibling abuse and homicide (2 Sam 13:1-38). This scenario conveys valuable lessons on the importance of addressing conflict in a timely manner, a manner that achieves peace and reconciliation.

One of the most blatant and disgraceful acts of sexual abuse and incest in the palace of David the king was instigated by his first-born son Amnon. Upon the evil advice of his uncle Jonadab, he raped his sister Tamar (2 Sam 13:1-14). It was a saga of deep deception and selfish devising that lured Tamar to himself as he violated her. This inordinate action incurred the venomous wrath of his brother Absalom, who took things into his own hands when his father king David did not address the matter (13:21). For two years, Absalom orchestrated the demise of his brother whom he eventually murdered.

When conflict is not addressed, it can escalate; we see in the narrative that Absalom progressed from murder to treason. After returning from his three-year leave, he presented himself at the gate of city—a place the leaders of Israel would occupy to assist the people with their problems. There, Absalom incited the people against his father the king, saying that their problems were legitimate, but that there was no one to hear them,
therefore, he would be a better leader. This eventually led to the abdication of the throne by King David and the replacement by angry Absalom. Consequently, after years of conflict, the situation was resolved in an unbalanced manner—Absalom was himself murdered by David’s warriors, the same way he was attempting to kill his father.

When conflict is not addressed and principles of mutual benefits are ignored, matters escalate. Moore (1998) noted that unresolved conflicts “stand as a sharp reminder to every Christian parent of just how high the price can be when we choose to leave our conflicts unresolved” (p. 58). Negligence can make reconciliation difficult.

**Sibling Rivalry: Joseph and His Brothers**

One of the most enthralling and emotionally engaging biblical narratives of conflict in human interactions, and similarly how reconciliation can be possible, is that of Joseph and his family (Gen 37-50). The basis of the conflict seems plausible. Joseph was the favorite of his father, Jacob, who one day brought an odious of report about his brothers to his father. The detail of the report is absent, but whatever it was, the fury of Joseph’s brothers was engaged (Gen 37:2, 3). This was coupled with the fact that he had dreams that suggested in the interpretations that he was going to reign over his entire family (vv. 5-7, 9-11). Consequently, in response, the perceived favoritism of their father and the ambition of Joseph to be ruler (summarized from his dreams) caused a phenomenal family feud to erupt. Eventually, Joseph was sold by his siblings to the Midianites, a ruse was invented to explain his absence—something that broke his father heart—and finally, he was traded into Egyptian slavery (v. 36). There, in Egypt, Joseph had mixed fortunes as he went from prison to the palace of Egypt.
In a strange, but providential way, the life of Joseph in the palace of Pharaoh provided an opportunity for peace and reconciliation. The unfolding of a dream interpreted by Joseph and the effect of a famine that swept through the region of Egypt brought a reunion with his siblings, his father, and himself. After his siblings traveled from Egypt to Canaan and back, fulfilling Joseph’s request to see his younger brother Benjamin, the then governor of Egypt revealed himself. The revelation was remarkable and teeming with emotions (Gen 45:1-3). What was remarkable about this encounter was the extension of forgiveness and the experience of their reconciliation.

Concerning the extension of forgiveness, Joseph exhibited true forgiveness to his brothers after a much protracted period of emotional instability. This forgiveness was offered after testing the caliber of his brothers’ honesty and trustworthiness by holding Simeon in custody and observing how they treated Benjamin. Upon seeing how they treated their younger brother, Joseph was moved to the point of revelation. Baxter (2012) asserted that Joseph was now convinced that his brothers had changed and “because he sees God’s hands in the affairs, he can honestly through his words and action confirm his total forgiveness of his brothers” (pp. 22-25). One lesson for families in conflict is that God works in and through even the most difficult circumstances for His glory and their good. Consequently, reconciliation (in this narrative) was exhibited and experienced by the perpetrators—Joseph’s brothers—and the victim—Joseph (Gen 45:4-8) when they were forgiven in Egypt. This experience can be shared by any family in a similar situation, granted they exhibit similar attitudes.
Limits of Reconciliation: Abraham and Lot

It is God’s desire that people “live peaceably” with each other (Rom 12:18); however, the narrative of Genesis 13 demonstrates that it is not always possible. The concept of living in peace underlines the need for forgiveness and reconciliation. Forgiveness is integral when conflicted parties are seeking wholeness, peace, and reconciliation, but does not always translate into such. The word “forgiveness” in the Old Testament is *nasa* or *nasah* and means “to lift up, to bear, to carry, or to carry away.” Its New Testament counterpart *aphiemi* conveys a similar meaning of “sending away, or sending forth.” The idea is that a person’s transgression is taken away or lifted when forgiven. However, when applied to the conflict processed, though forgiveness may be extended and reconciliation desirable, it may not be the immediate outcome as demonstrated in the Abraham and Lot narrative.

They were affluent men whose assets were abundant, both in livestock and riches. Subsequently, the narrative records, “the land was not able to support them, that they might dwell together, for their possessions were so great that they could not dwell together” (Gen 13:5). This apparent lack of geographic space for both entities and their livestock, created a conflict, which commenced between Abraham and Lot’s herdsmen (Gen 13:7). This scenario proves the point that conflict is incompatibility between two interests seeking dominance and acceptance, which can escalate into a situation of anger, aggression, and unproductivity.

Considering the magnitude of the matter between Abram and Lot’s herdsmen, escalation of the conflict was a possibility, but Abram’s approach made reconciliation possible. His words are instructive:
Please let there be no strife between you and me, and between my herdsmen and your herdsmen; for we are brethren. Is not the whole land before you? Please separate from me. If you take the left, then I will go to the right; or, if you go to the right, then I will go to the left.” And Lot lifted his eyes and saw all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered everywhere (before the LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah) like the garden of the LORD, like the land of Egypt as you go toward Zoar. (Gen 13:8-10, NKJV)

Three thoughts are inferred in the passage referenced above. First, focusing on that which is common is the place to begin healing conflict. For Abram, the first step in resolving conflict was to identify what they had in common. In addition, conflict addressed and not avoided proffers a possibility of de-escalation, and thus, may obtain a desirable end. In this case, it was a situation where compromise seemed to have accomplished its preferred end. Lot got the piece of the land he preferred, and Abraham accepted the remainder. According to conflict-management specialist Kilmann (2011), in describing compromise in mathematical terms, both conflict parties received 50% of the agreement that translated into 100% satisfaction. Second, a conflict situation does not always translate into reconciliation in the traditional way of understanding—conflicted parties unite and relationship returns to order. This might be desirable, however, and separation might be the initial antidote in the process of reconciliation apparent in the narrative. In this sense, reconciliation has some limitations or dimensions depending on the parties, the attitudes involved, and the magnitude of the conflict.

Paradigms in New Testament Families

Martha and Mary’s Confusion

Some conflicts are not as overtly identifiable at the onset as others are and must be addressed before they erupt and create greater tension and stress. This is presumably the case in the brief account of Luke 10:38-42. The journey of Jesus and His disciples
brought them to the village and home of Martha and Mary where they would be hosted. Void of details, the narrative succinctly captures the fact that Mary entertained Jesus, while Martha, her sister, was engaged in the work of preparation—two different hostess roles. However, Martha did not appear to appreciate Mary’s position. She preferred to have Mary involved in a similar function as herself. She came complaining to Jesus with the hope that Mary would be redirected to what she felt was urgent (v. 40).

The response of Jesus provides an insightful and indirect interventional approach when addressing potential conflict situations. Instead of mollifying Martha’s desire, He brought perspective to her concern by pointing out, “Martha, you are worried about many things,” that might be of importance, but “Mary has chosen what is better” (vv. 41, 42). The “better part,” suggested Meyer (1832/1880), was Mary’s studious nature of learning from Jesus. Some conflicts can be described as seething beneath the surface, fueled by the imposed need of expectation. An apt example is Martha’s concern for Mary’s lack of culinary involvement which became problematic. Expectations unreasonably placed can ignite tension that is unwarranted. However, potential conflict can be defused and the outcome redirected towards reconciliation, depending on the response it receives.

**Jesus and Mother Mary**

The final scenario highlighting the conflict and reconciliation construct is the unique encounter of Jesus and His mother Mary at the Feast of the Jewish Passover found in Luke 2:40-52. This situation does not present a typical conflict context; however, an important observation about a conflict tactic can be gleaned. A brief summary of their situation indicates that Mary, along with Jesus, accompanied Joseph, her husband to the Feast of the Passover. After having fulfilled their obligation to go, they were returning
from Jerusalem with the crowd when it became apparent that Jesus was absent. Parental instinct propelled them to search for Him. In so doing, they retraced their steps back to Jerusalem, making enquiries along the way. After three days, they found Him in the company of teachers of the law dialoging (2:46).

The response of Mary after discovering Jesus is noteworthy and requires some elucidation as it relates to the matter of conflict management and reconciliation. Whereas the astonishment of Mary and Joseph over the appearance of Jesus could be described as “divinity flashing through humanity” and the Son of man being none other than the Son of God (White, 2006a, p. 81), the ensuing brief conversation between Jesus and His mother lends itself to further interpretation. Mary’s enquiry, “Son, why have you treated us like this? Your father and I have been anxiously searching for you,” and Jesus’ response, “Why were you searching for me? Didn’t you know I had to be in my Father’s house?” (vv. 48, 49 NIV) hint at some kind of unease or misunderstanding, at least on the part of Mary, since Jesus seemed to have been aware of His mission. This misunderstanding is confirmed by the comment that neither earthly parent understood (v. 50) or could interpret what was being conveyed by Jesus.

In conclusion, if one reads beyond the current interpretation advocated by commentators on verse 50, one could reasonably determine that the response by the parents attaches itself to conflict management. The dyad needed time to process not just what was uttered, but also how the whole situation was impacting them mentally and emotionally. Thus, their nonresponse and “treasuring” of the things Jesus said (v. 51) can be seen as a positive avoidance strategy. The positive avoidance (Kilmann, 2011) or withdrawal approach expresses the need to take a break in order to process appropriately
an actual or potential conflict situation, as seen in this above scenario. This method was used by Jesus later in His ministerial functioning (Luke 5:15, 16; 22:29-41).

When one reads these illustrative stories in both Old and New Testaments, it seems clear that the narratives are opulent with meaning and learning and pertinent to conflict management and reconciliation. They demonstrate the reality and impact of conflict in human interactions.

**Dimensions of a Peaceful Reconciliation Strategy**

Reconciliation as one of the clear objectives of conflict management, resolution, and transformation in both horizontal and vertical relationships is a reality taught in Scripture. The word “reconciliation” is a New Testament term that translates the Greek verb *katallasso*, sometimes also the noun *katallage*, and is used only four times in Scripture (Blazen, 2001). According to Vine, Unger, and White (1996), reconciliation means “to change or exchange” one for the other. Used for persons, it means “to change from enmity to friendship” or “to reconcile” (p. 513).

In relationship to God and humanity, reconciliation is what God accomplishes when His grace is extended toward us as seen in Ephesian 2:11-19 and Colossian 1:19 - 22. Both passages speak to those who were separated, alienated, or “estranged and hostile in mind” towards God, being brought back into relationship through the blood of Christ. According to Blazen (2001), “reconciliation is the process by which enmity is removed and fellowship is restored” (p. 287). Applied to the social context, reconciliation by definition is “the active commitment to the restoration of love and trustworthiness by both the injured party and the perpetrator so that their relationship may be transformed” (Holeman 2007, p. 12). This means that reconciliation progresses beyond a mere
preservation, accommodation, and acceptance to embrace transformation that produces development and peace amongst conflicted parties.

Considering that reconciliation has relevance to both the spiritual and social levels, five practical dimensions are intimated in Genesis 3:1-21 that can aid in the process. Each of these dimensions require additional subsets to effect the process of reconciliation effectively.

Incarnation of Presence

When the progenitors of the human family yielded their allegiance to the archenemy of God, He did not abandon them. Instead, He condescended to interact with the Edenic dyad, to demonstrate incarnational ministry according to His custom. An incarnational ministry, Billings (2011) writes, is relational in nature. It is a coming alongside someone like an envoy in order to provide unconditional support. This was the kind of presence God provided Adam and Eve in spite of their yielding of allegiance to the serpent.

In the conflict-management sense, incarnational ministry is being present at the place where the conflict is currently active, with the intention to initiate the reconciliation process. This is evident in Genesis 3:8 which reads, “Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the LORD God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day.” This “coming to be with” was not to reprimand, but to associate with. God did not abandon Adam and Eve because they contaminated their commitment and allegiance through the choice of eating from the forbidden tree. He continued His commitment to be with them at the time of their usual appointment. However, this time, His purpose was adjusted from the usual interaction of worship and fellowship to one of investigation and
redemption. This action on the part of God signified the New Testament model of incarnation depicted by Christ and referred to as the Word becoming flesh and dwelling among us (John 1: 14) for the purpose of giving us grace. In other words, the condescension of Christ, the Son of God, was, in part, to effect the plan of redemption and restore the brokenness in relationships. Christ incarnate or “God with us” was for the purpose of bringing about reconciliation between Himself and His creation. It is important to note that the incarnational presence is an essential first step to the reconciliation process of both vertical and horizontal interactions.

Confrontation-Oriented Ministry

A second dimension of the reconciliation process is confrontation, implied in the way God addressed the decision of the Edenic couple to eat the fruit (Gen 3:9-11). Although confrontation is often interpreted as something negative to be avoided because of its potential to heighten emotion and tension, it is a necessary move towards conflict management. Vine et al. (1996) indicate that the Hebrew verb qadam or confront means “to meet” or “go before” and is used 27 times in the Hebrew Bible. The word is mainly used in a marital context in two ways: peacefully (Ps 21:3) or in a hostile manner (2 Sam 22:6). When used positively, confrontation aids in the healing of conflict. God confronted or engaged Adam and Eve in one of the most effective ways to deliberate a problem by asking questions and seeking for feedback.

In seeking feedback during the confrontation process in order to generate reconciliation in human relationships, communication is key. How things are said, the tone, the mannerisms, the language—verbal and nonverbal—all affect how productive confrontation can be. Similarly, listening is another essential area to consider while
confronting a conflictual situation. Adam and Eve did not listen much to God; they just wanted to defend their action. However, in the confrontation process of trying to clarify positions and views, listening benefits relationships when it is contemplative and discerning. Hedahl (2001) explains that contemplative listening that is pastoral and incarnational is “comprehensive, critical, therapeutic, and appreciative listening” (p. 48).

On the other hand, discerning seeks to differentiate and distinguish through understanding a particular state of mind. Listening to bring resolve includes waiting—delaying premature conclusions, being attentive, clarifying, reflecting or paraphrasing, and agreeing (Sande & Raabe, 2002). God listened to Adam and Even when they were not listening to Him.

Competition is also an area to be cognizant of when confronting a problem. During the confrontation process, competition can surface and create undue tension and exacerbation of the conflict. It is important, then, that those in conflict be careful not to compete with each other. Competition is seen as a win-lose strategy of engaging conflict. Therefore, this approach impedes the confrontation process and ultimately, how successful reconciliation will become. Instead of engaging the win-lose strategy of competition, (which means to win your opponent at all cost) one should employ the integrative approach. The integrative outcome is a win-win way of thinking about the interest of the opposing party (Ryan & Castro, 2004). This means both parties in conflict achieve their goals fully. On the one hand, McSwain and Treadwell (1997) affirm that confrontation is a useful step in examining and clarifying differences, pointing out its growth-promoting benefits for human relationships, and a caring way to engage differences. However, on the other hand, they discourage a competitive approach as it
hinders the reconciliation process.

Concession a Necessary Step

A third step that emerges from Genesis 3:2, 3 alludes to Adam and Eve’s understanding of wrong even before it was committed. They had both received and accepted the instruction of God regarding what they could and could not eat from the garden. The text states, “The woman said to the serpent, ‘We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, but God did say, “You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.”’” Nonetheless, when she was deceived by the “serpent,” she desired the fruit, ate it, and then shared it with her husband (vv. 4-6). One would think that when approached by God regarding their disobedience, they would concede. On the contrary, they tried to evade responsibility for their actions by presenting an attitude of blame and denial.

When a conflict situation erupts in human relationships, moving towards change requires a concession on the part of opposing disputants. The acknowledgement that something has gone awry and needs attention is the place to start the process of healing a conflict that may be causing pain and discomfort. In order to avoid this step indefinitely is to court further deepening of the problem. Sande and Raabe (2002) emphasize that confession aids the reconciliation process and suggested “Seven A’s of Confession.”

They are as follows:

1. Address all those involved in the conflict situation—God and humans (Jas 5:16).

2. Avoid weasel-words such as *If, But,* or *Maybe.*

3. Admit to specifics not only of the action but of the attitude that may have led
to the action.

4. Apologize and be patient for a response.

5. Accept the consequences.

6. Alter your behavior.

7. Ask for forgiveness and patience.

Admission of error intentionally or inadvertently committed is an inevitable step in the healing process of conflict. This principle is an imperative in the spiritual realm (1 John 1:9), as well as in the social context (Jas 5:16).

Solution-Oriented Strategy

The fourth and significant aspect of the reconciliation process when managing conflict in human relationships is solution. It is a set of goals or an approach utilized to effect change. Within the context of the Edenic dilemma, solution was not the simplistic attempt demonstrated by the couple to cover up the effects of their wayward choice. It was not the attempt to adorn themselves with fig leaves (v. 7). This was apparently a mechanism of human and artificial devising geared at deflecting the consciousness of their nakedness and shame (vv. 6, 7). The couple’s action could not by itself bring about the reconciliation of this great chasm. This anthropomorphic conundrum required a resolution that would meet the acceptability of the divine.

Genesis 3:15a and 21 highlight the only acceptable solution of divine acceptability—crushing the serpent’s head and clothing Adam and Eve with garments of skin (a symbol of God’s character). This was God’s riposte to their disobedience and any other issue of discord—spiritual or relational. In God’s response to this human predicament, two solutions are represented in the text—short term and long term. On one
hand, the short-term solution (providing covering) would proffer an immediate benefit that was more sustainable—outlasting that of fig leaves. On the other hand, it was a representation of a prophetic response to conflict and sin in general that would be ultimately annihilated.

The eventual outcome of the prophetic utterance of these two verses found fulfilment primarily in the cross of Calvary. Revelation 13:8 and 1 Peter 1:18-20 declare that the Lamb was slain from the “foundation of the world” to redeem humanity through His spotless and precious blood. As a prophetic declaration, Genesis 3:15, otherwise called the protoevangelium (the first announcement of the gospel), finds its ultimate meaning in “Christ the seed who would conquer the evil one” (Rom 16:20). Similarly, when human relationships experience estrangement, reconciliation is the goal to aspire towards. Solution to this end would require engaging in meaningful dialogue, compromise, negotiation, and an agreement upon mutually beneficial goals in order to guide the conflict situation towards reconciliation.

Eradication: A Final Strategy

The fifth reconciliation strategy that emerges from Genesis 3 is eradication. Eradication is closely related to the foregoing concept of solution. It is one of the ultimate objectives of managing conflict from a biblical perspective. This tactic seeks to neutralize and even eliminate the negative and destructive impact of conflict upon the relationship-growth outcome on a long-term basis.

A further examination of Genesis 3:14-15 infers that the removal of the causative element of conflict is an important move towards peace and reconciliation. Careful analysis of this text reveals two thoughts—it has both a literal and a prophetic
interpretation. The literal meaning is evidenced by the reference to the serpent (v. 14) that engaged Eve and ultimately convinced her and her husband to act against God’s instruction. In contrast, the prophetic component is a declaration that the “serpent” would be judged and rewarded for the negative influence he would have had upon the universe and its inhabitants. Ultimately, the prophetic dimension points to the total and ultimate annihilation of conflict in all of its forms, resulting in peace and reconciliation in the social and spiritual realms.

Applied specifically to the work of reconciliation in Christ, the fulfillment of Genesis 3:15 points to a future without relational discord of any type. Christ became both sacrifice and reconciler of humanity when He died on the cross. This was ultimately to address the discord and alienation conflict had caused. Four Pauline Epistles (2 Cor 5:19; Rom 5:10, 11; Eph 2:16; Col 1:16) declare that God was working through Christ to reconcile the world to himself. According to Rice (1997), God overcame alienation in Christ, which was a result of the sin conflict, restoring wholeness. This peace, brought about by the cross, enables the reconciliation process within human interactions and with God. It fosters the hope of a time when all consequences of conflict will be transformed and the original intent of harmony is realized. White (1888) rightly captures a new environment without conflict when she writes:

The great controversy is ended. Sin and sinners are no more. The entire universe is clean. One pulse of harmony and gladness beats through the vast creation. From Him who created all, flow life and light and gladness, throughout the realms of illimitable space. From the minutest atom to the greatest world, all things, animate and inanimate, in their unshadowed beauty and perfect joy, declare that God is love. (p. 678)

In this quotation, as in Revelation 21 and 22:1-5, we see the eradication of conflict in all forms—intrapersonal, interpersonal, organizational, and spiritual. The
name of God is glorified and respected; relationships vertical or horizontal are unhindered and undisrupted. Peace and reconciliation are now the perpetual norm, and conflict is absolutely eradicated. This is the ultimate purpose of the reconciliation or conflict-management plan—bringing about the original norm of a conflict-free universe and relationships.

**Conclusion**

It was established in this chapter that in a perfectly created universe thriving with harmony and peace, order and precision, conflict became a reality that disrupted the relationship God and humankind shared. This disruption, otherwise called cosmic conflict, emerged in the angelic being Lucifer due to the motives of self-exultation and disregard for the love of God— the undergirding foundation of His government. Conflict then moved from the heavenly to the earthly realm of the planet as the angelic expulsion was effected. This expulsion has generated the great fall of humankind who have since had to deal with its corollaries. The consequences of this mysterious disruptive action are visible in the demise of humankind’s spirituality and relationship with God, as well as the human social dysfunctions at play in various family systems.

Nevertheless, selected narratives of various family types in both the Old and New Testaments present illustrations of how conflicts within human interactions can be used in a transformative manner. The various biblical family paradigms investigated throughout this chapter provide teaching tools and valuable lessons that can inform the conflict-management dialogue in families. Furthermore, the five mediatory principles (incarnation, confrontation, concession, solution and eradication) taken from Genesis 3:1-21 are reconciliatory strategies that can aid in the conflict-management process.
Ultimately, when the cosmic conflict is terminated, peace and satisfaction will be experienced at both the macrocosmic (universal) and microcosmic (social or relational) levels. All types of relationships will then experience complete satisfaction.
CHAPTER 3

LITERATURE RELATED TO CONFLICT
AND ITS MANAGEMENT

The theme of conflict and its management or “handling” (Menkel-Meadow, 2013, p. 38) is a well-known and vast field of study. This reality of conflict and managing it has received the attention of several practitioners and scholars in its field. But why study the management of conflict in the family? Canary and Canary (2013) posit several rationales for studying family conflict. First, knowing family conflict is an unexpected occurrence that often enters the family unnoticed, although it is natural to the human condition; thus, it makes studying it a necessity. Second, since managing conflict has implications for the quality of family relationships—for example, marriage satisfaction—it needs to receive attention. Destructive messages more than constructive messages are said to predict the quality of the marriage as much as divorce (Gottman, Schwartz Gottman, & DeClaire, 2006). Third, the impact on conflict of family members psychologically, socially, and physically warrants its study. One such impact reveals itself in how children become withdrawn, especially when parents seek to use them as pawns. Another reason is the need to develop a Christian conflict-management theory and practice model that is “theologically rooted and ecclesiastically integrated” (Poirier, 2006, p. 13). This model incorporates Christ-centered ideals.

Priority for this present review has been given to literature within the last 10
years. However, because the formative years of conflict and its study predate that time period, some earlier works will be included. As stated in the introduction, the literature review first highlights the historical evolvement of conflict and its management, focusing on several themes such as the source, triggers, types, and outcomes of conflict. Second, an in-depth, but succinct overview of the nature of conflict and how it functions in several family types is featured. Finally, selected viable and practical conflict-management strategies were reviewed, including the one to be utilized in the project. The chapter closes with a conclusion.

**Perspectives on Conflict**

**History**

Conflict is inevitable and has always been in existence. This fact makes having a historical understanding of the dynamics of conflict essential. Awareness of the historic account of conflict and its management aids in the development of an effective strategy for personal, group, organization, or family satisfaction and growth.

A brief survey of selected literature from the voluminous work on conflict reveals that throughout the centuries, conflict has been an area of study by leaders, practitioners, and specialists. At various periods, contributions from individuals and different disciplines have emerged. The contributions have come from areas such as sociology (Coser, 1956; Durkeim, 1984; Simmel, 1955), anthropology (Abel, 1973; Avruch, 1998; Gulliver, 1979), and international relations and peace studies (Burton, 1987; Galtung, 1989). It was later in “the twentieth century, as a reaction to the devastation of World War II and the Cold War, that a broader and multi-disciplinary field of ‘conflict resolution’ emerged to attempt some systematic understanding of conflict prevention and
management” (Menkel-Meadow, 2013, p. 38). More contemporary contributions on conflict management and resolution were framed by the legal and more philosophical theories of jurisprudence (Hampshire, 2000). Over time, religious advocates have also added their voices to the conversation by calling for Christian conflict-management theory and practice (Leas, 2001; Poirier, 2006; Sande & Johnson, 2011).

During the development of conflict and its management in the twentieth century, a new branch of social anthropology called political anthropology led to the prominence of a new focus on conflict. Consequently, a great divide emerged regarding the theoretical impact of conflict. On the one hand, some viewed conflict as disjunctive or divisive in its effect. They argued that conflict has a negative impact and, therefore, should be avoided. On the other hand, others viewed conflict as sociation, meaning that it has connecting outcomes and should be embraced with the intention of appropriating its values for a good purpose. Those who repudiated the disjunctive view of conflict (as cited in Thakore, 2013) purport that “conflict is a means to solve or avert fissions” (p. 7). Thereby, it preserves some kind of unity, the development of cultural shifts in society, and maintains the social order. Moreover, the focus on stopping violence was expanded to include such areas as building peace, post-violence reconciliation, enhancing justice, and establishing conflict-management systems (Kriesberg, 2009).

The evolution of conflict management and resolution have been in existence for as far back as conflict itself. Since “humans have always waged conflicts, they have also engaged in various ways to end them” (Kriesberg, 2009, p.1). Conflict management is an attempt to manage the dispute, avoid the escalation, and remove the cause of the conflict.
Definition of Conflict

The many settings in which conflict occurs makes it difficult to define (Hellriegel, Slocum, & Woodman, 1989). Albeit, conflict has been defined in several different ways depending on the context of its occurrence. Bercovitch (1983) states that conflict is a broad term that encompasses three elements: (a) the conflict situation or the basic incompatibility, (b) conflict attitudes or range of psychological factors, and (c) conflict behavior or set of related behaviors. Webster (“Conflict,” 1994) describes conflict as a derivative of the Latin word conflictus. It means “to contend with or against another in strife. Conflict shows variance, incompatibility, irreconcilability, or opposition, a clash of ideas fighting for dominance whether intrapersonal, interpersonal, or social environment” (p. 292).

From an organizational perspective, De Dreu and Gelfand (2008) define conflict “as a process that begins when an individual or group perceives difference or opposition between itself and another individual or group over interests and resources, beliefs, values, or practices that matter to them” (p. 8). Similarly, Folger, Poole, and Stutman (2007) suggest that conflict is an interaction of people sharing interdependence who perceive incongruity and the possibility of interference from others as a result of this incongruity. Wiebe (2012) synthetizes conflict as “a dynamic process that occurs between interdependent parties as they experience negative emotional reactions to perceived disagreements and interference with attainment of their goals” (p. 4).

Psychotherapist and family mediators, Wilmot and Hocker (2011), define conflict as a “felt struggle between two or more interdependent individuals over perceived
incompatible differences in beliefs, values, and goals, or over differences in desires for esteem, control, and connectedness” (p. 11). In analyzing this definition, Northouse (2011) extracted four characteristics of conflict and distilled them thus:

1. Conflict as struggle: a reference to two opposing powers or parties coming together in objection to each other.

2. Interdependence: an element of reciprocity between persons involved in the incident of conflict for it to take place, whether it is between husband or wife, children and parents, and sibling and sibling.

3. It is affective: in other words, conflict engages feelings. In the process of disagreeing, emotions (anger, hostility, loneliness, sadness or disconnection) bang against each other.

4. It involves differences: can be a product of individual beliefs, values, status, goals, status, and desire to control (Mayer, 2000).

An analysis of the above succinct definitions of conflict reveals that certain properties are conjoint to all conflicting circumstances and relationships. Rahim (2011) and Janosik and Hirt (2013) observe that conflict is comprised of certain core elements: (a) the existence of opposing interests, (b) both opposing interest must be recognized, and (c) incompatibility is driven by opponents perceiving that neither of their needs is being met.

Conflict, for the purpose of this present project study, is understood as incompatibilities or struggles experienced by interdependent family members related through biological, legal, marriage, or equivalent ties (Canary & Canary, 2013) over content or relational issues. What this means is that persons who in some way share
interdependence do experience incompatibilities that need to be managed or handled for mutual gains and resolution.

Views of Conflict

In order to apply a sound conflict-management approach, understanding how it is viewed forms a solid base for managing the conflict process. There are several schools of thought detected in current literature.

The first school of thought of conflict is the traditional view. This view of conflict promotes the idea that because conflict is a malfunctioning within a group or relationship, it should be avoided (Robbins & Judge, 2013). This view believes conflict carries a dysfunctional outcome resulting from poor communication, distrust between people who are not open, and failure on the part of leaders who are nonresponsive to subordinates. Thus, it should be avoided.

The second school of thought is the interactionist view. This view agrees that conflict is natural and inevitable in groups, organizations, and personal relationships. Thus, it has the potential to be positive or functional, enhancing performance, and should be permitted. Researchers of the interactionist view do not noticeably see all conflict as good. Nevertheless, in order to limit the negative or dysfunctional impact on groups or relationships, conflict should be managed. Managing conflict reduces the apathy and unresponsive need for change, thus allowing for performance (Robbins & Judge, 2013).

The third view of conflict is the resolution-focused view. Researchers have explained this view of conflict as minimizing the “negative effects of conflict by focusing on preparing people for conflicts, developing resolution strategies, and facilitating open discussion” (Robbins & Judge, 2013, p. 449). In conclusion, research has shifted from
revealing conflict, to encouraging limited levels of conflict, to applying constructive ways of dealing with it. It seems clear that a combination of the positive elements of the interactionist and the resolution-focused views have benefits that can make conflict management productive and not destructive or disruptive.

Sources of Conflict

There is an increasing body of literature that identifies sources of conflict. Due to limitation of space these sources are divided into two categories and commented on briefly: (a) organizational conflict and (b) relational conflict.

Organizational sources of conflict include changes due to restructuring, group goals, competition for scarce resources, and intergroup struggle for power or control (Baum, 2003; Huber, 2014; Kazimoto, 2013; Rahim, 2011;).

Relational sources of conflict, on which this research is focused, occurs at both the intrapersonal and interpersonal levels. The intrapersonal perspective of conflict includes differing opinions and personal values, and demographic dissimilarity—gender and educational differences. Interpersonal conflict is caused by lack of trust, injustice or disrespect, insufficient or poor communication, and clashing of opinions (Huber, 2014). Mayer (2000) identifies the causes of conflict related to the general assumption of needs. He posits that conflicts arise out of needs in relationships where one party or group seeks to fulfill its needs, sometimes leading to friction. He further delineates that sources of conflict are communication, emotions, values, structure, history, culture, power, and data. All these sources can be broken down further in respect to the various family types and developmental stages addressed later on.
Conflict in the church or Christian families is similar to sources mentioned above. Christian researchers indicate that conflict themes among Christian families are similar to those in marriage. For example, conflict includes relational and moral issues, expectations, money, communication, roles, and so on (Haywood, 2016; Leas, 2001).

Types of Conflict

The literature reviewed in this section are classified into two areas, as does the section above: (a) content level conflict and (b) relational level conflict. These two levels of conflict are evident in the families of the church.

Content Level Conflicts

According to Northouse (2011), content conflict “involves struggles between leaders and others who differ on issues such as policies and procedures” (p. 177). He posits further that content conflicts are disagreements that center on differences in (a) beliefs and values or (b) goals and ways to reach these goals.

Conflict over beliefs and values usually emerge out of educational and personal philosophies of life. When others differ from us in what we think and sometimes how we express what we think, conflict erupts. Northouse (2011) explains that beliefs are personal viewpoints. When these viewpoints are perceived as incompatible with someone else’s beliefs, conflict is created. Values (which stem from beliefs and govern our behavior) also create conflict. One researcher stated that conflict can occur between individuals who have different values. When these differences are perceived as incompatible, conflict is created and what is required is interpersonal communication about their differences in values (Huber, 2014; Janosik & Hirt, 2013; Northouse, 2011).
Content conflict also occurs over goals. Researchers have identified two types of conflicts regarding goals: (a) procedural conflict and (b) substantive conflicts (Knutson, Lashbrook, & Heemer, 1976). Procedural conflict is a disagreement between parties over how to achieve the goal. For example, procedural conflict is about what steps to take to achieve the goal that has been agreed upon and not as much on the goal itself.

Substantive conflict, however, occurs when a group (say the family) disagrees about the goal of the group. People in the group with different perspectives and prior experience about the task are likely to have substantive conflict than is a homogenous group (Rahim, 2011). Substantive conflict has been analyzed to have great benefits for goal and group achievements since it neutralizes stagnation or groupthink—a condition that discourages critical thinking and creativity of persons engaged in problem solving (O’Connell & Cuthbertson, 2009).

**Relational Level Conflict**

Relational conflict is described by Northouse (2011) as “the differences we feel between ourselves and others concerning how we relate to each other” (p. 180). This level of conflict exhibits itself through (a) intrapersonal incongruences and (b) interpersonal incompatibilities of esteem, control, and affiliation.

Intrapersonal conflict or “intra-psychic” conflict describes an internal challenge within oneself (Wynn, Wilburn, & West-Olatunji, 2010). Since this conflict is an internal war that rages within one’s self, it can adversely affect the psyche and have negative effects on interactions with others when it is not easily or quickly resolved, thus resulting in undue stress or inappropriate decision-making (Rahim, 2011; Wynn, Wilburn, & West-Olatunji, 2010). An example of intrapsychic conflict is making a choice between two
possible vacations where one has more pleasurable activities and the other is less expensive.

Interpersonal conflict or dyadic conflict involves conflict between two or more persons. Interpersonal conflict can result from cultural differences, unclear communication, misconceptions, and lack of empathy. Kellermanns and Eddleston (2006) label interpersonal conflict as affective conflict, a type of conflict that involves interpersonal disagreement prejudices, antagonism, emotional tensions, trust or respect issues, attitudes, personality or power clashes, and other interpersonal struggles unrelated to a task or procedure. In addition, interpersonal conflict is identified through anger, frustration, and emotional twists. This kind of conflict, if not deliberately managed and minimized, expresses itself in areas of performance both at the personal and organizational levels.

Outcomes of Conflict

The action–reaction interaction between conflicting parties results in consequences that can be broadly explained as twofold. First, the outcome of conflict can be constructive or functional (Deutsch, 2014; Huber, 2014; Laursen & Hafen, 2010). Robbins, Judge, Millet and Boyle (2014) state that conflict is constructive or functional:

When it improves the quality of decisions, stimulates creativity and innovation, encourages interest and curiosity among group members, provides the medium through which problems can be aired and tensions released, and fosters an environment of self-evaluation and change. The evidence suggests conflict can improve the quality of decision making by allowing all points to be weighed, particularly those that are unusual or held by a minority. (p. 455)

Constructive conflict usually yields productivity. It reduces passivity, challenges the status quo, encourages performance, and enables the sharing of goals within the
conflict process. When goals are achieved, conflict can be described as functional. Functional conflict is, therefore, integrative—both conflicted parties are able to arrive at an arrangement that fully or largely achieves their goal in resolving conflict.

Second, conflict is not only constructive, functional, or integrative, but it can also be destructive, dysfunctional, or distributive in outcome. When conflict is destructive, conflicted parties experience frustration, anger, disappointment, and hopelessness (Chapman, 2006). Destructive conflict is unhealthy and unproductive, and is concerned with the distributive outcome – satisfaction of one party more than the other (Kilmann, 2011). Families must seek to be constructive, functional, and integrative.

**Conflict in Family Types and Developmental Stages**

So far, the literature reviewed has focused on the nature of conflict. This section will focus particularly on conflict in the various family types. Whether the family is defined as structural (according to the traditional nuclear view) or functional (the way people function in each other’s lives (Garland, 2012), conflict is visible in every family development stage. The family types affected by relational conflict include marital, parent-children, sibling, single-parent, and step or blended families.

**Marital Conflict**

Marital conflict is defined as a state of tension or stress between marital partners carrying out their roles. Marital conflict within or without the Christian community can be challenging and cause dissatisfaction. Dyadic conflict like any other conflict is inevitable and happens due to differences of opinions, values, needs, desires, intimacy, chores, and habits that are part of everyday living (Kelly, 2012; Tolorunleke, 2014).
Research conducted with over 4,200 church members and 1860 church leaders, including Seventh-day Adventists, reported several causes of conflict for marital couples and the family. For example, character differences, educational and intellectual differences, spiritual differences, roles, sexual challenges, and use of media are a few of the areas cited as being triggers for conflict (John, 2017).

Hoppe, Snell, and Cocroft (1996) describe three marital types where conflict functions: the traditional marriage which “endorses traditional values, have high interdependence, and engages in conflicts only to the extent they may be important” (p. 21), the independent (that is moderately interdependent but not in a traditional way, where partners confront each other routinely), and the separate partner (which is ambivalent about their family values, not very interdependent in their marriage, and tends to avoid marital conflict). Strong and Cohen (2014) name the marital types as conflict-habituated (where tension, arguing, and conflict characterize the relationship), passive-congenial (that starts without the romantic idealization), devitalized (which begins with high intensity that fades overtime), vitalized (which is characterized by romantic notions and continues with high intensity), and total (a more intense form of vitalized marriage).

Kelly (2012) comments this way concerning conflict in couple types:

Traditional partners engage in conflict over important issues, are conciliatory, and focus on the content of conflicts more so than the relational implications of conflicts. Independent partners readily engage in conflicts, are highly expressive (both delivering and seeking expression), and use negation to get their way. In an opposite manner, separate partners avoid conflict, have difficulty overcoming their emotional distance with each other, and suppress open discussion. (p. 27)

In addressing conflict in any of these marital types to ensure marital satisfaction, marital conflict specialist, Gottman and Silver (2015) unearth four lenses through which to view and protect marriage from the destructive effects of conflict. They presented an
imagery model called the “Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse”: criticism, contempt, defensiveness, and stonewalling (pp. 34-39). Criticism involves attacking our partners’ personality or character, rather than focusing on the specific behavior that bothers us. Contempt, which is one step up from criticism, involves tearing down or being insulting toward our partners and is sign of disrespect. Defensiveness is denying responsibility, making excuses, or meeting one complaint with another. This intensifies tension. Stonewalling is simply refusing to respond to one’s partner. When stonewalling becomes the typical way of interacting with one’s partner, then it can be destructive to the marriage (Gottman & Silver, 2015).

Consequently, whether the causative factors of marital conflict are static (things a partner cannot change about herself/himself) or dynamic (things a partner can change—the main reason for divorce), processing the “manure of marriage”—conflict—grows the relationship (Oliver & Oliver, 2012).

Parental–Child(ren) Conflict

Parent–child(ren) conflict has been studied by researchers who focus particularly on the various developmental stages that children go through (Canary & Canary, 2013). Conflict at the developmental stages—early childhood, parent-adolescent, and parent-adult—impacts family members conduct and relationship qualities, even at later stages of partner relationships in young adulthood (Burt, McGue, Krueger, & Jaconos, 2005; Overbeek, Stattin, Vermulst, Ha, & Engels, 2007). Conclusively, parent-child conflict impacts the family of origin, as well as the legal or marital family, or more accurately, the entire family system (Cupach, Canary & Spitzberg, 2010).
Conflict within the early childhood developmental stage focused on differences between parents and young children. Laible, Panfile, and Makariev (2008) shared that findings of conflict between early childhood and parent dyads have focused on toddlers to children two to four years of age. In addition, the peak age for conflict among children was between ages two and three years old (Caughy, Huang & Lima, 2009). The reasons for conflict at the early childhood level includes rules—socially or family based (Huang, Teti, Caughy, Feldstein & Genevro, 2007; Laible et. al., 2008), food consumption (Norgaard & Brunso, 2011; Paugh & Izquierdo, 2009), and destructive and/or aggressive behavior exhibited in physical action towards people and things, usually emerging in children of insecure attachment styles (Laible et al., 2008).

Regarding the parent–adolescent stage of conflict, Renke, Liljequist, Simpson, and Phares (2005) posit that the debate for many years has been over the storm and stress of adolescents. This period of life is a time of amplified struggle for youth, where parents and adolescents often disagree on issues based upon interpretations, morality, personal safety, conformity concerns; adolescents view these as matters of personal choice (Cupach, Canary, & Spitzberg, 2010). Similarly, adolescents are often characterized as impulsive risk-takers who operate by the mantra of experimentation and rebellious acts of defiance (Holmes, Bond, & Byrne, 2008). In the process of individuation, teens want to be more self-directed than parent-directed (Canary & Canary, 2013). Additional causes of parent-adolescent disagreement are household chores, homework, alcohol consumption, and personal appearance (Allison & Schultz, 2004; Chaplin et al., 2012; Solis, 2011).

According to Holmes et al. (2008), while adolescent years introduce a series of biological, social, cognitive, and contextual changes, manifesting themselves in the
likelihood of parent-adolescent disagreements, parents’ cognitive framework and belief systems guide how parents think about and respond to their children. In addition, Branje, van Doorn, van der Valk, and Meuss (2009) expand to say that adolescents reported more conflicts with fathers, while mothers reported lower self-esteem and riskier behavior with adolescents. Several factors such as parenting stress and environmental factors such as divorce impact the parent-adolescent relationship (Dugan, 2010).

While research in the parent-adult child(ren) is sparse, researchers have found that conflict between parents and adult children go beyond the adolescent years into adult life (Cupach et al., 2010; Canary & Canary, 2013). One significant finding in the parent-adult children study reveals that, as in early childhood and middle adulthood, individuation affects or is a predicator of relationship quality (Buhl, 2008). Individuation Buhl suggested, is conceptualized as emotional (feelings of affection and relationship stability), cognitive (mutuality and attachment) connectedness, and the structural individuality process (balance of power between children and parents) through which a child grows and which affects the parent–adult child relationship (p. 263).

Canary and Canary (2013) summarize parent-child conflict and outcomes by assessing an inter-generational relationship qualitative study conducted with parents having an average of 62 years and adult children having an average age of 39 years. The report revealed six common areas of conflict: (a) communication and interaction style; (b) habits and lifestyle choices; (c) child-rearing practices and values; (d) politics, religion, and ideology; (e) work habits and orientations; and (f) household standards or maintenance. Of the areas of conflict parents identified, conflicts over habits and lifestyles ranked number one. For the adult children, communication and interaction style
ranked the number one reason for conflict. The research appropriate to the conflict processes in parent–adult child relationships revealed that constructive approaches predicted greater relationship quality, whereas destructive and avoidant strategies predicted lower relationship quality (Birditt, Rott, & Fingerman, 2009).

Sibling Conflicts

The sibling relationship is unique in that it is characterized by both love and warmth, as well as by conflict and rivalry (Buist, Dekovic, & Prinzie, 2013). Garcia, Shaw, Winslow, and Yaggi (2000) indicate that the development of sibling relationships play an important role in children’s socialization and emotion regulation. Canary and Canary (2013) identify four types of sibling relationships where sibling conflict can be possible: (a) hostile and alienated relationships (which are low in warmth and communication and high in aggression and coercion), (b) companionate-caring relationships (which are high in warmth and communication and moderately low aggression and rivalry), (c) ambivalent relationships (where siblings are avoidant), and (d) enmeshed relationships (exhibited in an unhealthy and restrictive way).

Sibling conflict, which includes any incompatibility between siblings (Canary & Canary 2013), is one of the most important factors that determine children’s social and cognitive development (Alekseeva, Kozlova, Baskaeva, & Pyankova, 2014). For example, researchers believe that elder children impact younger children through asymmetric complementary roles when playing. The teacher-pupil conflict interactions engaged in by older and younger siblings facilitate children education. In addition, sibling conflicts at the childhood and adolescent stages include themes such as conflict-
management processes among young children, role of birth order, and parental involvement.

According to Canary and Canary (2013), within the developmental stage of adolescence (a period when hormones rage and children explore roles and identities beyond those ascribe by family), negative sibling conflict predicts activity in deviant behavior, family relationships, and age differentiation where the younger siblings try to model the older siblings. Researchers report that conflict issues among siblings span the personal domain (e.g. borrowing items without permission), equality (e.g. control over TV or computer), power (controlling the other person’s behavior), abuse (physical hitting or psychological teasing), and relational betrayal or acts of neglect (Canary & Canary, 2013; Campione-Barr & Smetana, 2010). It is important to note that adolescent sibling conflict represent a “symbol of the adolescent’s individuation and the right to their own possessions” (Canary & Canary, 2013, p. 133).

In conclusion, while any conflict can be destructive to the relationship process, sibling conflict can have a healthy outcome. It can be highly beneficial to children’s social and developmental growth and seen as “practice sessions” for honing negotiation skills, viewpoint taking, and information giving (Socha & Yingling, 2010). Furthermore, sibling conflict could be beneficial if constructive tactics (e.g. the integrative approach) instead of destructive tactics (e.g. distributive approach–intimidation and use of sarcasm) or even the avoidance approach (e.g. change or avoid topic) were used in the conflict-management processes. The integrative conflict approach was seen as being most productive in the conflict-management processes in sibling conflicts (Canary & Canary, 2013).
Single Parent Conflicts

Growing research shows that there is an increase in single-parent homes. In this family type, conflict is also a reality. Canary and Canary (2013) describe a single-parent family as a home in which only one adult raises the child(ren). They further state that a single parent could be a divorced but never remarried person, a widower or widow, or someone who has never been married, but is a parent.

Research in the social science arena reveals five observations about single-parents’ residence that has affinity to conflict (Dufur, Howell, Downey, Ainsworth, & Lapray, 2010; McLoyd, Toyokawa, & Kaplan, 2008). First, the majority of single parents are females, and approximately 40% of children born since 2006 were to single women (Socha & Yingling, 2010; Ventura, 2009). Socha and Yingling (2010) emphasize that this scenario might be so because never married and divorced fathers exited the scene. Consequently, less than half of the men remain in touch with their children after the exodus (Dufur et al., 2010).

Second, single-parents endure work-life conflicts resulting from the dual parent function of negotiating work and home issues which leave single parents stressed more than are married mothers. This, in turn, leads to disruptive behavior in children and family conflict.

Third, single parents are further stressed due to daily activities and awareness of the child’s whereabouts. The demands of work on single mothers decrease the experience of routines concerning their children adjustment (McLoyd et al., 2008).

Fourth, depression in single-parent mothers occurs more frequently. McLoyd et al. (2008) posit that work-family conflict leads to depression in single-parents (linked to}
lack of routines in the home and child adjustment problems). Depression was seen as an indicator of maternal stress, a stress associated with positive parenting or consistency in parenting (Dorsey, Forehand, & Brody, 2007).

Finally, children in single-parent homes tended to be less well-adjusted than children in two-parent homes. A report concerning mothers raising children without a father revealed more severe disputes, irritability, and loss of temper during disciplinary interaction with their child/ren than did mothers in father-present families (MacCallum & Golombok, 2004). Canary and Canary (2013) write that negative behaviors of children (an externalization adjustment factor) occurred more in divorced and single-parent homes than in two-parent homes.

A classification system used to describe the personality of children affected by divorce in single parent families can be summarized in three styles (Canary & Canary, 2013; Boyan & Termini, 2013. The first style is the aggressive-insecure style. Described as non-compliant, children in this household have fewer friends and suffer from adjustment problems. They suffer from low self-esteem and poor academic performance. Furthermore, high levels of conflict, negative emotional responses, and poor conflict-management skills typify these children. A three times greater number of boys than girls were likely to exhibit this style in step- and single-parent families.

The second personality style is the opportunistic-competent style. Children exhibiting this style have high self-worth, many friends, great ability to adjust, and ability to be calm even in highly conflicting situations. Although this child is sociable, she or he has difficulty maintaining any peer or adult relationship or attachment (Boyan & Termini, 2013). Finally, opportunistic-caring/competent children are well adjusted and live in
intact families experiencing limited familial conflict. Those manifesting this personality often become sibling caregivers and maintain healthy relationships characterized by affection and compassion. Girls are said to exhibit this style much more than boys and are raised by single-parent mothers.

Issues affecting single-parent families are similar to those mentioned earlier in parent-child conflict. However, with specific variations, Canary and Canary (2013), catalogued the top seven issues for early, mid-adolescents: (a) chores, (b) activities regulated by parents, (c) interpersonal relationships, (d) homework and achievement, (e) bedtime curfews, (f) appearance and dress, and (g) parental regulation of friendship. It is noted that single-parent conflict topics reflect the individuation process that adolescents must progress through whether they are from a one-parent or two-parent family.

Step or Blended Families Conflict

Step- or blended families no matter the type (Kelly, 2012; Canary & Canary, 2013), have their own share of unique conflicts that differentiate and define them. The stepfamily is described as one in which both adults provide continued care for a child/ren not the biological offspring of both parents (Canary & Canary, 2013; Socha & Yingling, 2010). Similarly, stepfamily refers to a family in which one of the parents has a child (or children) from a previous relationship. Of note is the fact that 50% of stepfamilies in the US are remarriages, and 25% of these bring children from a previous marriage (Ganong & Coleman, 2004 cited in Canary & Canary, 2013).

Canary and Canary (2013) note that most of the conflict issues affecting step- or blended families are focused on children. These issues can be classified as differing parental styles, with children viewing stepparents more as friends than parents. In
addition, stepfamilies tend to have more direct criticism and anger, leading to avoidance and withdrawal. Another conflict issue is the fact that the biological parent can feel divided loyalties between his/her children and that of his/her marital partner. Parents tend to feel an alliance to their own children and are torn concerning the extent of their involvement with their stepchildren. Role conflicts in stepfamilies often leave a biological parent siding with his/her own child/ren (Weaver & Coleman, 2010). Three other reasons for conflict in stepfamilies are (a) the differences that exist between marital partners regarding how money should be spent on children, with the stepparents being less willing to spend, (b) how involved a non-residential parent should be with the child/ren in a stepfamily, and (c) the fact that a child might play the parents and stepparents off each other so that he/she benefits. These stepfamily conflict issues do impact the social adaptation and instability of children (Feinberg, Kan, & Heatherington, 2007; Perry, 2013).

As part of the discussion of conflict in stepfamilies, the matter of negative interparental conflict (IPC) surfaces. Researchers have pointed out that IPC may adversely affect children more than divorce does (Afifi, Aldeis, & Joseph, 2010; Canary & Canary, 2013). Interparental conflict is a frequent disagreement or struggle between both adult parents who provide continued care for a child (Dincer, 2010), although these parents may have individual families of their own.

Lastly, the interparental conflict processes impacts children through marital spillover, triangulation, and emotional security. “Spillover refers to the transferring of moods, emotions, or behavior from one setting to another” (Canary & Canary, 2013, p. 55). Marital spillover occurs when moods and affects are transferred to the parent–child
relationship creating a negative impact. Triangulation describes the act of children’s becoming involved in parents’ conflict, feeling pressure to take sides with one parent against the other, while becoming affected in the process (Balswick & Balswick, 2007; Canary & Canary, 2013; Schrodt & Shimkowsk, 2013). For instance, children will blame themselves for the conflicts between parents, adolescent maladjustment, and triangulation that lead to internalization (withdrawal) and externalization (aggression).

**Conflict-Management Strategies**

Throughout this chapter, we have highlighted the complexity of conflict and the challenges that arise in addressing it. This section explores components of the conflict-management strategies that will form the intervention strategy in this present project. Such areas as the meaning of conflict-management styles (CMS), assessment strategies, and other conflict-management strategies such as communication, principled negotiation, and the Thomas and Kilmann Conflict Mode that were used as part of the educational training program of this project will be described.

**Conflict-Management Styles**

Conflict-management styles describe various methods (including negotiation, mediation, arbitration, and others in this section) used when confronting conflict in its different contexts and processes (Veshki, Jazayeri, Ahani, Aminjafari, & Hosnije, 2012). McCorkle and Reese (2010) posit that CMS refers to a person’s routine or desired response to conflict situations. Furthermore, conflict management describes approaches or activities intended to influence the course or outcome of conflict, making the conflict processes more productive and less costly (Bercovitch, 2008). It is to be noted, however,
that since some conflicts are not immediately resolvable due to perpetual issues in relationships, they need to be managed (Gottman & Silver, 2015; Balswick & Balswick, 2007). Managing conflict as opposed to resolving it is supported by Miller (2009), who argues for the complex nature of conflict. For example, he highlights the fact that intractable or long-standing and elusive conflict can take years in both large organizations and inter-personal relationships to be resolved. Consequently, conflict management is one of the most realistic approaches to addressing conflict (Oetzel & Ting-Toomey, 2006, p. xi). Managing conflict should begin with assessing the conflict situation.

Assessing the Conflict Process

A significant feature of managing conflict toward productivity and satisfaction involves assessing it in terms of its perspectives and processes. Research has shown that there are several approaches to assessing conflict for effective management (McCorkle & Reese, 2010, pp. 155-174). However, Sportsman (2007) offers a five-step framework (PEPRS) that aids in effective evaluation and informed decisions when handling conflict:

1. Parties involved: The first step in assessing a conflict situation would be to identify the persons involved. The participants may include principal, ancillary, or interested third parties, all of whom may have some level of concern about the conflict.

2. Event/issues: The elements necessary for determining the issues in the conflict are the triggering event, the background, the level of interconnectedness among the persons involved, named issues, available resources, and prior solutions contemplated. All these features speak to the value of relationship shared and how important it is to work towards particular goals (content, relational, identity, and process).
3. Power: A significant element in persons experiencing conflict is power. Power, whether societal or organizational, is active in personal or work conflict. It should be noted that the powerful are those who “have the advantage of physical and psychological strength by virtue of gender, education, health, or resources” (Sportsman, 2007, p. 335). Importantly, the assessment of power needs to be more about how it is used more than on the power itself.

4. Regulating conflict: The resources for dealing with conflict such as the internal factor (the value each participant places on each other and the relationship shared), external factor (an authority intervenes to settle the conflict), third party interests (facilitators who are trusted), and styles are available in the conflict situation.

5. Styles of Conflict: How the participants engage in conflict and manage it is often influenced by genetics, life experiences, personal philosophies, and development of habits formed over time (Sportsman, 2007, pp. 333-337). The next three sections provide insights into some significant approaches for dealing with conflict.

In addition to the foregoing assessment framework, Christensen, Doss, and Jacobson (2014, pp. 17-20) highlighted four triggers of conflict patterns. These triggers are applicable to the assessment process, not only in couple relationships, but also in other family settings as well. These triggers are criticism, demand, cumulative annoyance, and rejection. Criticism that leads to conflict is often perceived as comments that evaluate another person’s personality, behavior, appearance, or life’s choices. Ceasing from speaking irritatingly or phrasing one’s legitimate concerns in a more positive manner is likely to diffuse criticism. Demand can also trigger conflict. Demand centers around how one makes a request or expresses a desire of the other person. The
one making the request has to be careful that whatever he/she is asking for is framed in such a way that it does not create tension from the one being asked. Conversely, the one responding to the request also needs to be conscious of how he/she responds to a perceived demand.

Cumulative annoyance “is a building up of frustration or anger that occurs over time, eventually resulting in a conflict interaction” (Christensen et al., 2014, p. 20). This trigger builds up pressure from sensitive unaddressed issues that, over time, explode into serious conflict. The last trigger is rejection. This trigger can lead to conflict when invalidation or ignoring is perceived from comments of behavior made about someone. Anger or resentment is often the response to the feeling of rejection. Communication and not a reaction to rejection is often the best way to handle rejection.

A Communication Strategy

The beginning point for implementing any conflict intervention strategy is communication. Communication performs particular conflict-management functions (Oetzel & Ting-Toomey, 2006). Ries (2005) adds, “communication is essential to human development, health, and even survival” (p. 12) as it is the means by which individuals establish and maintain relationships. She further acknowledges that human beings are influenced by communication rules experienced and modeled in the family. In establishing the indispensable nature of communication in the conflict-management process, Northouse (2011, pp. 189-193) advances a three-tier approach: differentiation, fraction, and face saving. This strategy can lessen the angst of conflict, providing conflicted individuals are engaged in conflict situations.
Differentiation describes the early phase of the conflict process that defines the nature of conflict and helps participants to clarify their positions with regard to each other. Here the nature and the parameters of conflict resolution are established. Differentiation is beneficial to the conflict process as it requires individuals to explain and elaborate their unique positions, not their similarities. In this difficult process, escalation is possible as opposing parties attempt to distinguish their viewpoints. The value of the differentiation process is observed when the problem is distilled and defined. In this process the issue, not the personality, becomes the focus and the problem. Only then can the resolution approach be applied.

Fractionation in the subject of communication “refers to the technique of breaking down large conflicts into smaller and more manageable pieces” (Northouse, 2011, p. 190). In this intentional process, which is done during the early stages of the conflict, the participants agree to confront the conflict in manageable sizes. This approach yields several benefits. First, it reduces the problem into less complex parts, helping the participants to know that the issue is more specific and defined. Second, focus is given to the conflict, and individuals are able to clarify and define their problem instead of trying to solve the huge issue all at one time. Third, reducing a conflict into smaller parts decreases the emotional intensity and carries less emotional weight (Wilmot & Hocker, 2011). Finally, applying the principle of fractionation facilitates a better working relationship between those in conflict while confirming their willingness to solve the problem together.

Face-saving is the third skill in the communication strategy that assists in conflict management. Face-saving is a communicative attempt to establish one’s self-image in
response to threat. The face-saving skill helps conflicted parties to establish how they want to be seen by others. It has the goal of protecting one’s self-image. Initially, this approach may appear to be problematic as it focuses on the person and not the problem. However, using the face-saving approach establishes the need for conflicted individuals to be respectful of the other person’s image. Affirming the other’s point of view when addressing conflicts can communicate how much the other is validated. In so doing, interpersonal conflicts can be less threatening an individual’s self-image is preserved.

As we can see, a communication model that is built on these skills can be beneficial. This model serves to induce the productive elements that can be possible when conflict is handle constructively. Unhealthy communication styles (criticism, rationalization, pacification, and withdrawal) which can negatively impact the conflict process should be understood (Ursiny, 2003).

Principled Negotiation Strategy

Another CMS model that is commonly employed in the conflict-management arena is the Fisher, Ury, and Patton Model. The Fisher, Ury and Patton model was developed from studies piloted by a Harvard Negotiation Project. This four-step approach for managing conflict, also called Principled Negotiation, emphasizes determining disputes without engaging into competitive or excessive accommodation (Fisher, Ury, & Patton, 2011). In other words, this kind of negotiation model shows how contenders in a conflict situation obtain fairness without taking advantage of each other. These four principles are integral elements in the negotiation process and can be summarized thus:

1. Separating the people from the problem. This principle highlights the fact that conflict has people and problem factors. When dealing with conflict, there needs to be a
separation of the people factor from the problem factor. Since people’s “personalities, beliefs, and values are intricately interwoven with conflict” (Northouse, 2011, p. 185), there needs to be a disentangling. When the separation is made, two things happen: (a) the uniqueness of others is recognised and (b) focus is given to the relationships in the conflict. Solving conflict becomes more solution-oriented.

2. Focus on interest, not positions. In negotiating a conflict, the most important thing is the interest, not the position. Position is one’s stance or viewpoint of the opposing perspectives in a specific conflict. Interest, on the other hand, characterizes what is behind the positions, the real problems why the conflict is happening. Fisher et al. (2011) suggest, “your position is something you have decided upon. Your interests are what caused you to so decide” (p. 43).

3. Invent options for mutual gains. This negotiation technique mitigates conflict by focusing on more than one option for solving it. Inventing options involves a process that includes a proper diagnosis, as well as an appropriate prescription. This diagnosis avoids premature judgment by searching for the single answer, assuming a fixed approach, and being concerned only with one’s interests. The prescription process advocates separating solutions from deciding on them. In prescribing for problem-solving, following certain guidelines of brainstorming requires broadening, not narrowing options; identifying shared interests; and merging differing interests without making decisions for both parties difficult (Fisher et al., 2011, pp. 58-81).

4. Insist on using objective criteria. A challenging aspect of problem-solving through negotiation is dependence on the will. Opponents are usually consumed with what they are willing or unwilling to give, thus the need for deliberate collaboration on
the principle of using some objective criteria. Objective criteria involve negotiating around fair standards and fair procedures that are removed from emotions and subjectivity. Furthermore, when crafting objective criteria, issues should be framed as a joint effort; openness to reason and standards are paramount; and principle; not pressure, should be the basis for decision making (Fisher et al., 2011, pp. 82-93).

In summary, the Fisher, Ury, and Patton principled negotiation model focuses on needs. It seeks to consider the needs of opposing parties in conflict intentionally. This model concentrates on how people address the conflict situation along the line of self or other. The Fisher, Ury, and Patton negotiation strategy emphasizes principles of how to engage one’s style of managing a dispute.

Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode
Instrument Strategy

Most popular of the conflict-management strategies is the five-style and two-dimensional mode instrument adapted from Blake and Mouton (1964) by Thomas and Kilmann in 1976 (Hammer, 2005; Holt & DeVore, 2005; McCorkle & Reese, 2010). This five step TKI model (used in this project) assesses an individual’s behavior in conflict situations along two dimensions: (a) assertiveness—the extent to which the individual endeavors to mollify his or her own goals and (b) cooperativeness—the extent to which the individual endeavors to mollify the other person’s goals (Thomas & Kilmann, 2007, 2009). The modes have advantages and disadvantages.

1. Competing, otherwise called dominating or forcing by some conflict-management specialists (Al-Hamdan, Shukri, & Anthony, 2011; Rahim, 2011), is an assertive and uncooperative style in which the individual pursues personal concerns at the expense of others. Using power to win position, this style is a win-lose orientation. A
disadvantage of competing is that it is driven by power and aggression, persuasive arguments, and involves threats. An advantage of competing, on the other hand, is that it can be useful when protecting oneself from an aggressor or when an unpopular decision must be made in an emergency situation.

2. Collaborating, the opposite of avoiding, is an assertive and cooperative style. Individuals attempting to use this style move towards a solution that is amenable for all involved in conflict. This style means exploring each other’s insight to find a solution. This style is seen as most desirable since it recognizes the inevitability of conflict, and at the same time, confronts it, then uses conflict to produce constructive outcomes. A drawback of collaboration is that it is time consuming, demands a lot of energy, and is often the most difficult style to achieve. An advantage of this style is that it is a win-win for both sides, relationships are strengthened, and costs are minimized in the long-term.

3. Compromising is an intermediate assertive cooperative style in which the issue becomes the focus. This approach occurs halfway between competing and accommodating. This style is often chosen because of its middle ground outcome, where both parties in conflict receive partial benefit. The challenge with this style is that it may not explore the conflicting issue fully and can become an easy way out where innovative solutions are sacrificed. On the other hand, compromise can force an equal balance of power between conflicted parties.

4. Avoiding is an unassertive and uncooperative way in which the individual does not immediately pursue personal or the other’s concerns. This approach is a form of postponing or withdrawing from addressing the conflict. One disadvantage of avoiding is that it is a static approach to conflict; it is a passive approach that does nothing to solve
the conflict. On the other hand, applying the avoiding technique gives time for reflection while a more workable solution for a problem is contemplated.

5. Accommodating (obliging) is a form of self-sacrificing approach to resolving conflicts. It puts the personal in the background while it places the other’s viewpoint in the foreground. This style is characterized by an attitude of cooperation. It is unassertive in behavior (Al-Hamdan et al., 2011). To accommodate is other-directed. One benefit of this style is that it lessens frustration and produces harmony. However, it is, in effect, a lose-win approach to managing conflict. In other words, although it may resolve conflict faster than some of the other approaches, it sacrifices one’s own needs and possibly a higher quality of relationship in order to maintain a smooth relationship.

These five conflict-management styles—competing, collaborating, compromising, avoiding, and accommodating—can be observed in several conflict situations. They are useful approaches to conflict management. These five modes are further explained in chapters four and five as they will be used in this project as the conflict handling method to evaluate the participants’ conflict-management skills.

**Conclusion**

In this literature research, some distinct principles of conflict and how to manage it were discovered. The research was applicable to the purpose of developing, implementing, training, and evaluating a conflict-management training program for families of the ISDAC. It was shown that conflict is common in the human experience and takes different paths and processes based on various values governing the parties in the conflict context. Conflict is essentially neutral and becomes destructive or
pathological, constructive or productive, depending on the response to it. In other words, conflict can be a seed for growth and development when managed positively.

The research revealed that since conflict is pervasive, it is potentially active in every sphere, including the family. It exists in the family contexts of marital unions, parent-children relationships, sibling, single-parents, and step- or blended families. Since conflict is present in all the various family development stages and types, managing it is a significant step towards family health, resolution, and reconciliation.

Therefore, this chapter concludes that there is a need to understand conflict-management styles or ways used to manage conflict. Constructive strategies and methodologies necessary for a positive conflict outcome need to be balanced and comprehensive. When methodologies and skills of conflict management are comprehensive, reconciliation and family satisfaction are more likely to occur.
CHAPTER 4

DESIGN OF THE CONFLICT-MANAGEMENT INTERVENTION

Family Satisfaction has been shown to be negatively impacted by several factors, such as workplace stress, sibling rivalry, parent-child issues, and marital tension (Barraca, Yarto, & Olea, 2000; Bellivia & Frone, 2005; Sharaievsha, 2012). Seventh-day Adventist families, in general, and families of the ISDAC, in particular, are impacted by these stressors and give evidence of conflict and distress in their family relationships.

The intervention described in this chapter will be an attempt to address the needs of the Immanuel Seventh-day Adventist Church for improved family satisfaction. The intervention will explore some conflict-management strategies with selected families of the ISDAC. Research by Thomas and Kilmann (2009) supports the fact that since conflict is a fact of life—in the workplace, within organizations, among associates, and even family—having a conflict-management strategy can positively affect the outcomes of how conflict functions for growth, change, and satisfaction.

Thus, this chapter is divided into three sections. The first section provides a profile of the ministry context in which the intervention will be undertaken. The second section reports the development of the intervention strategy—an adult educational seminar with the primary focus on conflict management and resolution. The third section will provide a description of the intervention initiative—conflict-management
methodology, protocol, and organization of content themes to be used in this intervention.

**Profile of the Ministry Context**

When I entered my pastoral assignment at the Immanuel Seventh-day Adventist Church in 2013, I immediately engaged in relationship building with my parishioners. Through this approach, their needs would be assessed and pastoral care adapted. Consequently, it was while carrying out this function that I discovered that managing family differences was a challenge for many. The ministry context of the community and the church, in particular, further shows the need for an intervention.

**The Community Context**

The ISDAC was established in an ethnically diverse, multiracial and multicultural community. The 2016 census of the entire city of Toronto showed a population inclusive of Whites (47.7%), Visible Minorities (52.5%), and Aboriginals (0.9%). The North York Community Council Profile (2016) has a population of 691,595, broken down into Whites (44.6%), Chinese (13.3%), South Asians (8.9%), Filipinos (8.0%) Blacks (7.1%) and West Asians (5.1%; North York, 2018, pp. 1, 19-22). The Ward 29 Profiles census also outlined various family types. They were described as families of couples with children (46.2 %), families that are couples without children (36.7%), and families consisting of single parents with children (17.1%) (North York, 2018, p. 16).

A further classification of families in the 2016 census described couples with one child (49.3%), couples with two children (40.3%), and couples with three or more children (10.3%). In addition, there were lone or single parents with one child (64.6%),
single parents with two children (28.9%), and single parents with three or more children (6.5%) (North York, 2018, p. 16).

While it was unknown what the level of conflict was or how it affected the people groups in the community, the diversity, cultural amalgam, and various family configurations made conflict probable. Research on culture and conflict indicates that culturally diverse groups “breed conflict,” as well as complicate communication despite the ability to solve it at the same time (Mayer, 2012, p. 110).

The Church Context

The members who constitute the ISDAC reflect the diversity of the North York community. The families of the church also reflect a similar profile as the community. As highlighted in the introduction of chapter 1, there are several nationalities (over 35) and family types within the congregation. Approximately 10% of these families are of a multiracial mix.

Specific conflict patterns were observed at the ISDAC and this observation pointed to a need for a practical and useful intervention. My first observation was that some members of the congregation appeared generally sensitive and easily agitated. This intuition was confirmed through an interview I conducted with some charter members in 2014. This interview was to fulfill part of a Doctor of Ministry assignment for a Ministry Context paper during the first year of my enrolment. The dialogue revealed that it was out of a conflict situation between ethnic groups from previous churches that the ISDAC was established. This confirmed that conflict was a natural part of the church’s function.

Second, it was observed that some families in the congregation were not equipped to manage conflict within and among them. This was observed in such behavior patterns
as being unable to handle challenges in their marriages and families. An example of the challenges families faced was evident in how they interacted with each other in the public domain. Expressing frustration was for some their means of addressing the differences present in their family context. Like most stressful situations, the inability to manage conflict positively was clearly having adverse effects on many families. Consequently, some declined ministry and mission opportunities.

**Development of the Intervention Strategy**

The conflict-management intervention at the center of this study appropriated the ministry-context needs advanced earlier. Consequently, a well-adjusted initiative that assessed the immediate concerns of the participants while combining lessons from the theological and theoretical components would be included.

**A Need for a Balanced Approach**

Research by Mayer (2012) shows that a well-adjusted intervention for conflict management or resolution is needed in order for it to be effective, meaningful, and transforming. Considering this observation, an intervention strategy with multiple and balanced components was developed. This intervention, then, considered the context delineated in the ministry profile above and sought to share empowerment strategies for the participants to handle their issues of hurt and separation in a manner that would yield satisfaction and fulfillment. This need of families to manage their differences led to a brainstorming process that yielded a holistic approach for addressing this arduous challenge of conflict in the family. Subsequent to a period of reflection and evaluation of family needs, counseling interviews, and visitations, I concluded that an educational or
training methodology would be paramount. The goal of this intervention was to expose and equip families with some skills that would enable them to handle their conflicts in a more constructive and productive manner.

The Basis of the Intervention

The development of the intervention strategy at the center of this present study sought to incorporate the essentials of the literature surveyed and themes of the theological foundation. These components were essential to an effective intervention initiative.

After surveying literature on the subject of conflict and analyzing the families that participated in this study, several similar conflict patterns emerged that influenced the use of conflict-management training in this project. In all the family developmental stages, conflict causes were similar and responses were often behavioral in nature. This is, the way family members conducted themselves when in conflict were defensive and protective of self. The literature describes this dimension of the conflict response as assertive. The assertive response is concerned with satisfying one’s self as opposed to the cooperative response, which satisfies the concerns of others involved in the conflict. This was one of the reasons I selected the conflict mode as the main teaching instrument for training the families of this study. This model was developed to measure behaviors in conflict, while other conflict instruments focused on beliefs, attitudes, personality types, traits, and styles (Thomas & Kilmann, 2009).

It is important to note that the conflict model recognizes behaviors as situational and subject to change. Thus, it proposes matching the modes to behaviors as the best way to handle conflict. This teaching tool will ensure that the actions and not the personalities
of those involved in the conflict are the focus. In addition, the choice of this conflict-management instrument was based on its broad applicability to any conflict context—family, work place or otherwise (Kilmann, 2011). Moreover, the decision to integrate this method centers in the fact that it was a proven approach in the conflict-management field—one participants could depend on to make handling conflict a matter of fulfillment.

Concepts of the theological reflection informed the development of the intervention strategy in the same way the theoretical aspect did. An analysis of the theological reflection as shown in chapter 2 reveals that although conflict is universal and has a negative impact on various family structures both vertically and horizontally, it can be managed. The objective of developing the intervention for this study was to equip participants with the skills needed to manage conflict to improve satisfaction. Resolution is not merely an elimination of the problem, but rather, manages the problem in such a way that the conflicted parties come away experiencing some level of satisfaction, achievement, and/or agreement.

To assist in the achievement of reaching a place of mutual benefits, the conflicted parties needed to understand and embrace the five components of the peaceful reconciliation strategy as described in chapter 2. The participants needed to embrace relational presence (Gen 3:15), confront the issue(s) creating the conflict (Gen 3:6, 7), acknowledge there was a problem (Gen 3:2-6), and engage in a brainstorming process to find answers (Gen 3:9-11), while seeking to eradicate the problem (Gen 3:8).

**Description of the Intervention Initiative**

This section will include several components of the study protocol and research design that accomplished the task of the study. The research design followed the order
and themes outlined below. The sub-headings were the following: the purpose of the study; research study questions; recruitment procedure; selection of sample; learning objectives; instrumentation measures; validity and reliability; seminar format; content of the seminars; an overall analysis of the data; my awareness, security, and confidentiality; and a conclusion.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the participants’ perspectives on the spiritual and relational value of developing conflict-management skills to improve family satisfaction. The intervention involved training the participants in the awareness of the different conflict modes and skills available for appropriate use in conflict situations, family types, and development stages. Having these skills would result in greater improvement in conflict management and family satisfaction.

Research Study Questions

To focus and guide the study and to obtain useful results, the following questions guided the intervention initiative.

1. Were the conflict-management TKI seminars educational and informative and did they enhance the participants’ understanding of the conflict-management styles and assessment of conflict in the various family types when handling conflict?

2. Is the practice of healthy communication and negotiation strategies important to family satisfaction when handling conflict using the TKI Conflict Modes?

3. What role could the TKI Conflict Modes of the participants play in motivating them for increased involvement in conflict management?
Recruitment Procedure

In order to accomplish the purpose of this project, I collaborated with the Family Ministries Department of the ISDAC to recruit participants. The recruitment process included the use of flyers (Appendix C) that were placed on the church’s notice boards, a PowerPoint presentation (Appendix C) used during the announcement period, and personal contact of participants in an attempt to increase attendance. This was done in an effort to include a wider cross-section of the membership of the congregation.

I shared the details of the project—the title, seminar topics, venue, time, and commencement date of the project—with the congregation during regular convocation periods. The PowerPoint presentation mentioned above accompanied the verbal promotion and recruitment for the project.

Selection of Sample

This research used a convenience sample. A convenience sampling approach speaks to participants’ availability and willingness to participate (Johnson and Christensen, 2012), hence the results cannot be generalized without caution. Thirty individual participants or 15 families were the target number for the intervention initiative. All 30 participants were expected to complete a pre- and post-Family Satisfaction Scale survey (Appendix B). The participants also completed the TKI survey online once (Appendix B). The results of the TKI formed the main teaching material for the seminar. All the participants had to satisfy the age of consent requirement of 18 years. They completed the participant consent form (Appendix A).
The Learning Outcomes

There are two learning outcomes, theoretical and practical for the participants in this intervention. Theoretically, the participants (a) became more aware of their own conflict-management modes and how to analyze different conflict situations; (b) were able to recognize and understanding the conflict-management modes of others, thus, creating a response that is more productive; and (c) assessed conflict situations with a view to applying a more appropriate conflict-management mode. Practically, the participants were able to (a) exercise different conflict-management modes in dealing with conflict to improve their conflict skills, (b) identify what mode was functional in a given conflict situation, and (c) know what action to take in order to avoid under-use or over-use of a particular conflict-management mode and appropriately apply a mode suitable for the problematic situation.

Instrumentation Measures

The measures at the center of this project intervention were the Thomas and Kilmann Conflict Mode (TKI) survey (to be completed online), the Conflict Workshop Facilitators Guide (CWFG) for the TKI, and the Family Satisfaction Scale (FSS) survey.

The TKI is a self-reporting questionnaire designed to measure tendencies in dealing with conflict (Thomas & Kilmann, 2009). The TKI is a paired 30-item forced choice statement survey that was used to identify which mode was used most often by the participants when handling conflict. It is described as “forced” because the participants were expected to choose one of two statements per item posed. Because of the choice between the two questions, the participants’ bias was minimized and the response was likely to be more realistic. The TKI feedback report that the participants received
subsequent to completing it online provided a way for them to consciously steer conflict situations in a constructive direction. Consequently, the participants knew whether they needed to adjust their approach when the situation required it. They learned the skills necessary for adjustment from the training seminar that was conducted in this study using the CWFG below.

The CWFG for the TKI was the core material used while presenting the seminars. The CWFG focused primarily on the appropriate use of the conflict modes (competing, collaborating, compromising, avoiding and accommodating). The CWFG was used to explain to the participants how to understand the modes, utilize them, and develop the skills needed for more effective use of managing conflict situations.

The FSS survey, on the other hand, is also a self-reported, 10-item assessment questionnaire that is designed to assess the satisfaction levels of family functioning. These satisfaction levels are measured along the dimensions of cohesion, flexibility, and communication. However, the report from this survey focused only on whether a participant in the family was satisfied or dissatisfied. The survey solicited information such as age, gender, marital status, ethnicity, family type, and job status for the purpose of knowing the demographic participation. The participants’ responses to the survey were rated on a five-point scale. Scale 1 represented “extremely dissatisfied” or low and concerned about family happiness, and scale 5 represented “extremely satisfied” or high and very satisfied about most aspects of the family.

This study primarily used a qualitative case study design. Merriam (2002) indicated that a qualitative case study is best suited for a bounded system research. A bounded system is a description and analysis of a phenomenon or social situation such as
an individual, group, or institution. The focus of this method of study was to gain insight and discovery into the participants’ experience, rather than testing a hypothesis. The quantitative data that both the FSS survey and the TKI collected were descriptive and were primarily used to understand the research context.

Seminar Format

This section outlines the teaching aspect of the intervention initiative. The delivery approach of the intervention took the form of a 10-hour workshop that was conducted over a four-month period (November 2016 to February 2017). Each seminar period lasted for approximately two hours each. The goal was to enhance self-awareness, refine existing skills, and develop new skills in how the participants managed conflict. Table 1 below outlines the seminar format for each session.

Table 1

Seminar Format

| **Ice Breakers and Review and Preview:** 20 min. | Icebreakers were used to engage the participants in a period of introduction and warm-up activity. In addition, each training session facilitated a review of the session preceding with a view to reinforcing concepts learned. |
| **Presentation:** 70 Min. | The TKI Workshop Guide material was used to provide training for the conflict modes, skills development, and theological and theoretical framework of the project. |
| **Discussion:** 20 Min. | Planned discussion periods facilitated allowing for the participants’ interaction and reaction to the material presented. |
| **Breaks:** 10 Min. | Break periods were scheduled during sessions. |
Content of Seminars

The seminar sessions focused on introducing theoretical and theological insights of conflict, dimensions and skills of conflict styles, and conflict modes parts one and two. I utilized presentation aids such as PowerPoint application and group activities to teach the seminar.

Session One

For the first session, I introduced the foundational concepts of the conflict-management training to the participants. Here the theoretical concepts of conflict were presented. Themes such as the benefits of conflict, levels or anatomy of conflict, the nature of conflict, and conflict-management definitions emerging from the literature review (chapter 3) were shared. In addition, a biblical overview that reviewed aspects of the theological reflection (chapter 2) were presented. The intent was to offer an awareness of the biblical reality of conflict, its impact on biblical families, and insights into a conciliatory approach to handling conflict.

A period of reflection followed the presentation of the seminar. The participants were invited to reflect on past conflict scenarios and record them. This took place for two reasons: (a) to enable the participants to apply the principles learned to personal and real conflict situation and (b) to provide material for a sharing exercise among the participants during the group activity sessions—rapid fire, flash cards, and sharing exercises.

Session Two

The second session of the intervention focused on understanding the conflict modes dimensions and skills. The connection between the assertive and cooperative
dimensions, as well as the conflict modes were explained (Thomas & Kilmann, 2009). On the one hand, the assertive dimension highlighted the extent to which an individual attempts to satisfy his or her concerns in a conflict situation. On the other hand, the cooperative dimension described as the extent to which an individual attempts to satisfy the concerns of the other in the conflict process (Thomas & Kilmann, 2007). Conflict modes describe behavior patterns: ways persons handle conflict.

In addition, the need to acquire or improve skills for managing conflict were part of this session. The participants learned that an individual’s conflict mode is equal to his or her skill plus a conflict. In other words, the effective use of the conflict mode in any given conflict is based on an individual’s skill level. The implication is that all modes are useful and can be effective if used in a skillful and appropriate manner.

Session Three

Session three consisted of teaching the first two conflict-handling modes of the TKI—competing and collaborating. I first shared with the participants the definitions of these conflict modes or styles. I then provided them with some appropriate uses of these modes. Similarly, the skills required to maximize the effective use of these conflict modes were shared in order not to overuse (high competing) or underuse (low competing) them. Consequently, the participants understood that competing is high in assertiveness and low in cooperativeness. The participants also learned that the goal of competing is “I win, you lose.” In addition, the participants were taught the meaning of the collaborating mode—it focuses on satisfying both sides of an issue by finding an optimal solution. This style is characterized by high assertiveness and high cooperativeness with the goal of a win-win solution (Thomas & Kilmann, 2009; Fisher et al., 2011).
**Session Four**

The fourth seminar addressed the conflict modes of *compromising, avoiding,* and *accommodating.* The participants learned how to define the modes differently, as in the previous seminars. I explored how to develop skills in the use of these modes with the participants. Techniques to avoid overuse or underuse were also explored. Understanding compromise (finding a middle ground or disregarding particular personal concerns in order to have the other’s met), avoidance (not satisfying one’s concerns or the concerns of another in a conflict situation), and accommodation (disregarding one’s own concerns in order to satisfy the concerns of another person) were shared with the participants as effective ways to handle conflict in the conflict-management process within their families.

**Overall Data Analysis Construct**

The research was exploratory and the method of evaluating data was primarily a qualitative analysis. Qualitative information was for the purpose of gaining insights into the participants’ conflict context and conflict-management understanding. The overall process of data analysis included (a) the self-report FSS surveys—used to assess the participants’ general familial happiness pre and post seminar, (b) the online forced-question TKI conflict mode survey that evaluated the participants’ conflict mode in a given conflict situation, (c) a post-seminar group reflection session, and (d) my personal observations. These measures were conducted throughout the project.

**Validity and Reliability**

Factors of validity and reliability emerged from the instruments used in this
project. First, the FSS showed that there is a large inter-correlation between the marital satisfaction scale results and the family satisfaction scale results. Second, the FSS sample was based on 2,465 family members, giving it an alpha reliability that measured a high of .92 test and re-test of .85 (Olson, 2010). Third, the TKI reported a norm sample of 8,000 people, with a 50% split between males and females. Fourth, the social desirability bias (how subjects want to be seen when answering the survey, rather than who they truly are) was minimized in the pair question style survey (Schaubhut, 2007).

The internal validity of this project included several methods of data collection, my declared awareness of biases, and the conducting of a 10-hour seminar over a three-month period in which the principles could be applied. The external validity factors emerged from disclosing to the participants the various ways the data were collected, classified, and analyzed.

The Researcher’s Awareness

As the researcher, I entered this study aware of my dual functioning roles—researcher and pastor of the group. This awareness enabled me to keep both roles distinctly separate and I endeavored not to make the primary role (that of researcher) become overshadowed by the secondary one (that of pastor). In addition, due to the nature of the subject of this study, ensuring that the sessions did not change into therapy sessions was a constant priority, although this could have happened inadvertently. In addition, being aware of possible tensions present in the subject of study and how this could impact the participants, a professional family–helpers list was provided for the participants to use when needed.
Security and Confidentiality

Survey results, consent forms, evaluation forms, and all data information were stored in a private storage area that only I had access to. The surveys completed online were password protected and were only available to me and the participant to whom each individual result was sent. The participants were assigned an alphanumeric code for each survey and document they completed. This was to keep the subject participants anonymous during the process of assessment and analysis of the data. When the data analysis was complete, all digital data was deleted and paper materials were shredded.

Conclusion

This chapter has outlined the measures of the research design that were undertaken in the delivery of the intervention for families of this study. The chapter highlights the environment that warranted the implementation of this intervention. This chapter also outlined how the intervention was developed, as well as the various intervention measures. All these actions were followed in establishing and executing the intervention of this present project unless unfavourable circumstances dictated otherwise.

I concluded that the intervention strategy that was employed in this project could be useful to families that seek to improve how they manage conflict. Seeking a deeper understanding and developing the skills that were taught in this conflict-management workshop equipped and empowered the participants in the appropriate use of the conflict modes outlined. It should be said that while there are no guarantees for anything in life, the participants did indeed gain much insight and practical, useful knowledge that was designed to provide the various goals and objectives of this educational training program.
CHAPTER 5

NARRATIVE OF THE INTERVENTION IMPLEMENTATION

Chapter 5 narrates the implementation of the intervention initiative of the project that was outlined in chapter 4. This project is constructed on the building blocks of theory, theology, and praxis. These three essentials are foundational to an effective response to the problem of family conflict and achieving satisfaction. Consequently, over the period of this study (November 12, 2016 to February 19, 2017), I engaged in seminar presentations, facilitated participant discussions, used group learning activities, and conducted surveys and post-seminar evaluations.

This chapter is organized into three main sections. The first section focuses on the pre-seminar preliminary initiatives. It includes securing authorization, promoting and advertising, registration and orientation, distribution of program documents, and data collection. The second section narrates a detailed annotation of the training initiative where emphasis was placed on engaging and explaining to the participants how to use the five conflict modes as explained in the Thomas-Kilmann CWFG.

The third aspect of the initiative highlights how the seminars impacted the participants. An evaluation process that included participant response was implemented. Here, participant responses were assessed, evaluated, and reported according to the evaluation method chosen. The chapter closes with a conclusion.
**Preliminary Initiatives**

**Authorization**

Before any aspect of the project was developed or implemented, authorization and support from the ISDAC Board was secured. I submitted a request letter (Appendix A) to the Church Board. In this letter, I outlined the details of the project: the need for the project (to equip and test the effectiveness of a conflict-management program and its impact on family satisfaction), the methodology to be utilized, the conditions for participating in the project, the project purpose, the process of implementation, and the outcomes expected. The request for conducting this project study at the church was granted on June 4, 2016 (Appendix A). Subsequently, the Institutional Review Board (IRB), the organization that grants permission for research to be done with human subjects, approved the request to do the study (Appendix A).

**Promotion**

Subsequent to securing ISDAC Board and IRB approval to do the project, the first step of the implementation initiative was set in motion. A plan of how to interest the participants were conceived, developed, and activated to advertise the project. The advertisement of the initiative included a verbal component, accompanied by the use of a power-point presentation, posting posters on the ISDAC notice boards, and personally contacting the participants. This promotional appeal was conducted over several weeks.

Subsequent to the development of the advertisement strategy, the promotion of the project was launched by presenting the activities of the project during the main church services. In addition to the congregational promotions, I contacted some participants personally. This was in an attempt to obtain an ethnically diverse
representation of participants which would fit into the general configuration of the congregation. All promotional measures highlighted the reality of family conflict and provided information on the study topic, its purpose, venue, seminar schedule, sample topics, and sign-up deadline for the initiative. The promotional elements established the foundation for a session of orientation for the participants who enlisted in the study.

Orientation and Registration

In order to formalize the group of participants for the study, I convened a one-hour registration and orientation session on November 12, 2016. The purpose of the orientation forum was to facilitate a period where the participants were able to seek clarification concerning the study initiative. Information concerning the overarching objectives and details of the project process was disclosed to the participants. An overview of the seminar module for the conflict-management training geared towards equipping the participants in developing their skills and managing conflict for improved family satisfaction was conducted. The subject of confidentiality was explained and discussed. This ensured that the participants understood and agreed to the ethical terms of participation. The dates, permanent meeting place, duration of the seminars, and other elements pertaining to the project were arranged and agreed upon.

The registration process was done during the orientation session. Of the interests generated, 26 participants completed a brief registration form. This form ascertained contact information for the participants and secured their commitment for the duration of the project process. At this juncture, the participants were informed of their right to exit the project at their discretion if they were unable to continue at any time and for any
reason they were unable to continue. The orientation session concluded and the documents that were used in the project were distributed.

Distribution of Program Documents

To initiate the data collection process, several documents were distributed to the participants who volunteered, through the recruitment procedure, to be part of the study. Each registrant received a manila folder containing the following documents: (a) two Family Satisfaction Scale surveys (Appendix B), (b) a TKI survey online link (Appendix B), (c) an alphanumeric code which served as an identification for all documents the participants would complete for this project, (d) a participant informed consent form (Appendix A), and (e) a list of professionals from the counselling and legal fields that was provided to the participants in case they had any specialized need for the information.

Instrumentation and Data Collection

Subsequent to the distribution of the project study documents to the participants, they were invited to complete (a) one of the two FSS surveys and (b) the TKI survey. Both surveys provided a portion of the data that was used as part of the overall assessment of the project. These surveys also provided information about the context to which the seminars were to be tailored.

Pre- and Post-test Surveys

In order to measure whether family members were experiencing satisfaction, the participants completed one of the two FSS surveys as a pre-assessment measure. The findings of this survey would provide the context that would inform the approach to be
taken during the training series. At the end of the seminar series, the participants completed the second FSS survey. Both surveys were compared to determine whether any change in the participants’ level of family satisfaction had taken place. Responses were assessed to determine the satisfaction levels of individuals and families in the study.

**TKI Survey Interpretive Report**

After purchasing the surveys and establishing a webpage with www.psychometrics.com (the online company from which the TKI was acquired and administered), I emailed each participant a link to the online survey. The participants were encouraged to complete the survey prior to the first seminar, as the seminar content focused primarily on the effective use of the five conflict modes assessed in the survey. The results of the TKI and the FSS also provided a context for the training seminars.

**Participant Informed Consent Form**

The participant Informed Consent Form documented the participants’ agreement to be involved in the study. After explaining each item on the form to the participants, both the participants and I signed it. In signing the forms, the participants were acknowledging that they had read the contents of the consent form, listened to the verbal explanations given, and that their questions were facilitated and clarified. Furthermore, by signing, the participants were expressing their satisfaction with the terms of participation and were consenting to voluntary participation in the study. At the end of the signing, I issued a signed copy of the form to the participants for their record-keeping.

**Project Research Questions**

To measure the effectiveness of the seminars and to determine the level of
participant learning cognitively, behaviorally, and affectively, three research questions formed the basis of evaluation. The questions were as follows:

1. Were the conflict-management TKI seminars educational and informative and did they enhance the participants’ understanding of the conflict-management styles and assessment of conflict in the various family types when handling conflict?

2. Is the practice of healthy communication and negotiation strategies important to family satisfaction when handling conflict using the TKI?

3. What role could the TKI of the participants play in motivating them for increased involvement in conflict management?

Each question was interpreted using the group reflection questions below and the outcome reported in Chapter 6.

Equipment and Logistics

In order to facilitate the sessions of the conflict-management initiative and to aid in the presentation of the seminars, a multi-media projector, a projector screen, and a personal computer were used. The sessions were convened in a secluded room, safeguarding the concern of privacy and confidentiality of the participants. The room was arranged with tables and chairs to allow family members to sit together. In this way, they were able to do group work together when required. Refreshments were provided on the penultimate and ultimate sessions at no cost to the participants.

Training Initiative

This section of the chapter presents details of the actual seminar initiative that was conducted to share the principles of the TKI with the participants. The primary content of
the seminar centered on the five conflict-handling modes: competing, collaborating, compromising, avoiding, and accommodating. The objective of the seminars was threefold: (a) to enhance the participants’ self-awareness of their conflict mode use, (b) to refine their existing skills, and (c) to support the participants in developing new conflict-management skills. This section commenced with a restatement of the problem and purpose of the study, followed by the content of the seminars.

Restating the Problem and Rationale

As was stated in chapter 1, the records of the ISDAC showed that the church was multi-racial and multi-cultural in membership configuration. The membership included over 35 nationalities and approximately 200 families, approximately 10% of whom were interracial in marriage. Several of the families observed were experiencing a low level of satisfaction and were uninvolved in the ministries of the church. Being one of the pastors (2013-2016), I observed that some family members expressed overt frustration and displayed problematic behavior patterns due to the inability to resolve their conflicts.

Therefore, it was in response to the Family Ministries Department and this challenge of unresolved family conflict that the conflict-management strategy was developed and implemented. The purpose of this intervention was to examine the participants’ perspectives of the spiritual and relational value of conflict-management education. In addition, it was to equip the participants with conflict-management skills that would improve their family satisfaction, thus resulting in increased ministry participation.
Seminar Content

To address and accomplish the forgoing objectives and the purpose of the program, I conducted four 2-hour seminars, over a period of three months. The content of the seminars was presented from the CWFG for the TKI. These seminars were delivered using the CWFG PowerPoint presentation (Appendix D), along with its accompanying manual. The interactive sessions are summarized below and the outline of the entire series is found in Appendix D.

**Seminar One: Insights on the Conflict-Handling Modes – November 12, 2016**

In seminar 1, I introduced the participants to the theoretical and theological foundations of conflict. While this aspect of the seminar does not appear in the CWFG, grounding the seminar in a biblical foundation was essential to its effectiveness in the church context.

The first session commenced with a 15-minute warm-up or ice breaker period, the objective of which was to help the participants get to know one another. I proceeded to share basic themes of conflict that emerged from the literature review (chapter 3). The themes highlighted were the origin or sources, benefits, levels, nature of and definition of conflict, and the meaning of conflict management. In other words, I imparted the rudiments of the subject of conflict to the participants theoretically. For example, it was highlighted that every conflict has a cause or source that emerges out of concerns, opinions, desires, culture, psychological needs, different values, or limited resources (Crawford & Bodine, 1996; Mayer, 2012; Thomas & Kilmann, 2009). The concept of family satisfaction and its significance to healthy family functioning were presented.
Each of these concepts formed part of the learning experience and interaction of the first half of the seminar.

Theologically, a biblical overview of conflict was also included in the first seminar. The areas of focus included several main points and sub-points of conflict. For instance, the universality of conflict, the horizontal and vertical consequences, and the paradigms of conflict in the social context of the Old and New Testaments were some important points that were discussed. Participant involvement in the form of discussions was integrated into the seminar process. This was facilitated for sharing, intensity, and learning.

**Seminar Two: Conflict Mode Dimensions and Skills – December 10, 2016**

The second session of the seminar intervention focused on introducing to the participants how to use the conflict modes to handle conflicts effectively. Attention was given to the dimensions or basic aspects of the conflict modes. Mastering the skills that are required to be effective when using these modes was also highlighted in the training. Each mode was explained in relationship to the two assertive and cooperative dimensions of handling conflict. It was emphasized that the dimensions of any conflict behavior can be used to measure the five methods of conflict-management styles (Thomas & Kilmann, 2009). On the one hand, the assertive dimension was defined to be the extent to which an individual attempts to satisfy his or her concerns. On the other hand, the cooperative dimension describes the extent to which an individual attempts to satisfy the concerns of others (Thomas & Kilmann, 2007). The participants were asked to identify the dimensions of each conflict mode by observing the Five Conflict-Handling Modes.
diagram. This exercise enabled the participants to become aware of when and why they please others as opposed to themselves.

In addition, sharing an understanding of the conflict modes and how to acquire or improve skills was part of this session. Emphasis was placed on how an individual’s conflict mode is equivalent to his/her skill, plus the conflict situation. In other words, it was conveyed to the participants that the use of the conflict mode in any given conflict is based on an individual’s skill level and the requirements of the conflict situation. The implication is that all modes are useful and can be effective if used appropriately.

In this session, the question of why a particular mode was preferred when handling conflict was also explored. Just before the session closed, the participants were invited to brainstorm reasons why individuals might overuse or underuse one conflict mode above the other. The intention for this brainstorming exercise was (a) to engage the participants in the dialogue of identifying possible reasons for conflict and why they found it easier to use a default or comfortable way of handling conflict and (b) to stimulate discussion while reinforcing the themes of conflict-management skills. Being aware of how habits, in comparison to conscious decisions, impact conflict skills helps one to detect when a certain mode is functioning.

Seminar Three – Conflict-Handling
Modes Part One – January 21, 2017

The third seminar explained the first two of the five conflict handling modes developed by behavioral scientists Thomas and Kilmann: competing and collaborating. Focus was given to explaining how one can know when they are functioning in a conflict situation. In addition, the participants were instructed on how to use the conflict modes
appropriately and developing skills in improving their use. In this way, the participants were able to interpret their own conflict-handling survey report that tested their conflict modes.

Competing, the first of the modes, was explained to the participants as “asserting their position without considering opposing viewpoints” (Thomas & Kilmann, 2009, p. 22). Characterized by high assertiveness and low cooperativeness, this mode was described as useful when a quick action is needed, unpopular action must be taken, and when it is necessary to defend oneself to avoid being disadvantaged. The participants were engaged in discussion on how to develop skills when using the competing mode. Moreover, they were exposed to some appropriate and indispensable uses of competing such as in the ability to argue, debate, and effectively communicate one’s thoughts and feelings.

Overuse, or high competing, and underuse, or low competing, were also examined. The participants were asked to think about possible problems that could occur when competing as a conflict-handling mode is misused. They were encouraged to share experiences of when they may have inappropriately or appropriately used the competing mode. At the end of this discussion, a flash card exercise was conducted. This exercise was used at the end of each mode presentation in this session to accomplish the following objectives: (a) to practice recognizing situations where each mode is applicable and (b) to share various reasons for choosing a particular mode.

Collaborating was defined as satisfying the concerns of both sides in an issue. This style is usually high in assertiveness and cooperativeness, and involves both parties working with the other to find an optimal solution. It was explained that the collaborating
mode is appropriate for integrating solutions when both sides of a concern are interdependent and important. For example, two individuals have appointments that clash. Using this mode is also useful when one wants to learn and test assumptions, find innovative solutions, acquire commitment or buy-in, and improve a difficult relationship. This mode fulfills the saying, “Two heads are better than one.” This mode helps to develop communication and listening skills, comprehension, compassion, empathy, and tact. In addition, this mode allows individuals to practice nonthreatening confrontation by inputting analysis of data objectively, identifying underlying concerns, and discovering the root of an issue. After explaining the pitfalls of overuse and underuse of this mode, the participants were allowed to discuss scenarios and complete their flash card exercises which were to be shared at the end of the seminar.

Seminar Four: Conflict-Handling Modes
Part Two – February 4, 2017

In seminar 4, I engaged the participants in a discussion of the need to be aware of when all conflict modes are functioning in and by themselves and in and by others. The participants learned that the most effective way of engaging in the conflict-management process was to be cognizant of when the modes were operational.

During the session about compromising, the third of the modes was described as finding a middle ground or disregarding particular personal concerns in order to have others met. This is the “let’s make a deal” or negotiating approach where “each person gets partially satisfied but not completely satisfied” (Kilmann, 2011, p. 7). Compromise, moderate on both the assertive and cooperative levels, needs to be used appropriately. Such appropriate use includes resolving issues of moderate importance, reaching a
resolution when both parties are equally powerful and committed to opposing views, and developing a temporary solution to a complex situation in order to buy time.

The skills required for successful demonstration of this mode were taught to be negotiating, applying fairness where gains and sacrifices are experienced on both ends, making concessions, and assigning value so bargaining can be fair. Disadvantages of this mode were also included in this seminar delivery. One such disadvantage was the overuse of the mode which could result in lack of trust, a cynical climate, and sacrificing long-term goals. On the other hand, underuse, or low compromising could lead to unnecessary confrontations, power struggles, and the inability to negotiate effectively. The participants were encouraged to think about experiences when they might have used this conflict mode.

Avoiding was the fourth mode explained to the participants. They were taught that avoiding occurs when those in conflict are not satisfying their concerns or the concerns of others. I shared with the participants that avoiding was said to take the form of stalling or ignoring and was characterized by low assertiveness and low cooperativeness. The participants learned that there were appropriate uses of this mode. For example, with the exception of leaving unimportant or trivial issues aside, the dangers outweigh the benefits; by buying time or delaying to make a more informed decision, the solution initiator has limitations such as little power or little control, allowing others to own their causes, and a problem may be an evidence of a symptom of a much larger issue. Good avoiding (Kilmann, 2011) means knowing when and where to get involved.
In order to use the mode of avoiding effectively, the participants were exposed to specific skills including withdrawing, sidestepping or diplomacy, a sense of timing (that is, postponing handling conflict until a more suitable time) or more important, allowing some conflicts to go unresolved, which can be rather difficult.

The participants were given practical examples of high or overuse of avoiding and low or underuse of avoiding conflict mode. With this, they were invited to brainstorm and reflect on experiences and incidents where they might have used, overused, or underused the conflict mode of avoiding. Some areas of overuse shared in the seminar were indicated through the following signs: (a) a lack of input from all persons involved in the conflict, a practice which can deprive the conflict-management process of important contributions; (b) making decisions by default, which implicitly challenges the credibility of the one overusing avoidance; (c) ignoring problems and thus, festering issues; and (d) being involved in the conflict in a cautious or hands-off way. On the contrary, the underuse of avoiding or low avoiding results in feelings being hurt, excessive stress and output, and lack of delegation.

The accommodating conflict mode is described as disregarding one’s own concerns in order to satisfy the concerns of another person. This mode is considered to be low on assertiveness and high on cooperativeness. It is seen as a kind of selfless generosity or obeying of orders. Methods on how to use this conflict mode appropriately were reviewed. Concepts such as showing reasonableness, allowing others to develop their performance from their mistakes, yielding to others, keeping the peace to avoid disruption, retreating when outmatched, and maintaining perspective when the matter is
more important to the other person are effective ways the participants were taught to practice accommodating.

In order to employ this mode appropriately, the participants were guided into a period of skill development. They were educated in the need to make sacrifices and not always focus on their own desires. Selflessness, obedience, and yielding were also discussed. All these were seen as healthy and necessary steps for skill development when applying the accommodating conflict mode.

The penultimate subject of this segment covered the overuse and underuse of the accommodating conflict mode. The participants were then asked to discuss experiences in both areas of overuse and underuse. Following this, knowledge of the importance of balancing the use of the accommodating mode was shared. The improper or inappropriate use of any of the preceding modes, including the accommodating mode, can obstruct the conflict-management process and the outcomes that may be desired. On the one hand, I shared with the participants the fact that over-emphasis of the accommodating mode, for example, was shown to create an overlook of ones’ ideas, a lessening of influence, a loss of valuable contribution, and possible anarchy. On the other hand, underuse was seen as something that can stagnate rapport, damage morale, produce enslavement to policies, and create inability to yield (Thomas & Kilmann, 2009). Finally, case studies were presented and assessed through group learning exercises in order to help the participants identify different modes.

Methods of Evaluation

Subsequent to the conflict-management seminars, three post-seminar measures were employed to assess the impact of the seminars on the participants’ learning. First,
there was a post-FSS survey, a group reflection session where the participants responded
to six questions pertaining to the seminar content, and finally, my observations.

Post-Evaluation Family Satisfaction Scale

This post-evaluation survey was the same as the pre-FSS survey that was
conducted at the beginning of the intervention process. The purpose of this survey was to
collect and measure the participants’ impact subsequent to the seminar. The responses
from this survey were compared with the pre-FSS survey to see if there was any
difference in the participants’ family satisfaction responses. The findings of this survey
were evaluated and a summary will be reported in the final chapter of this project.

Group Reflection

Two weeks subsequent to the conclusion of the intervention implementation
(February 19, 2017), I convened and conducted a group reflection session. At this
session, I conducted a recap of the TKI conflict-management principles and then engaged
the participants in discussing and sharing experiences. Nineteen individuals participated.
At the conclusion of an engaging interaction, the participants were invited to respond in
writing to six questions that were meant to acquire data for the three study questions of
this project listed above. Observations and assessment of responses to these questions
will be reported as part of the evaluation and conclusion. The questions asked at the
group reflection session were the following:

1. How can you describe the conflict-management training program?

2. How does the information of assessing conflict motivate you to be involved in
   conflict-management roles of the different types and stages of the family?
3. Do you think the practice of healthy communication impacts family satisfaction? If yes, why?

4. Do you think practicing the negotiation skills of conflict management is important to family satisfaction? If yes, why?

5. What would you say are some of the benefits you gained from participating in the TKI assessment?

6. What are some things from the assessment that you would say could help you to become more involved in conflict management?

Researcher’s Observations

Throughout the entire conflict-management intervention process, I organized, promoted, imparted information, procured notes, and facilitated discussions and interaction among the participants. During the intervention process several viewpoints and discoveries emerged. These plays and counter-plays when compared and contrasted shared several pertinent and unique dynamics of the intervention and its impact on the intervention process. All these elements were evaluated and my observations were reported. These annotations formed an integral part of the outcome of the project.

Conclusion

This chapter presented a narrative on the process of the intervention implemented for managing conflict in the family context of the ISDAC. Several steps were implemented to achieve the task of equipping the participants with the knowledge and skills required to be successful in the conflict-management process. For the most part, all the parts were implemented as planned.
The seminars conducted focused on teaching the participants five behavioral models of handling conflict. The participants benefitted from the presentations and reported that their skills were indeed enhanced and the seminars were useful. Throughout the seminar process and at the conclusion of the training, the participants expressed their appreciation and commitment to using the behavioral principles when dealing with conflict.

The assessment methods used to measure the intervention initiative yielded discoveries that showed the participants’ growth and my own learning. A more detailed report of these outcomes is found in chapter 6.
CHAPTER 6

PROJECT EVALUATION AND LEARNING

Chapter 6 provides a summary of the project, a description of the evaluation, outcome of the intervention, interpretation and observations, a summary and conclusion of the project chapters, personal transformation, some recommendations, and a final word. All these areas provide the findings and learnings of this present project.

**Summary of the Project Document**

This project was a response to the problem of unresolved conflict that was observed within families of the ISDAC. It was an attempt to evaluate the participants’ perspectives concerning an educational conflict-management seminar. Moreover, it was meant to equip family members with some of the requisite skills needed to assist in how they managed conflict. A two-tier program was developed to facilitate the intervention.

The first stage included two assessments: (a) a pre-test FSS survey and (b) the TKI self-assessment survey used to verify their dominant conflict mode. In the second stage, a 10-hour conflict-management seminar was presented to address the task of the study. The seminars were presented using primarily the CWFG manual. The seminars conveyed to the participants the skills of the TKI, how to use them, and how to identify when the modes are functioning in both one’s self and others. Finally, the impact of this
study was assessed by using a post-test FSS survey along with data collected from the post-seminar group questions.

**Description of the Evaluation**

To evaluate the project study accurately, two elements are essential: data generated from the project and a set of criteria by which to judge the data.

The evaluation of this project utilized data generated from (a) two self-reporting surveys, (b) a group reflection session, (c) and my observations. Both the FSS survey and the TKI generated data that was descriptive of the context in which the study was conducted and should not be generalized beyond this study cohort without caution. The findings of the study emerged from a content-based analysis. Themes from the participants’ responses were organized to form part of this report. Findings from the data were compared with my observations and notes.

The data collected through the three means mentioned previously must be filtered through the research study questions generated prior to the project implementation. There were three questions that provided the platform for analysis of data and observations of this present study:

1. Were the conflict-management TKI seminars educational and informative and did they enhance the participants’ understanding of the conflict-management styles and assessment of conflict, in the various family types when handling conflict?

2. Is the practice of healthy communication and negotiation strategies important to family satisfaction when handling conflict using the TKI?

3. What role could the TKI Conflict Modes of the participants play in motivating them toward increased involvement in conflict management?
Outcome of the Intervention

A summary of the results of the conflict-management intervention includes several components that measure the outcome of this study.

Demographic Data

The demographic data relating to participation in this project reflected five ethnic groups. Table 2 shows that three surveys were completed by the participants: the TKI Conflict Mode questionnaire \((n = 26)\), the pre-FSS survey \((n = 21)\), and the post-FSS survey \((n = 19)\). Fifty-three percent were males and 47% were females. The distribution between the male and female genders was inadvertent and not deliberately selected.

Sharing the demographic data highlights, the spectrum of people in this project.

Table 2

*Participants of the TKI Conflict Mode, Pre-, and Post-FSS Ethnic Classification: A Total of 26, 21, and 19 Respectively*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>TKI Conflict Mode Participants’</th>
<th>Pre-FSS Ethnic Participants’</th>
<th>Post-FSS Ethnic Participants’</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Males</td>
<td>Females</td>
<td>Males</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Afro-Canadian</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Afro-Caribbean</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>14</strong></td>
<td><strong>12</strong></td>
<td><strong>11</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Results of the Surveys

What follows below is a summary of the data described in the TKI and the pre-and post-FSS surveys, respectively.

Data From TKI Interpretive Report

The results from the TKI Profile and Interpretive Report of the 26 participants in Table 3 reveal that avoiding (38%) and accommodating (38%) were the modes used most frequently when handling conflict in their family. The other three modes (competing, compromising, and collaborating) were used minimally, 12%, 8%, and 4% respectively. On the other hand, the family as a unit reported a mean percentile score of 30% when managing a conflict. Collaborating for the individual and compromising for the family unit were the least used modes. In sum, this data shows that the participants’ default approach when managing conflict embraces the cooperative dimension of the conflict modes—they were prepared to sacrifice their needs in order to avoid conflict. It is

Table 3

*High or Dominant vs. Low or Minimal Use of Conflict Modes: A Total of 26 Participants*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Modes</th>
<th>High or Dominant Use of Mode</th>
<th>Low or Minimal Use of Modes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Raw and Percentile Scores</td>
<td>Raw and Percentile Scores</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competing</td>
<td>3 (12%)</td>
<td>5 (19%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaborating</td>
<td>1 (4%)</td>
<td>4 (15%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compromising</td>
<td>2 (8%)</td>
<td>8 (31%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accommodating</td>
<td>10 (38%)</td>
<td>6 (23%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avoiding</td>
<td>10 (38%)</td>
<td>3 (12%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>26 (100%)</td>
<td>26 (100%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
interesting to note that habitual responses to conflict can further exacerbate the problem, especially when use of another response might be more appropriate.

**Data From the Pre-FSS Survey**

The pre-FSS survey conducted prior to the conflict-management seminar for the purpose of discovering the participants’ level of family happiness showed a mean score of 34 (30%) measured by the FSS scoring chart. This score indicates that individual family members, in general, were experiencing low levels of satisfaction. In other words, according to Olson (2010), on the Family Satisfaction Scale Overview score sheet, “family members are dissatisfied and have some concerns about their family” (p. 5).

Further analysis of the responses reveals that 13 of the 21 individual family members (62%) were somewhat dissatisfied or very dissatisfied. On the other hand, 38% were either generally satisfied or highly satisfied (see Table 4). The family as a unit also revealed dissatisfaction. Sixty-four percent of the 11 families were either very dissatisfied or somewhat dissatisfied, while 36% were very satisfied or somewhat satisfied.

**Table 4**

*Pre-Family Satisfaction Scale Levels: A Total of 21 Individuals and 11 Families*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Individual and Percentile Scores</th>
<th>Family Unit and Percentile Scores</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5 = Extremely Satisfied</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 = Very Satisfied</td>
<td>2 (9.5%)</td>
<td>1 (10%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 = Generally Satisfied</td>
<td>6 (28.5%)</td>
<td>3 (27%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 = Somewhat Dissatisfied</td>
<td>10 (48%)</td>
<td>5 (45%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 = Very Dissatisfied</td>
<td>3 (14%)</td>
<td>2 (18%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>21 (100%)</td>
<td>11 (100%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Data From the Post-FSS Survey

The post-FSS survey, conducted subsequent to the Conflict Mode workshop, reported a mean score of 41 or 71%. When compared to the pre-FSS values, the post-FSS survey mean score represents an improvement of 7 in the individual participant field. There was also an increase of 41% in the family unit category. With the exception of four participants in the very dissatisfied and somewhat dissatisfied scores, the participants of the ISDAC reported that they experienced improvement in their family satisfaction after participating in the conflict-management workshop. An overall improvement of seven participants reported experiencing improved satisfaction, although the overall number of participants in the survey decreased by two (see Table 5). The family category also revealed improvement.

Table 5

*Post-Family Satisfaction Scale Levels: A Total of 19 Individuals and 10 Families*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Individuals and Percentile Scores</th>
<th>Family Unit and Percentile Scores</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5 = Extremely Satisfied</td>
<td>3 (17%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 = Very Satisfied</td>
<td>7 (39%)</td>
<td>5 (50%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 = Generally Satisfied</td>
<td>5 (22%)</td>
<td>2 (20%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 = Somewhat Dissatisfied</td>
<td>2 (11%)</td>
<td>2 (20%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 = Very Dissatisfied</td>
<td>2 (11%)</td>
<td>1 (10%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>19 (100%)</td>
<td>10 (100%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Results of Post-Seminar Group Reflection

This section summarizes the participants’ feedback to the conflict-management intervention that was ascertained two weeks after the seminars. These responses were used to interpret the three research questions of the intervention and to provide the participants’ perspectives on the value of the seminar for family types and development stages.

Research Question One

*Were the conflict-management TKI seminars educational and informative and did they enhance the participants’ understanding of the conflict-management styles and assessment of conflict, in the various family types when handling conflict?*

In relation to the above research question, the participants responded as follows during the group reflection period:

A. How can you describe the conflict-management training program?

B. How does the information of assessing conflict motivate you to be involved in conflict-management roles of the different types and stages of the family?

Nineteen individuals shared in journaling their description of the TKI conflict-management intervention. In response to subsidiary question A, all the participants but one expressed the fact that the material was new to them. Seventeen participants agreed that the conflict-management training intervention was useful and relevant for effectively managing conflict in their families. In general, the participants expressed an interest in and appreciation for the intervention and commented that they were grateful for the exposure to the conflict modes seminar. One participant wrote, “I found the seminar to have been extremely interesting, helpful and informative. It provided my husband and me
with an understanding of how to use the modes or styles when handling conflict in our relationship.” Another commented, “I have learned a lot and I am committed to using the information learned in how I handle conflict with my children in a more positive way.”

In regard to question B, all the participants expressed the fact that they were motivated to use the information of the conflict assessment strategy (PEPRS) when seeking to understand conflict in the different stages of their families. For instance, several participants reported that before being exposed to how power functions in a conflict situation, they were adamant about their position in a family conflict. However, now they are more inclusive and adaptive. They stated that more value was placed on the contribution of those with whom they differ. This response demonstrates the fact that the participants’ awareness of their conflict styles and assessment approach improved. This showed that the participants were utilizing their knowledge of the conflict-management styles and assessment tools.

**Research Question Two**

*Is the practice of healthy communication and negotiation strategies important to family satisfaction when handling conflict using the TKI Conflict Modes?*

To support further the improvement in the participants’ family satisfaction levels reported in the post-FSS and to provide an interpretation for the above research question, the participants responded to the following questions:

A. Do you think the practice of healthy communication impacts family satisfaction? If yes, why?”

B. Do you think practicing the negotiation skills of conflict management is important to family satisfaction? If yes, why?
The participants’ responses to question A varied in three ways. First, they affirmed that the practice of healthy communication does impact conflict outcomes and enhances family satisfaction when using the TKI modes. Second, the participants stated that they were able to define and distill their position in the conflict process with others. This was something they found was a challenge to their overall happiness. Third, the participants indicated that a proper communication approach enabled them to clarify and bring focus to the problem they themselves had, instead of that of the family member. In this way, greater dialogue and openness was encouraged. It also made their conflict more manageable as the viewpoints of others were validated without losing one’s importance in the conflict process. The participants stated that being heard by family members with whom they had conflict was key to their satisfaction. Tension was reduced as they could articulate their differences.

Based upon responses to question B, the participants thought that practicing the negotiation skills taught in the conflict-management initiative was important to family satisfaction. They specified that practicing the skills was essential for two reasons. First, according to the participants, the negotiation skills needed to handle differences in the family benefited both the offender and the offended. They relished the negotiation conflict model as it functioned similarly to aspects of the communication model. While people are entangled with their problem, the negotiation model seeks to separate the two and focus on a solution. A second point shared by the participants about why the negotiation model appealed to them was that they could focus on solutions that are mutual, not judgmental and selfish, but objective and collaborative. Many participants
aired the fact that practicing this approach gave them the ease and freedom that led to satisfaction.

**Research Question Three**

3. *What role could the TKI Conflict Modes of the participants play in motivating them toward increased involvement in conflict management in their families?*

In relation to this question, the participants responded to the final two questions of the group reflection session:

A. How important was the discovery of the conflict modes?

B. How does the discovery of your conflict-management style affect your involvement in problem solving?

In response to question A, the participants conveyed the fact that discovering the conflict TKI Conflict Modes in this intervention was significant for three reasons.

First, the discovery of the conflict modes produced increased awareness. Several participants reported that being exposed to these conflict modes brought an awareness of how they, as well as their opponents responded to conflict. This awareness made them able to identify when and which mode was active in both the parties engaged in conflict. Knowing how to identify a mode creates the foundation for a more appropriate or balanced use of the modes in the conflict process. Since all the modes were useful depending on the conflict situation, awareness of when and how they function lays the foundation for a positive approach to addressing the conflict situation.

Second, the participants emphasized the fact that knowing the modes provided a sense of empowerment. The participants reported feeling a sense of empowerment and confidence in addressing potential problematic issues without feeling inadequate. The
participants indicated that inadequacies create an overuse of avoidance. According to Thomas and Kilmann (2009), overuse of avoidance or any other mode, can hinder the conflict process. Discovery of the modes helps to eliminate the attitude of avoidance, something the participants reported they practiced as a way of experiencing peace.

Third, the participants felt discovering the modes infused improved objectivity. They indicated that their first response to conflict was often the preservation of self. However, having an objective or independent standard by which to guide one’s response to conflict provided confidence that the situation would be handled fairly. In addition to fairness, objectivity produces trust that the process will yield benefits for each party in conflict. The participants agreed that trust was a healthy platform in the process of managing conflict that could lead the conflicted to a place of resolve.

The responses to question B revealed that the participants believed that discovering their conflict mode helped them become more invested in the conflict-management process. Several participants commented that discovering the modes provided them with needed skills that were suitable for not handling conflict only in the family, but also in other contexts. It provided knowledge on how to engage productively in handling differences. Many shared the fact that their awareness of how one’s values, socialization, and religious upbringing impacted their involvement in in a positive way when handling conflict gave satisfaction.

My Observations

A closer examination of the overall initiative revealed several insights emerging from the various aspects of this study. First, the participants’ perspectives showed that they believed that there was spiritual and relational value in having the conflict-
management skills of the TKI Conflict model. They believed that although the modes did not emerge from a biblical foundation, they had spiritual implication and relational relevance. It was the conclusion of the participants that being able to resolve their differences by using conflict-management skills improved family satisfaction. For instance, whereas the participants of the ISDAC experienced low satisfaction levels prior to the seminar, there was improvement in their satisfaction quotient after the training initiative.

Second, the prolific use of the TKI modes (accommodating and avoiding) revealed that the participants’ conflict-management styles were influenced by their religious beliefs and socialization. As a result of the discussion segment, the participants expressed the idea that Christians were expected to accommodate one another without having personal or self-interest when engaging in conflict. However, this position of ignoring personal interests when seeking to manage and resolve family differences could be detrimental to sustained family satisfaction.

Third, regardless of the viewpoint of the participants mentioned previously regarding accommodating one’s opponent in conflict, the participants were open to integrating the tenets of the conflict-management training. While a marginal number of participants (10%) indicated that they were neutral about the seminars’ impact (that it may not necessarily produce positive change in how they manage conflict), a greater percentage favored the intervention and the possibilities of adopting its use. I also concluded that more time, financial resources, and a larger sample could be explored for future study. This no doubt would provide a broader and deeper understanding of participant impact and relevance of the initiative. Overall, the participants’ responses
demonstrate that the conflict-management education program proved useful, and teaching the topic is both relevant and necessary for the families of the church.

**Chapter Summaries and Conclusions**

This section presents the summary and conclusion of each chapter of this project.

Chapter 1 essentially provided glimpses into the entire approach undertaken to accomplish the task of this project within the context of selected families of the ISDAC. It is important to note that this chapter introduced the subject of conflict, the context of the study, and a preview of the entire project.

Chapter 2 provided a biblical and theological framework on the subject of conflict and how it has impacted social and spiritual relationships. The inception of conflict into the cosmos in general and the human experience in particular is discussed here. From the content of this chapter, I concluded that while conflict is an inevitable occurrence in the social order, as well as in life, having a biblical view of it provides awareness and understanding in its management. Moreover, I conclude that a conflict-management model that is bolstered by biblical principles of peace and reconciliation can yield enduring benefits and satisfaction.

Chapter 3 reviewed literature related to the nature of conflict, the family types in which conflict functions, and conflict-management models that were used to provide a conflict-management training initiative. From this review, I concluded that although conflict may have a multifaceted impact on families, a constructive approach to conflict in any family type or development stage (marital, parent-child, siblings, single parent, blended families) predicts a more positive relationship outcome, rather than a lower relationship quality (Birditt, Rott, & Fingerman, 2009). Furthermore, I concluded that a
behavioral management strategy that centers on attitude, rather than on steps, can be applied across all conflict situation, and yields more lasting result and greater satisfaction.

Chapter 4 presented a conflict-management intervention initiative that was developed after the assessment of the participants’ conflict context. From this process, I concluded that an intervention was needed that would be informed by the combination of theology and theory. A qualitative approach of evaluating the outcome of the study was applied as it conveyed the insights gained from the initiative and the participants’ responses.

Chapter 5 narrated the steps through which the conflict-management intervention was implemented. The participants who volunteered to participate in this study were organized and briefed concerning the process of the study. They received instruction about the various components and expectations of the program. From the responses of the members and the implementation of the process, I concluded that the seminars had a positive impact and achieved their intended purpose.

Chapter 6 primarily provides the data and its evaluation and learning from the intervention that was implemented in order to equip the participants with the skills to manage conflict within the family. Considering the participants’ responses, I concluded that they were positively impacted about how they viewed, understood, and managed conflict in their families. The participants’ data revealed that they valued the conflict-management skills implemented in this present initiative and that they can be used in other contexts.

Personal Transformation

An additional way of assessing the outcome of the conflict-management initiative
of this study is to consider its impact on me as a researcher and ministry provider. Three changes are worth mentioning. First, my ability to function in the different roles of researcher, trainer, and ministry provider was informed and enhanced. Through this means, I was able to developed skills that helped me to distinguish and, at the same time, combine these varying roles during the project process in preparation for such future endeavors. Second, the way theology interacted with practice was heartening and exhilarating. Throughout the study process and especially during the literature review and implementation of the project, I was able to grasp how one’s religious beliefs can impact how conflict decisions are processed. Third, what was obvious was the transformative impact of the entire study process. Over the duration of my enrolment in the program (2014-2018), I gained much from engaging in the entire research journey of classroom interactions, academic rigors, and research undertakings. Indeed, my ministry skillset was sharpened, spiritual discipline enhanced, and family conflict management and relational skills improved. These are transferable changes that I treasure.

**Recommendations**

Taking into consideration the journey of the entire project study, the following are recommendations for further attention:

1. During the recruitment process, many participants were reluctant to enroll in the study. Subsequent investigation of this response revealed that the topic of conflict was taboo. It is my recommendation that the Adventist Church leadership urgently engage family members at the local level in conflict-management conversations. As such, misunderstandings and stigmatization about conflict can be reduced and, in some instances, eliminated.
2. While surveying the conflict literature in chapter 3, it seemed clear that more conflict-management materials of a Christocentric nature would be helpful to the church context. Therefore, I recommend that Seventh-day Adventist family life educators, scholars, and specialists engage in developing conflict-management material that is informed by biblical principles for families’ use.

3. I recommend that congregations undertake implementing conflict-management and relationship-growth programs such as this one on an annual, semi-annual, or quarterly basis. Greater emphasis on the conflict-management theme would benefit families in developing their problem-solving skills, relationship satisfaction, and involvement in mission.

4. The subject of conflict impacts the congregation, as well as leadership. I recommend the development and implementation of a conflict-management training program that is focused on congregation and leadership conflict.

5. The literature review unearthed conflict-management approaches (negotiation, arbitration, conflict transformation, and resolution) that were beyond the scope of this intervention. I hope to explore writing an educational conflict-management tool kit series for the various stages of the family in order to reflect some of the insights in this study.

6. Considering the inevitability of conflict, I recommend that at least a one-semester course be incorporated into the ministerial curriculum in Adventist seminaries. In addition, pastors should receive some level of conflict-management training. It will enhance the quality of ministry to families and avoid some pitfalls of unresolved conflict.

7. Finally, as a result of undertaking this project study, I plan to replicate this research and training on the theme of conflict management in new congregations I pastor.
A Final Word

One may inquire, “Why should an educational seminar to equip family members to manage conflict be conducted?” The response is that families need it. It is important to remember that an educational program can help to minimize the ill-effects of conflict on families while furnishing them with the skills that can enable them to experience greater levels of family satisfaction. Providing exposure to conflict-management forums will empower and enable families with a Christian conflict-management perspective that is grounded in a healthy view of handling conflict. Understanding some theoretical notions of conflict and how they can inform family efforts in addressing the important subject of conflict management is advantageous. Families in society, in general, and in the church, in particular, that desire to experience sustainable emotional, social, and spiritual fulfilment should adhere to the conflict principles espoused in this study. It is my hope that church family workers—educators, local ministry leaders, pastors, higher organization departmental leaders—will invest their resources in engaging in the dialogue, practice, and promotion of healthy conflict management, one that leads to improved family satisfaction for all.
APPENDIX A

RESEARCH APPROVAL LETTERS AND CONSENT
Institutional Review Board  
Andrews University  
4150 Administration Drive, Room 322  
Berrien Springs, MI 49104-0355  

June 29th 2016  

RE: Pastor Anthony Reid  

To whom it may concern:  

On April 12th 2016 the Immanuel Seventh-day Adventist Church Board voted to approve item 2016:034, for Pastor Anthony Reid to complete his doctoral project, “Improving Family Satisfaction through Conflict Management Training for Families in the Multiracial Immanuel Seventh-day Adventist Church in Toronto Canada.”  

We wish Pastor Reid every success in the completion of his project.  

Sincerely regards,  

[Signature]  

Dr. David Baker, D.Min, BCCC  
Senior Pastor, Immanuel Seventh-day Adventist Church
September 29, 2016

Anthony Reid
Tel. (416) 616-3567
Email: areid@adventistontario.org

RE: APPLICATION FOR APPROVAL OF RESEARCH INVOLVING HUMAN SUBJECTS
IRB Protocol #: 16-109  Application Type: Original  Dept.: Doctor of Ministry
Review Category: Exempt  Action Taken: Approved  Advisor: David Penno

Title: Improving family satisfaction through conflict management training for the multiracial
Immanuel Seventh-day Adventist Church in Toronto Canada.

Your IRB application for approval of research involving human subjects entitled:
“Improving family satisfaction through conflict management training for the multiracial
Immanuel Seventh-day Adventist Church in Toronto Canada” IRB protocol # 16-109 has
been evaluated and determined Exempt from IRB review under regulation 46.101 (b) (2).
You may now proceed with your research.

Please note that any future changes (see IRB Handbook pages 11-12) made to the study
design and/or informed consent form require prior approval from the IRB before such
changes can be implemented. Incase you need to make changes please use the attached
report form.

While there appears to be no more than minimum risks with your study, should an
incidence occur that results in a research-related adverse reaction and/or physical injury,
(see IRB Handbook pages 12) this must be reported immediately in writing to the IRB. Any
research-related physical injury must also be reported immediately to the University
Physician, Dr. Katherine, by calling (269) 473-2222.

We ask that you reference the protocol number in any future correspondence regarding
this study for easy retrieval of information.

Best wishes in your research.

Sincerely,

Mordekai Ongo
Research Integrity and Compliance Officer

Institutional Review Board - 4150 Administration Dr Room 322 - Berrien Springs, MI 49104-0355
Tel: (269) 471-6361 Fax: (269) 471-6543 E-mail: irb@andrews.edu
August 14, 2016

Title of Study: Improving Family Satisfaction through Conflict Management Training for the Immanuel Seventh-day Adventist Church in Toronto Canada

Dear Participant,
Thank you for volunteering to be part of the “Improving Family Satisfaction through Conflict Management Training for the Immanuel Seventh-day Adventist Church in Toronto Canada” workshop series, which are part of a study I am doing at Andrews University Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary. The series of workshops will include a four to six one-half hour sessions. These sessions will be presented over a three to four-month period, beginning Saturday, October 8, 2016, at 4 pm - 5:30 pm.

Before the workshops begin proper, participants will be asked to: a) attend a participant consent information session where a form will be distributed, explained, and signed by both participant and investigator, b) complete a 10 question family satisfaction scale survey, c) take an online 30 question conflict style survey before the first workshop, at the end of which each participant will receive a copy with her/his result, and d) participate in two group sessions where participant will complete a post workshop survey. The objective of this study is to examine participants’ perspectives on the spiritual and relational value of developing conflict management skills, to improve family satisfaction.

Finally, a list of helping professionals, e.g. counselors will be provided to each participant or family in the event they desire to access such services.

Sincerely,
Anthony Reid,

[Signature]

Doctor of Ministry Student, Principal Investigator
Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, Andrews University
Permission to use
Family Satisfaction Scale

We are pleased to give you permission to use the Family Satisfaction Scale in your research project, teaching or clinical work with couples or families. You may either duplicate the materials directly or have them retyped for use in a new format. If they are retyped, acknowledgement should be given regarding the name of the instrument, the developers' names, and PREPARE/ENRICH, LLC.

In exchange for providing this permission, we would appreciate a copy of any papers, theses or reports that you complete using Family Satisfaction Scale. This will help us to stay abreast of the most recent developments and research regarding this scale. We thank you for your cooperation in this effort.

In closing, I hope you find Family Satisfaction Scale of value in your work with couples and families. Good luck with your project!
Title of study: Improving Family Satisfaction through Conflict Management Training in the Immanuel Seventh-day Adventist Church in Toronto Canada

Anthony Reid, Doctor of Ministry Student, Principal Investigator
Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, 4145 E. Campus Circle Drive, Andrews University Berrien Springs, MI 49104-1500
wasreid1@hotmail.com

Purpose: Many families in the Church experience conflicts that impact their level of satisfaction. The purpose of this study is to investigate the repertoire of conflict management modes and their influence on family satisfaction, with the intention of improving conflict management skills and family satisfaction levels in the Immanuel Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Inclusion Criteria: I have been told that for me to participate in this study I must be a member of the Immanuel Seventh-day Adventist church and 16 years of age or older. Vulnerable members will not be required to participate.

Procedure: I understand that the first step is for participants to be recruited from the congregation. The investigator will explain the project to the congregation and request volunteers. Next, the participants will be asked to complete two surveys, totaling 25 minutes, and also keep a journal. Participants will participate in eight weekly one-half hour training session that will occur over a four-month period. The experiences reported in the journals, as well as the surveys, will be compared with each other to see how they relate and differ. This is to see if there is any influence of conflict management styles on family satisfaction. I understand that I will be asked to complete a journal.

Risks and Discomforts: I have been informed that there are no known risks, apart from the normal activities of life for participating in this study. I have been told that the data collected from this experiment will be analyzed as group rather than individual. I have been also told that the journal kept will be seen only by the researcher and therefore will be confidential. There is no way for others to associate the journal entries to me personally.

Benefits/Results: I understand that I may not receive any direct benefits from participating in this study. I accept that there will be no remuneration for my participation. However, participation in this project may result in helping the researcher,
the Immanuel Seventh-day Adventist church family, to better understand and enhance how conflict management styles relate to family satisfaction levels, thus developing skills to handle conflict.

**Confidentiality:** I understand that all information and survey results will be kept confidential. Record will be identified by numbers or a combination of numbers and letters and will be kept secure by the researcher. Only the investigator will be able to access my data, however, and my individual identity will not be published or disclosed.

**Voluntary Participation:** I have been told that my participation in this study is voluntary. I have been told that I may discontinue my participation in this study at any time without any penalty or prejudice. I also have been told that there is no compensation in return for my participation.

**Request for Information:** In the event I have any concerns or questions in regarding to participation in this project, I have been told that I may contact the investigator, Anthony Reid, at 416-616-35-67 or wasreid@hotmail.com. I have been told that if I wish to contact an impartial third party, I may contact Dr. Curtis Fox, investigators advisor at 909 238 9139 or the Institutional Review Board, Andrews University at 269 471-6361 or email irb@andrews.edu for information and assistance.

I have read the contents of this consent form and have listened to the verbal explanation given by the investigator. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I hereby give voluntary consent to participate in this study. If I have additional questions or concerns, I may contact Anthony Reid using the information above. I have also been given a copy of this consent form.

__________________________________  ____________________
Signature of Participant                Date

__________________________________
Print Name

I have reviewed the contents of this form with the person signing above. I have explained the potential risks and benefits of the study.

__________________________________  Phone number  ____________________
Signature of Investigator              Date
APPENDIX B

RESEARCH DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS
# FAMILY SATISFACTION SCALE

David H. Olson

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>Write ID Initials</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very Dissatisfied</td>
<td>Somewhat Dissatisfied</td>
<td>Generally Satisfied</td>
<td>Very Satisfied</td>
<td>Extremely Satisfied</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Place the number that represents your answer at the end of each question.**

**How satisfied are you with:**

1. The degree of closeness between family members.
2. Your family’s ability to cope with stress.
3. Your family’s ability to be flexible.
4. Your family’s ability to share positive experiences.
5. The quality of communication between family members.
6. Your family’s ability to resolve conflicts.
7. The amount of time you spend together as a family.
8. The way problems are discussed.
9. The fairness of criticism in your family.
10. Family members concern for each other.

**Demographic Data:**

1. Age: 16-20; 21-25; 26-35; 36-40; 41-45; 46-50; 51-55; 56-60; 61-65; 65 and over
2. Gender: _____ Female _____ Male
4. Ethnicity: _____ African-Canadian _____ First Nation _____ Caucasian _____ Inter-racial _____ Asian _____ Hispanic _____ Caribbean _____ Other (Please State) ______________________
5. Family: _____ Single Parent _____ Nuclear _____ Blended/Step _____ Son _____ Daughter (Other) ______________________
6. Job Status: _____ Employed _____ Unemployed

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THOMAS-KILMANN CONFLICT MODE INSTRUMENT

Consider situations in which you find your wishes differing from those of another person. How do you usually respond to such situations?

On the following pages are several pairs of statements describing possible behavioral responses. For each pair, please circle the “A” or “B” statements, which is most characteristic of your own behavior.

In many cases, neither the “A” nor “B” statement may be very typical of your behavior, but please select the response, which you would be more likely to use.

1. A. There are times when I let others take responsibility for solving the problem.  
   B. Rather than negotiate the things on which we disagree, I try to stress those things upon which we both agree.

2. A. I try to find a compromise solution.  
   B. I attempt to deal with all of his/her and my concerns.

3. A. I am usually firm in pursuing my goals  
   B. I might try to soothe the other’s feelings and preserve our relationship.

4. A. I try to find a compromise solution.  
   B. I sometimes sacrifice my own wishes for the wishes of the other person.

5. A. I consistently seek the other’s help in working out a solution.  
   B. I try to do what is necessary to avoid useless tensions.

6. A. I try to avoid creating unpleasantness for myself.  
   B. I try to win my position.

7. A. I try to postpone the issue until I have had some time to think it over.  
   B. I give up some points in exchange for others.

8. A. I am usually firm in pursuing my goals.  
   B. I attempt to get all concerns and issues immediately out in the open.

9. A. I feel that differences are not always worth worrying about.  
   B. I make some effort to get my way.

10. A. I am firm in pursuing my goals.
11. A. I attempt to get all concerns and issues immediately out in the open.
   B. I might try to soothe the other’s feelings and preserve our relationship.

12. A. I sometimes avoid taking positions, which would create controversy.
   B. I will let him/her have some of his/her positions if he/she lets me have some of mine.

13. A. I propose a middle ground.
   B. I press to get my points made.

14. A. I tell the other person my ideas and ask for his/hers.
   B. I try to show him the logic and benefits of my position.

15. A. I might try to soothe the other’s feelings and preserve our relationship.
   B. I try to do what is necessary to avoid tensions.

16. A. I try not to hurt other’s feelings.
   B. I try to convince the other person of the merits of my position.

17. A. I am usually firm in pursuing my goals.
   B. I try to do what is necessary to avoid useless tensions.

18. A. If it makes the other person happy, I might let them maintain their views.
   B. I will let the other person have some of their positions if they let me have some of mine.

19. A. I attempt to get all concerns and issues immediately out in the open.
   B. I try to postpone the issue until I have had some time to think it over.

20. A. I attempt to immediately work through our differences.
   B. I try to find a fair combination of gains and losses for both of us.

21. A. In approaching negotiations, I try to be considerate of the other person’s wishes.
   B. I always lean toward a direct discussion of the problem.

22. A. I try to find a position that is intermediate between his/her and mine.
   B. I assert my wishes.

23. A. I am very often concerned with satisfying all our wishes.
   B. There are times when I let others take responsibility for solving the problem.
24. A. If the other’s position seems very important to him/her, I would try to meet his/her wishes.
   B. I try to get him to settle for a compromise.

25. A. I try to show him the logic and benefits of my position.
   B. In approaching negotiations, I try to be considerate of the other person’s wishes.

26. A. I propose a middle ground.
   B. I am nearly always concerned with satisfying all our wishes.

27. A. I sometimes avoid taking positions that would create controversy.
   B. If it makes the other person happy, I might let him maintain their views.

28. A. I am usually firm in pursuing my goals.
   B. I usually seek the other’s help in working out a solution.

29. A. I propose a middle ground.
   B. I feel that differences are not always worth worrying about.

30. A. I try not to hurt the other’s feelings.
    B. I always share the problem with the other person so that we can work it out.
1. How can you describe the conflict management-training program?

2. How does the information of assessing conflict motivate you to be involved in conflict management roles of different stages of the family?

3. Do you think the practice of healthy communication impacts family satisfaction? If yes, Why?”

4. Do you think practicing the negotiation skills of conflict management is important to family satisfaction? If yes, Why?

5. What would you say are some of the benefits you gained from participating in the TKI assessment?

6. What are some things from the assessment that you would say could help you to become more involved in conflict management?
APPENDIX C

RESEARCH ADVERTISEMENT FLYER AND POWERPOINT
THE FAMILY MINISTRIES
DEPARTMENT OF THE IMMANUEL
SDA CHURCH PRESENTS:

A 10 HOUR WORKSHOP SERIES

IMPROVING FAMILY SATISFACTION: MANAGING CONFLICTS

Venue: Right here @ the Immanuel SDA Church

Come and take the journey of understanding how to manage conflict for satisfaction in your family by being aware of your conflict management styles.

Get registered now! Space is limited to 30 persons

CONTACT: PRESENTER
ANTHONY REID, DOCTOR
OF MINISTRY STUDENT,
ANDREWS UNIVERSITY
416 616 3567 (Cell)
areid@andrews.edu

Starting:
November 16, 2016
The Family Ministries Department of the Immanuel Seventh-day Adventist Church in partnership with Andrews University present: ‘Improving Family Satisfaction: Managing Conflict’

Topic of Study:
Improving Family Satisfaction through Conflict Management Training at the Immanuel Seventh-day Adventist Church in Toronto Canada

Purpose of Study:

Percentage of Respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Females</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>No Designation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>57%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Conflict Management Survey Result

Schedule of Workshop

WHERE?
Right here at the Immanuel SDA Church, 385 Desery Ave.

WHEN?
Saturday Evening, November 16, 2016
4:00 - 5:30 pm
THE WORKSHOP PROCESS WILL INCLUDE:

• The workshops will be held over a 2-4 month period – 2 sessions per month (Sabbath afternoons)
• Each workshop/session will last for 1 1/2 to 2 hours
• Sessions will be interactive and engaging and confidential
• First 20 participants do survey free

Activities at Workshop

1. Issuing of participants recruitment forms and letters to volunteers prior to the survey completion
2. Issuing of Thomas/Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument to participants to be completed prior to workshop (Survey may take up to 15 minutes)
3. Issuing of Family Satisfaction Scale to participants prior to workshop (Survey may take 5-10 minutes)
4. Presentation and participation in 4-B workshop sessions
5. Issuing of an evaluation of the workshop survey 2 months after the workshop

Come and learn how to handle conflict and experience improved family satisfaction

PRINCIPLES TO BE COVERED

• What the Bible says about conflict and the family?
• Is conflict good or bad?
• What is my conflict management style?
• How can I experience family satisfaction through how I manage conflict?

How can you be a part of this wonderful journey to making our families and church better?

Sing Up Now!
Spaces are limited
The first 20 families or 30 persons complete surveys for free!

For more information Contact:
areid@adventistontario.org
or 416 616 3567
APPENDIX D

SEMINAR OUTLINE AND SAMPLE POWERPOINT
The TKI Conflict Mode Workshop
Held, November 16 – February 2017
Presenter: A. M. Reid (Andrews University Student)

Purpose of Seminar: To equip and evaluate participants’ perspectives on the spiritual and relational value of developing conflict management skills, to improve satisfaction.

Seminar 1-November 16, 2016

Getting Started
Identifying the Seminar Objectives
A Theological Framework
   Conflict in the Biblical Context
   Cosmic Conflict
   Outcome of the Cosmic Conflict
A Theoretical Framework
   Types of Conflict
   Causes of Conflict
   Communication and Conflict
   Assessing the Conflict Process
   Constructive and Destructive Conflict

Seminar 2-December 10, 2016

Understanding Conflict Modes
Looking at Preferred Modes
Introducing Online Self-Assessment TKI Participants Results
Interpreting Your Scores
Dimensions of Conflict
Acquiring Conflict Skills

Seminar 3, Part 1-January 21, 2017

Competing
Understanding the Competing Mode
Competing Mode Skills
Overuse of the Competing Mode
Underuse of the Competing Mode

Collaborating
Understanding the Collaborating Mode
Collaborating Mode Skills
Overuse of the Collaborating Mode
Underuse of the Collaborating Mode
Seminar 4, Part 2-February 4, 2017

**Compromising**
Understanding the Compromising Mode
Compromising Mode Skills
Overuse of the Compromising Mode
Underuse of the Compromising Mode

**Avoiding**
Understanding the Avoiding Mode
Avoiding Mode Skills
Overuse of the Avoiding Mode
Underuse of the Avoiding Mode

**Accommodating**
Understanding the Accommodating Mode
Accommodating Mode Skills
Overuse of the Accommodating Mode
Underuse of the Accommodating Mode
Conclusion and Evaluation
Getting Started (15 mins)

- Warm up activity
  1. Say a little about yourself (e.g. name, what you do, your passion)
  2. Select one of the themes below and comment:
     1. If money were no object, what would be your ideal vacation?
     2. Complete the statement, "In high school, I..."

Objectives

- Understand a biblical framework of conflict
- Become more aware of your own conflict style
- Recognize the conflict styles of others
- Assess conflict situations
- Practice using different conflict modes

Conflict is . . .

any situation in which your concerns or desires differ from those of another person

A Theological Framework

- Conflict in the Biblical Context
  - Cosmic Conflict (Genesis 3; Revelation 12:7-12; Isaiah 14: 12-14; Ezekiel 28: 12-18)
  - Microcosmic Conflict
- Outcome of the Cosmic Conflict
  - Vertical impact – Spiritual
  - Horizontal impact – Social

A Theological Framework Cont’d

- Causes of Conflict
  - Biblical Cause (Isaiah 14:
  - Relational Causes (Power, Culture, Goals, etc.)
- Outcomes of Conflict
  - Constructive vs Destructive
  - Functional vs Dysfunctional
Classifications or Types of Conflict

- Types of Conflict
  - Procedural
  - Goal
  - Intrapersonal
  - Interpersonal
  - Substantive

Understanding the Conflict Modes

Two basic aspects of all Conflict-handling modes

As cooperativeness

Your Conflict Mode = Skill + Situation

The Five Conflict-Handling Modes

Competing

"My way or the highway"

- Taking quick action
- Making unpopular decisions
- Standing up for vital issues
- Protecting yourself

Competing Skills

- Arguing or debating
- Using rank, position, or influence
- Asserting your opinions and feelings
- Standing your ground
- Stating your position clearly

Overuse of Competing

- Lack of feedback
- Reduced learning
- Low empowerment
- Surrounded by "yes people"
REFERENCE LIST


CURRICULUM VITA

Name: Anthony Michael Reid

Date of Birth: April 22

Family: wife: Wendy; daughter: Amarissa

Education:

2019  Doctor of Ministry in Family Ministries, Emphasis: Conflict Management, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI
2014  Clinical Pastoral Training/Education: 4 Units, Canadian Association of Spiritual Care, Toronto, Canada and College of Pastoral Supervision and Psychotherapy, New York, NY
2004  Master of Arts in Pastoral Theology, Inter-American Adventist Theological Seminary, Miami, FL
1995  Bachelor of Arts in Religion, Northern Caribbean University, Mandeville, Jamaica

Ordination:

2002  Central Jamaica Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, West Indies Union

Experience:

2019-Present  Pastor, Mount Gilead Seventh-day Adventist Church, Toronto, Canada
2016-2019  Pastor, Kingsview Village Seventh-day Adventist Church, Toronto, Canada
2013-2016  Associate Pastor, Immanuel Seventh-day Adventist Church, Toronto, Canada
2009-2013  Associate Pastor, Apple Creek Seventh-day Adventist Church, Markham, Canada
2006-2009  Director of Family Ministries and Religious Liberty, Central Jamaica Conference of Seventh-day Adventist, Spanish Town, Jamaica
1996-2006  District Pastor, in Moneague, Highgate, May Pen, Waterford, Central Jamaica Conference of Seventh-day Adventist, Spanish Town, Jamaica