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A Design for Learning and Developing Skills for Handling Interpersonal and Substantive Conflict in the Ardmore, Oklahoma, Seventh-day Adventist Church

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A DESIGN FOR LEARNING AND DEVELOPING SKILLS FOR HANDLING INTERPERSONAL AND SUBSTANTIVE CONFLICT IN THE ARDMORE, OKLAHOMA, SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH

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HANDLING INTERPERSONAL AND SUBSTANTIVE
CONFLICT IN THE ARDMORE, OKLAHOMA,
SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH

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

by
Jan Gary Johnson
July 1986
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A project report presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree Doctor of Ministry

by

Jan Gary Johnson

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21 July 1986
ABSTRACT

A DESIGN FOR LEARNING AND DEVELOPING SKILLS FOR HANDLING INTERPERSONAL AND SUBSTANTIVE CONFLICT IN THE ARDMORE, OKLAHOMA, SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH

by

Jan Gary Johnson

Chairman: Garth D. Thompson
ABSTRACT OF GRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH

Project Report

Andrews University
Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

Title: A DESIGN FOR LEARNING AND DEVELOPING SKILLS FOR HANDLING INTERPERSONAL AND SUBSTANTIVE CONFLICT IN THE ARDMORE, OKLAHOMA, SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH

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Problem

While a great deal of attention has been given in conflict literature to the role of intra-church structures and the political/managerial processes and strategies for conflict intervention and/or management, this project is more concerned with relational matters. That is, the problem addressed in this project is the teaching of certain skills that would help church members preserve their interpersonal relationships even though engaged in conflict. The thesis is that an enlightened
understanding of conflict and the development of certain communication skills can significantly affect how the parishioner perceives conflict and thus how he/she will behave in conflictive situations thereby reducing the strained interpersonal relationships and alienation that often follows in the wake of conflict.

Method

A conflict skills curriculum was developed for the Ardmore Seventh-day Adventist church. Participants in the project were volunteers from the congregation who met weekly from February 5 to March 27, 1986, for a total of eight sessions. The participants were tested prior to the seminar and again at its conclusion. The same instrument was also administered to a control group for the purpose of comparison (nonequivalent control group design with pretest and posttest). The question addressed by the instrument was, "Will a seminar on conflict change the participants' attitude and feelings about conflict?"

Results

A comparison of the results of the treatment group and the control group indicate a significant change in the attitude of the treatment group toward conflict. This change indicates a higher level of tolerance for conflict and a feeling on the part of the participants that they can deal more effectively with conflict. It
can be assumed that this change resulted from exposure to the conflict skills curriculum.

Conclusions

Indications are that a lay training program in conflict skills development may be effective in raising the level of tolerance for conflict and develop certain interpersonal communication skills that may result in reducing the negative effects of conflict as it relates to interpersonal relationships.
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INTRODUCTION

Purpose of the Project

Surprise is perhaps the best word to describe our feelings about conflict in the church. Many mistakenly believe that the love and caring of its members would protect the church from conflictive experiences. When conflict develops, this erroneous opinion leads to feeling that the church has somehow failed. However, the fact that Christians care is a contributive reason why they sometimes engage in conflict; if one does not care about another--about what another is doing or believing--then one will not be motivated to disagree (confront, conflict, fight, argue, etc.) with another. If conflict can be connected with caring, and if the church is the epitome of a caring community, then the presence of conflict in the church should not be surprising and, in fact, should be expected.

The fact that the church is a caring community is instructive in an additional sense. An approach to the management of conflict needs to avoid a mechanistic orientation that seeks to resolve certain issues in conflictive situations but does not bring reconciliation between the antagonists. It seems reasonable to assume
that the management of conflict in the church should take on an aspect that is uniquely Christian. The theological understanding of the church is that the church hopes for more than other institutions; it not only seeks for a community experience and fellowship that transcends secular organizations, but also it seeks that goal by training and instructing its membership. This training should certainly include methods that are both Christian and effective that would help Christians deal with interpersonal and organizational strife in such a way that interpersonal relationships are ultimately affirmed.

Toward this end, this project reports on the development and implementation of a conflict training curriculum designed to form new attitudes in the minds of the participants toward conflict as well as provide training in certain communication skills that tend to facilitate understanding and promote deepening interpersonal commitment.

Justification of the Project

My interest in the dynamics of conflict especially as it affects interpersonal relationships developed as I reflected on and evaluated a personal pastoral experience. In the spring of 1980, I was invited to pastor a two-church district in the Mountain View conference. At the time I accepted the position, I was informed that a conflict existed in the district. The
opinion was conveyed to me that since the conflict was largely theological in nature and seemed to be agitated primarily by the pastor, once he was replaced the controversy would evaporate. As it turned out, however, this underestimated the strength and course of the conflict. A number of distressing factors were immediately evident—communication was emotionally charged, suspicion was rampant, accusations were flying, conspiracies were suspected, conspiracies were present, and "the other side" was seen as the enemy.

The course and impact of conflict in this district exhibited the classic characteristics of conflict's negative results. It resulted in the disintegration of church resources (loss of members, money, and energy); it resulted in dysfunction in the church's program as resources (energy) were spent on nonproductive issues; and it resulted in dissociation as members experienced the agony of interpersonal hostility.¹

As I spoke to my colleagues, I discovered that mine was not an unusual case; most pastors experienced conflict in the pastorate to one degree or another. This casual observation was subsequently verified by several sources. Research carried out by Andrews University Institute of Church Ministry indicates that conflict

issues rank high in areas of pastoral frustration and disappointment.\textsuperscript{1} For instance, pastors ranked the item, "Poor interrelationships between members," fifth in an overall ranking of ten with twenty items ranked. Perhaps it is just such a reaction to conflict that led Ronnie Littlejohn to assert in his article, "Ministering to Antagonists,"

> It occurred to me that the basic obstacle to happiness in church vocations had very little to do with theology or proper biblical interpretation. On the contrary, the nagging exaggeration of what was said (or not said) to this or that person; the opposition over moving a Sunday School class; the different impressions over what games to play in the fellowship hall; or how many hymns to have the congregation sing as opposed to the number sung by the choir all seem to be much greater threats to a happy and fruitful ministry.\textsuperscript{2}

Another study conducted among Lutheran laymen reported characteristics that they felt pastors should exhibit. The study ranked seventy-seven characteristics of ministry as they perceived their importance. Two characteristics in this study related specifically to conflict: "Creative use of conflict," and "Encouragement of expression of disagreement." Laymen ranked these twenty-fifth and forty-first respectively out of a possible seventy-seven characteristics.\textsuperscript{3} However, in


\textsuperscript{2}\textit{Church Administration} 23 (December 1980): 17.

\textsuperscript{3}Milo L. Brekke, Merton P. Strommen, and Dorothy
their summary, the authors of this study placed even
greater emphasis on these elements of ministry by
evaluating them as items that "contribute very much" to
an effective ministry.¹

Finally, two well-known authors in the area of
business management, Kenneth W. Thomas and Warren H.
Schmidt, report that managers spend about 20 percent of
their time dealing with conflict.² One may wonder if
pastors who are responsible for managing the church would
devote any less time to conflict. While our reasoning
may tell us that conflict should not exist in the church,
the obvious fact is that it does exist. But the recogni-
tion or admission of the presence of conflict is not
enough. There must be hope and belief that it can be
managed constructively. What needs to be understood is
that the church can have both harmony and love while at
the same time having disagreements. Disagreements do not
necessitate disharmony. Division need not spawn hatred.
Contention can exist within community.

¹L. Williams, Ten Faces of Ministry (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1979), pp. 13, 131.

²Brekke, et al., p. 195. The items were ranked
into eight levels from "absolutely essential for
effective ministry" to "absolutely disqualifying." "Contributes very much" to an effective ministry is the
second level under "absolutely essential."

³"A Survey of Managerial Interests with Respect to
Conflict," Academy of Management Journal 19 (June
Definition of Terms

For the purpose of this project, the word "conflict" is viewed as a neutral term that expresses the presence of perceptual differences between people. These differences may or may not be acted upon or they may or may not be acted upon in a negative or disruptive fashion. According to this definition, conflict is first perceived in the mind before it is exhibited in behavior.

This view of conflict allows for two elements that are essential to this project. First, viewing conflict as a neutral element allows for the possibility that either negative and/or positive outcomes can result from conflict. With this understanding of conflict, its presence, course, and management can be understood in the setting of the church.

Second, if conflict is seen as first experienced on the perceptual level, then intervention strategies can be constructed that seek to alter the perceptual functions in such a way that the negative outcomes of conflict are minimized in overt behavior. That is, effective conflict management includes not only procedural or mechanistic strategies but also strategies that will alter the mental processes from which conflictive behavior springs.

Overview

Formally stated, the task of this project is to
design and implement a program that will teach human relationship skills that will potentially improve acceptance and affirmation among the members of the Ardmore, Oklahoma, Seventh-day Adventist church as they face interpersonal and/or substantive conflict within the church. The thesis asserts that as members of a congregation are enlightened by a biblical perspective of the nature of the church and by contemporary knowledge of human behavior, they can learn to disagree over perceived facts, methods, goals, or values without experiencing the complication of disintegrating human relationships.

Chapter 1 reviews three theological positions currently espoused in conflict literature comparing the insights they contribute to an understanding of conflict; it analyzes these theological positions as largely a manward perspective of conflict; and it seeks to build a theological model of conflict from a Godward perspective of conflict. Chapter 2 reviews representative conflict literature and explores three widely held assumptions about conflict that have a bearing on the conclusions of this project; it explores educational sources in order to develop a theoretical base for learning; it reviews and analyzes two curricula widely available to church groups that seek to teach conflict management principles; and it develops an educational philosophy based on the foregoing material. Chapter 3 describes the congregation, the participants, the Conflict Skills Seminar, and the
schedule of events. Chapter 4 is an evaluation of the seminar that reviews the results from the Conflict Attitude Test; reviews the responses on the participant Feedback Sheets; reviews the conclusions of the pastor; and offers recommendations for further research.

**Limitations of the Project**

Though it is hoped that there will be certain elements in this project that will meet the needs of Christian bodies generally, the narrow scope of this project must be recognized. First, the theological approach used in this paper to justify the project and the curriculum materials selected for use was developed from a certain theological and doctrinal bias. However, one can hardly approach any issue without attempting to make sense of it by processing it through personal biases. Instead of being a liability, one's personal viewpoint enriched by environmental factors can provide a researcher with the tools necessary to produce something of significant value for his/her situation that may possibly be of value to others. Therefore, it is hoped that the theology and curriculum developed here will be valuable to other researchers dealing with this subject whatever their biases.

Second, the curriculum materials were selected to meet the needs of the group for which they were used. It remains to be seen if their effectiveness can be
established in a wider application than indicated by this project.

Third, this project should not be construed as a method of conflict eradication. While it is hoped that those who are exposed to the curriculum developed in this project will be less likely to engage in disruptive behavior in conflictive situations, it may have the effect of actually raising the level of conflict in the church. For instance, instead of withdrawing from conflict or denying the presence of conflict, participants in the seminar may acquire the skills necessary to confront, question, and challenge albeit in a loving and caring manner.
CHAPTER ONE

A THEOLOGY OF CONFLICT

Preliminary Considerations

Conflict is so much a part of social life that it has come to be considered by many theorists as inescapable, inevitable, often legitimate, and perhaps even desirable.\(^1\) Since the church has many characteristics in common with other societal institutions,\(^2\) it should not be surprising to find conflict in the church as well.\(^3\) Recognition or admission of the presence of conflict in the church, however, is not enough. There need to be some hope and belief that conflict can be managed constructively so that human relationships are


affirmed while the negative effects of conflict are minimized. It is the position of this paper that for such to occur requires not only an intelligent understanding of the processes of conflict but also a commitment by church leaders to the practice of good conflict management techniques.

The bases of a clear understanding of conflict and its management begin with a careful theological study. The doctrines and convictions of the Christian faith, which are seated in such biblical themes as reconciliation, forgiveness, peace, covenants, the Holy Spirit, the church as the body of Christ, and members of the body gifted for ministry, seem to indicate that the church is custom-made for conflict ministry and healing.¹

It is as such themes are considered that one discovers that one's approach to conflictual situations will of necessity differ from those who approach conflict with a different set of values and norms. This difference is most clearly seen in the fact that the Christian, especially the Christian pastor and administrator, will approach conflict situations as additional occasions where the ministry of reconciliation can be exercised. It is precisely at this point that the Christian perception differs from other approaches to conflict. On the one hand, most conflict management

¹Lynn R. Buzzard and Laurence Eck, Tell It to the Church (Elgin, Ill.: David C. Cook, 1982), p. 15.
material deals with the satisfactory handling and resolution of the issues that divide, while on the other hand, the Christian approach should tend to be concerned with the persons who experience the division. In other words, the Christian should be person-oriented as well as issue-oriented.

There is, then, the potential for a unique approach that the Christian faith can give to the study and handling of conflict. The question is, How will Christians be taught and directed by Christianity in these matters?

The answer to this question comes into focus through the study of the theology of conflict.¹ Such a

¹Paul Tillich defines theology as "... the normative and systematic presentation of a concrete realization of the concept of religion" in What Is Religion? (New York: Harper and Row, 1969), p. 33. Norman Shawchuck describes the work of theology as "... the prayerful process of discerning how God may think and act in a given situation, in order that we may know how to think and act in such situations" (How to Manage Conflict in the Church: Understanding and Managing Conflict, vol. 1 [Indianapolis: Spiritual Growth Press, 1983], p. 8). There may be a question in the mind of some whether theology is necessary or even meaningful in today's world. Richard G. Hutcheson seeks for a balanced understanding. He says that "systematic theology is not the style of the times." He further notes that today is an age of "theological pluralism" instead of the theological normalism that undergirded the work of such men as Aquinas or Calvin. This pluralism, according to Hutcheson's argument, makes a "commonly accepted theology of management"... neither possible nor desirable today." However, even though he suggests that a systematic theology is no longer possible he recommends that church leaders still need to "think theologically" about what they are doing (Wheel within the Wheel: Confronting the Management Crisis of the Pluralistic Church [Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1979], pp. 11, 24).
study is necessary in order for the church to understand how to fulfill its task of ministering meaningfully in settings of human fragmentation and alienation.\footnote{Larry L. McSwain and William C. Treadwell, Jr., \textit{Conflict Ministry in the Church} (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1981), p. 19.} Without this study, the "reality of conflict will remain a mystery"\footnote{Ibid.} and, therefore, its proper remedy will be lost to the church's view.

An additional reason for undertaking a study of the theology of conflict is based on the fact that the church must first be enlightened by a biblical understanding of the matter before other approaches such as those espoused by the social sciences can be evaluated properly. Those who would undertake such a study must remember that twentieth-century mankind more than ever speaks a secular language.\footnote{James Hitchcock, \textit{What Is Secular Humanism?} (Ann Arbor: Servant Books, 1982), pp. 7-17.} This situation presents a challenge for the church. That is, the language with which the church feels most comfortable and from which it derives its values, message, and mission is by and large a language foreign to society as a whole. At the same time, the secular humanistic philosophy\footnote{Hitchcock defends the use of the term "secular humanism" (ibid., p. 7).} that now permeates the social sciences and enjoys wide popularity in

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item Ibid.
\item Hitchcock defends the use of the term "secular humanism" (ibid., p. 7).
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
society is to a great degree a language foreign to the church. The issue facing the church is whether it is possible to reconcile itself to the differences without compromising the purpose for which the church was founded.

Robert C. Worley, who has sought to understand and explain the nature of the church in terms developed by the social sciences, has addressed the problem under discussion by suggesting that the church should "explore the possibility of developing a relation between theology and the social sciences, particularly organizational theory, to see if appropriate terms can be found for reflecting about the church and its ministry."¹ He reasons that our "religious language" no longer conveys meaning to society.² In fact, he goes on to say that "The languages of behavioral and social sciences may apply more extensively to our society than do any other languages at this moment."³

A first reaction to such a suggestion is perhaps resistance. However, one must keep in mind that many of the terms that the church considers religious (e.g., nomos, law; hilaskomai, propitiate; apolutrosis, redemption) are expressions that were first found in the

²Ibid.
³Ibid.
pagan world but gained acceptance in the New Testament church as the best expression of a spiritual reality.¹ Often the usage of these words was altered significantly as the early Christians filled them with new meaning.²

If it is the case that the church from its earliest days borrowed from secular language those terms which suited its purpose, then one should not now expect the situation to have changed. However, it is important to be aware of the dangers inherent in such thinking. For instance, it is possible that with the adoption of a new vocabulary will come new ideas that ultimately can change the complexion of the institution in ways which were not perceived at the outset.³

Church leaders need to think theologically about what is happening. As leaders search the social sciences for suitable ideas and methods, the question must be asked, Is what we are doing congruent with what we believe?⁴ While it may be a temptation to allow


²Bruce, p. 159.

³Norman C. Kraus, The Authentic Witness (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979), p. 14. Conversely, Kraus points out that "Even though an orthodox vocabulary is adopted and behavior patterns are codified" there is no guarantee that "social institutions, whether religious, economic, or political, will remain true to the original intention and purposes of their founder."

⁴Hutcheson, p. 24.
experience to dictate theology, the reverse must be true. In the words of David Haney, "Our experience needs to be stabilized by sound theology."\(^1\)

It is possible, then, for a Christian to acquire insights that come from ideas and methods generated within the social sciences, but such insights must always be evaluated in the light provided by revelation.\(^2\) It is important to remember that while both Christianity and social science are concerned with the nature of mankind and its institutions, they have conflicting presuppositions. That is, while Christianity is seated in the creation-fall-redeemption account of mankind's origin, social science holds a humanistic view of mankind that "asserts the dignity and worth of man and his capacity for self-realization through reason and that often rejects supernaturalism."\(^3\) This difference between Christian theology and humanistic social science is the subject of the remainder of this chapter.


\(^3\)Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary, 8th ed. (1981), s.v. "Humanism." Humanism had its foundation in the work of the 14th century Italian, Petrarch, "whose scholarship and enthusiasm for classic Latin writings
Creation--Not Mankind Apart from God

The creation account is a fruitful source of study that enlightens the learner with regard to the meaning of being, the origin and nature of alienation, and the necessity of redemption. It is against this backdrop that the reality and significance of conflict becomes clear.

Views of the Origin of Conflict

It should be said at the outset that the preponderance of those in the Christian community who have recently reflected on the subject of conflict seem not to have adequately considered either the nature of conflict or its origin. Instead, most authors simply accept the presence of conflict as normal and concern themselves with more pragmatic issues such as the methods of managing conflict.¹

¹ See Lynn R. Buzzard and Juanita Buzzard, Resolving Our Differences (Elgin, Ill.: David C. Cook, 1982); Flynn, Great Church Fights; Arnold Kurtz, "The Pastor As a Manager of Conflict in the Church," Andrews
While it is true that conflict seems to be a constant part of all human experience, one may ask if it was God's original plan for mankind. By way of example, Christians generally propose that sin was not originally a part of God's creation. However, sin may be considered a "normal" part of human existence now in the sense that it is "common" to all humans; at the same time it must be pointed out that sin is a corruption of the creation.¹ That is, God did not create mankind for sin; further, he does not plan to allow his creation to remain in sin.² Therefore, while sin may be considered the normal experience of mankind's current state, in its broader context it has to be seen as a temporary aberration in God's creation. It remains to be seen if the same must be said of conflict. At any rate, it is clear that a

¹Rom 3:23; 8:19-23.
²1 Cor 15:52; Rev 21:4.
consideration of creation and the subsequent fall of mankind not only influences one's understanding of such things as the presence of sin but may also contribute to one's understanding of the nature of conflict. This in turn would essentially affect the development of methods and tools for dealing with interpersonal or intragroup conflict.

Therefore, it is the pursuit of an adequate understanding of the nature of conflict that compels one to look for its possible origins. It can be seen that a definition of conflict is largely affected by one's view of its origin. In search of its origin a brief overview of three views of the origin of conflict is considered. These views are not meant to be exhaustive; they are, rather, instructive synopses in that they offer guidance as the subject in question is pursued.

**Conflict originated with sin**

The first view of the origin of conflict to consider is that all conflict and division is the result of the fall. G. C. Berkouwer, for instance, states emphatically that "division of the Church has its origin in human sin."¹ He continues by saying,

... one's personal life always embraces continuing sinfulness, nearly unavoidable

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¹The Church (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976), p. 33. Though Berkouwer is primarily concerned here with denominationalism, he reasons that it is human sin that causes conflicts which result in such divisions.
imperfection, . . . and that his continuing resistance can also be noted in the Church.¹

A similar view is espoused by Ben Patterson in an article published in the conflict and crisis issue of Leadership. There he asks, "Why is there church conflict in the first place?"² He answers as follows:

It's because we church people are sinners.... Church conflict will always find its roots in our passion to make ourselves--our needs, our opinions, our group, our goals, our theology--the center of the universe.³

Further, McSwain and Treadwell, suggest that mankind was meant to lead a conflict-free existence as is witnessed by mankind's condition prior to the fall. They base their view on the argument that prior to the fall the "divine expectation" for mankind was rooted in the fact that both human and divine-human relationships are portrayed in scripture as "communication without distortion and communion without fracture."⁴

So it would seem, according to this view, that God created mankind free from the elements that produce interpersonal conflict. Since this view holds that both conflict and sin have a common origin in the fall, it would be natural to see conflict--if not as an extension

¹Berkouwer, The Church, pp. 33-34.
²"A Small Pump at the Edge of the Swamp?" Leadership 1 (Spring 1980): 42.
³Ibid. See also, Shawchuck, How to Manage Conflict, pp. 8-9.
⁴Conflict Ministry, p. 21.
of sin, then certainly--as a result of sin. In either case, it would follow that as humans are redeemed from sin they must also be redeemed from conflict. The inescapable conclusion is that conflict is as unwelcome, destructive, and foreign to the church as is sin. Realistically, however, exponents of this view admit and justify the presence of both conflict and sin in the church by saying that the church is a community of sinners who are being saved by grace.¹

While it is true that this view answers some of the questions regarding the origin and nature of conflict, its primary weakness is that since conflict is so closely tied to sin it does not easily allow for benefits that obviously can come from some conflict situations. The weakness of this view, however, is the strength of the view to be discussed next.

Conflict results from human limitations

A second view of the origin of conflict holds that it is less a result of direct and immediate personal sin and more a result of social or psychosocial factors. Perry and Peterson, for instance, say that conflict develops when there is a failure to use the "tools and skills that God has put at our disposal to allow us to function productively as human beings in organizational

¹McSwain and Treadwell, p. 24.
relationships."¹ They further define these "tools" as "clear communication, design, purpose, goals, organization, and rules or controls for proper behavior."²

In like manner, Buzzard and Eck suggest that conflict results from genuine and important differences that naturally exist between people. They identify these differences in terms of values, goals, or means to achieve goals and suggest that these differences lead to controversy that "draws out our competitiveness, ego insecurities, and sensitivities."³

This view traces the origin of conflict to the limitations of being human rather than to human sin. Such factors as differing social histories, values, and life-styles all combine to create natural barriers in interpersonal relationships. In this vein, Robert C. Richard and Dell Olsen hold that

... these differences can hardly be thought of as "sinful" since they are a result of a sociological process which is different for everyone. Conflicts arising out of the differences, therefore, are a result of the limitations of the human situation.⁴

This is not seen to suggest, however, that sin does not play a part in conflictive situations. Richard

¹P. 15.
²Ibid.
³P. 23.
and Olsen further point out that in their view sin may enter in when "conflict management . . . [is] met with selfish and egocentric responses."\(^1\) They conclude, however, that "conflict per se does not have to be considered sinful and thus always thought of as a 'bad' experience in the life of the local congregation.\(^2\)

Along similar lines, Newbold contends that "conflict is not immoral; it is amoral."\(^3\) That is, "It can come out of a sin; but it need not be sinful."\(^4\) In fact, for Newbold conflict is "a natural result of human interaction, and is inherent in organization [sic]."\(^5\)

As a result of viewing conflict in more positive terms than the previous view, it is not surprising that exponents of this view tend to speak in terms of its management rather than its eradication. The theological justification for this position is based in the proposition that conflict itself existed prior to the fall albeit exacerbated by the fall. Note Richard and Olsen's comment:

We need to recognize that the amount and intensity of conflict and the degree of difficulty in managing

\(^1\)P. 7.
\(^2\)Ibid.
\(^3\)"Conflict in the Black Church," p. 99.
\(^4\)Ibid.
\(^5\)Ibid.

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it would be considerably lessened had there never been the Fall. ¹

It is significant that Richard and Olsen speak in terms of the "amount and intensity" of conflict being affected by the fall rather than conflict itself being introduced by the fall.

It would seem to follow, then, that according to this view, if conflict existed prior to the fall, either God created it or he created the elements that produced it. In either case G. Douglass Lewis seems to suggest that God is responsible for it because of the fact that he created humans as "intentional beings (beings with wills)" with the freedom to decide, take action, and even to separate themselves from God.² That is to say, he is responsible for the positive elements of conflict, but the negative elements must be assigned to the impact that the fall had on the processes that naturally resided in creation. Further, if conflict was a part of human relations prior to the fall, one should expect conflict to be present in human relationships following the fall.

¹P. 7.

²Notice the comments of G. Douglass Lewis, "Is it God's fault? Yes, in one sense it is! God created us as intentional beings (beings with wills) whose natures are social and historical. . . . Because we are intentional beings we hope and plan for the future. In pursuit of these hopes we encounter others on their quests. Conflict results." Resolving Church Conflicts (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1981), p. 27.
That is to say, in society at large and in the church, conflict will be evident and inevitable.

Though Lewis agrees with Richard and Olsen when they say that conflict cannot be equated with sin, he cautions that their view presents a danger. He points out that in an effort to "legitimatize conflict in the church," Richard and Olsen and other exponents of this view rely heavily on behavioral science explanations of the origin and nature of conflict and as a result, this view may not take "conflict or sin seriously enough."\(^1\)

For instance, referring to the above statement by Richard and Olsen, Lewis says, "... to understand sin as being present only when one is acting selfishly and egocentrically is to misunderstand the nature of sin."\(^2\)

Lewis takes the position that it is possible to take both conflict and sin seriously and see it as pervasive in the human condition and at the same time affirm that "conflict is manageable and sin is redeemable!"\(^3\) To do less, he contends, would result in a laissez-faire posture toward conflict. Lewis comments,

\[\text{Not to take conflict or sin seriously enough subtly tempts one to deny their reality and not work}\]

\(^1\)Pp. 39-40. Kurtz holds that to think of conflict in such psychological terms as the "interaction of desires" eliminates the connotation of good and bad ("Pastor as a Manager of Conflict," p. 113).

\(^2\)P. 40.

\(^3\)Ibid.
at management of conflict or a response to God's redemptive activity.¹

Lewis summarizes his position as follows:

Conflict should not be equated with sin, but inevitably under the conditions of finite existence, our sinful nature makes conflict potentially destructive and debilitating. As willful beings who are invariably sinful, we can be counted on to see things from our perspective and to pursue our fulfillment through the achievement of our goals. At the same time, however, we also have the capacity to be open to, affirm, and care about the concerns of others.²

In summary, it seems that what is seen as the weakness of the first view (i.e., that it was unable to account adequately for the benefits of conflict) is the strength of this second view. Conversely, what is seen as the strength of the first view (i.e., the identification of conflict with human sin) is the weakness of this second view. Additionally, these two views differ as to when conflict originated. While the first view holds that conflict originated with the fall, this second view sees conflict knitted into the fabric of the creation event itself, albeit exacerbated by the fall.

**Conflict results from dualism**

Ronald C. Arnett suggests another view of the origin of conflict which reflects some of the discussion among representatives of the "peace churches."³ Though

¹P. 40.

²Pp. 40-41.

this view does not seem to be widely held, it is, nevertheless, an important one to consider in that it represents an attempt to synthesize the preceding two views.

Foundational to Arnett's argument is his discussion concerning the complexity of human nature which, he says, defies description by any one particular theory.\(^1\) As a result, Arnett sees justification not only in examining various views of the nature of mankind (i.e., theological, psychological, and sociological) but also in synthesizing these, not for the purpose of "correctness or validity," but for the "ability to structure an individual's view of the human."\(^2\)

Basically, he examines two views of human nature. The first says that mankind is essentially evil and has a "natural tendency for evil or choosing alternatives that produce destructive results."\(^3\) The second claims that mankind is "primarily good" seeking to "achieve more meaning and satisfaction from life."\(^4\) Analyzing what on the surface appears to be conflicting philosophies of human nature, Arnett deduces that these views demonstrate that mankind "has almost infinite capacities for both

\(^1\)Pp. 57-58.
\(^2\)P. 57.
\(^3\)P. 58.
\(^4\)P. 62, 65.
good and bad." In other words, both destructive and constructive impulses are resident in human nature revealing what he calls the "dual nature of the human predicament."2

It appears as though Arnett attempts to maintain a tension between what he considers to be two diverse elements in human nature. For him, this dualism explains the presence of pervasive conflict while at the same time giving hope for resolution. Those involved in "peace-making"—Arnett's term for conflict managers—are to invite the goodness of others to come forward by caring for them. However, Arnett admits that while inviting the goodness to emerge in the face of conflict and confrontation, the peacemaker should not be surprised when, because of mankind's evil impulse, the "antithetical response is the answer."3

It seems that there are several weaknesses in Arnett's argument that are relevant to this discussion. First, Arnett fails to trace the evil impulse in human nature to its origin and, thereby, he fails to draw adequate implications as to the meaning of wholeness as may have been intended by God for his creatures.

Second, there is not adequate consideration as to

1P. 65.
2Ibid.
the possible implications of the nature of conflict. If conflict springs from the evil impulses of mankind, then one would have to assume that conflict itself is evil. If such is the case, then one would be led to question the appropriateness of conflict in the church community. However, Arnett is silent on these matters.

Third, Arnett believes that his dualistic view of human nature allows for the incorporation of the learning from "Freud, Lorenz, and Ardrey as well as Rogers, Maslow, and the humanistic movement."¹ However, his theory fails to give the direction necessary to explain how such widely divergent views as those expressed by these persons can be reconciled with each other, much less incorporated into a Christian context. It would appear, then, that there is wide and divergent opinion among those who have sought to understand the origin of conflict. The question to be addressed now is, Is there a view that is compatible with Seventh-day Adventist theology and if so, what is it?²

A Godward View of Conflict

Foundational to Adventist theology is its emphasis on the cosmological nature of the battle between the forces of good and the forces of evil. Since an

¹P. 65.
²Seventh-day Adventist is referred to as Adventist through the remainder of this paper.
Adventist view of conflict is flavored by this foundational theology, it seems necessary to discuss first the nature of what is called in this paper the "Adventist Godward" approach to theology. For the purpose of this study, a Godward approach to theology holds that an ontological understanding of the creature is best delineated in the context of the being and activity of the creator.

**A Godward approach to theology**

A single underlying factor that seems to appear in the foregoing views is that the theology of conflict is referenced primarily from what is referred to here as a "manward" approach to theology. That is to say, in those views it is the study of mankind with consideration as to its origin and/or nature that enlightens the understanding of conflict. For instance, in all three views it seems that when creation is considered, it is primarily mankind in creation that is considered with respect to communication, communion, intentionality, finiteness, and limitations.

Admittedly, one does well to study mankind as one seeks to understand conflict, for it is mankind in its social interactions that is beset with conflict. However, using a manward approach to theology in the study of conflict is to examine only half the evidence, because in the biblical view mankind is not truly mankind
apart from God. This means that humans cannot be fully understood if they are not considered in the context of their creation, fall, and redemption. To look at these elements of mankind's experience is to discover the true nature of mankind's creatureliness; what mankind is in the context of God's action.\(^1\) It is only then that one can begin to discover what mankind was to be, is now, and can become all in the context of the action of God. In effect, a Godward approach to theology enables one to better understand mankind and to account for those elements (such as, conflict) that color mankind's existence.

There is ample evidence for a Godward theology in scripture. Take, for example, the Genesis account of creation. This is not a narrative primarily about mankind, but rather, it is a narrative about God. It is God who moves, acts, speaks, blesses, commands, and redeems in the first three chapters of Genesis.\(^2\) It is God who calls a world into existence, dresses it with a living mantle, and populates it with multiple living creatures. Finally, it is God who creates as a capstone of his creation an image of himself; that is, man and


\(^2\) Gen 1:2-3, 28.
woman.¹ Mankind proceeds from God and represents God's ultimate work in the new creation.² Mankind derives its status, employment, authority, and limitations from God.³ Ultimately, mankind enjoys its fullest identity and meaning in its relationship with God as is witnessed by the institution of the Sabbath rest.⁴ In fact, mankind is only mankind as it is in God, living as it was created to live. Conversely, apart from God, mankind would lose its true identity. Therefore, the fall succeeded in dehumanizing mankind. It dehumanized mankind by marring the image of God in mankind and by causing a rift in human relationships with God.⁵ However, what sin has corrupted, God seeks to correct through reconciliation that is accomplished through God's activity in Jesus. That is, Jesus is the atonement that reunites fallen humans under the banner of redemption with God. Reconciliation, then, is God's recreative act that seeks to restore mankind to the original intent of creation.

This Godward approach to theology is foundational to Adventist theology. For instance, the visions claimed

¹Gen 1:26-27.
²Bonhoeffer, Creation and Fall, p. 36.
³Gen 1:27; 2:15; 1:28, respectively.
⁴Gen 2:1-3.
⁵Bonhoeffer says that man lost his "creatureliness" as the result of the fall (Creation and Fall, p. 72).
by Ellen G. White helped preserve the church from a restrictive Millerite concept of earth cleansing and personal preparation to a cosmological view involving a heavenly sanctuary, God sitting in judgment, and a world preparation.\(^1\) Also, The Great Controversy Between Christ and Satan is not merely the title of the fifth volume of a narrative written by White that covers the history of sin from its inception to its conclusion. The phrase (or its shortened form, "the great controversy," or simply, "the controversy") has also come to be frequently used by Adventists to describe the struggle between the forces of good and the forces of evil in the universe.\(^2\) The history of rebellion that forms the bases of this controversy did not begin, in the Adventist view, with the fall of mankind but with the germination of the seeds of rebellion in Lucifer's mind in heaven.\(^3\) Sin on earth results from and is an extension of the rebellion that rages on a cosmological scale.

It is clear, therefore, that the Adventist view of being and environment is influenced by Godward theology.

\(^1\) Ellen G. White, one of the founders of the Adventist Church, is considered by the church to be an authority on matters of faith.


\(^3\) Idem., Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 35.
Human creation, sin, and redemption tend to be viewed in the context of the great controversy between Christ and Satan and, thus, human experience is seen against the backdrop of cosmological themes and events.

To summarize, then, a Godward approach to theology accomplishes several things. First, it helps to avoid the humanistic trap of attempting to understand mankind by simply observing its current behavior and ignoring or denying the role and influence of the divine element upon mankind. Second, it allows for the possibility of seeing mankind in the context of a grander (and what Adventist's hold to be a more accurate) scheme that takes on universal proportions. And third, it leads to the conclusion that since mankind proceeds from God a factual understanding of mankind's nature and being must be built on information that is embodied within creation itself.

Potential for conflict resident in creation

It has been noted already that rebellion is not an experience restricted just to mankind. In fact, according to the Adventist view there seems to be no created being throughout the universe that is exempt from the possibility of rebellion.¹ If this is the case, the

fact that the potential for rebellion is so universally dispersed leads one to the assumption that the factors that make rebellion possible are resident in creation itself.

One would expect that all creation has certain elements in common (including the potential for rebellion) in that the universe has a common designer. However, recognizing that the universe has a common origin in one designer is not to say that the universe is entirely homogeneous. Even a casual look at creation either on a terrestrial or cosmic scale instructs with regard to elements of diversity within creation (see table 1). In fact, it can be argued that the presence of diversity is as much a result of a common creator as is homogeneity. That is to say, diversity itself is so common and so uniformly dispersed throughout the creation that it can only be attributed to a single creator.

However, diversity within the creation does not necessarily lead to confusion or conflict. It would appear God's design provided a diversity within creation that would be balanced with order and harmony. Even

1 Robert P. Kishner says that the universe is "richly populated with delightful inhomogeneities" ("Giant Voids in the Universe," 1985 Yearbook of Science and the Future [Chicago: Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1984], p. 48). He holds that this results from differing elements that make up the universe. However, he points out that though its parts are inhomogenous when taken on the whole, the "universe is homogeneous"; a principle called the "Cosmological Principle."
this—that is, order and harmony—may be seen as a result of God's creative act.

An example of this diversity in creation is witnessed in the human body. Note, for example, the

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Catagory 1</th>
<th>Catagory 2</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Light</td>
<td>Dark</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heat</td>
<td>Cold</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wet</td>
<td>Dry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matter</td>
<td>Emptiness (Void)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Micro</td>
<td>Macro</td>
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<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Right Hemisphere</td>
<td>Left Hemisphere</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Brain)</td>
<td>(Brain)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

variety of cells that comprise the human organism: red blood cells, white blood cells, muscle cells, cartilage cells, fat cells, bone cells, skin cells, reproductive cells, and nerve cells.\(^1\) These cells not only differ in appearance but also differ in function.\(^2\) It is because of the diversity of these cells—the differing functions carried on in the body—that makes it possible for the body to live, move, and have being.

Nevertheless, there are certain consequences that

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\(^2\)Ibid., p. 27.
naturally emerge from this diversity:

**Potential for tension.** Diversity even within an ordered and harmonious creation would have the potential of producing certain tension. One must assume, however, that the presence of tension in creation does not represent a destructive element that denies or diminishes the balance of order and harmony. In fact, since tension is God-ordered, it might be assumed that its presence is at least not opposed to order and harmony and may, in fact, be a function of it. At any rate, the presence of tension in creation is well supported by laws of the physical sciences that regulate such things as gravity, magnetism, the molecular structure, and the atomic structure. Interestingly, in each of these tension is a positive and constructive force that contributes to the order of the system.

**Positive results of tensions in interpersonal relationships.** What has been said thus far about creation generally can be assumed about humans and human relationships specifically. That God intended diversity within the human family is witnessed by the fact that he not only created a male and female but that he created in both a reproductive system that allows for near infinite variety. In addition, as one considers that God intended for mankind to be individual thinkers and individually accountable to himself, one begins to understand
that the presence of diversity could result in tension.

The orderliness of God would instruct us that this tension was not to lead to disharmony--rebellion--between humans or between humans and God. Instead, it seems logical to assume that the tension that God designed in his creation would effectively result in yet richer human relationships through deeper and more meaningful interpersonal contacts. While strict uniformity of human personality would suggest that a person has no original choice to express affection, the individuality allowed by diversity paves the way for varied ways in which affection could be expressed. Certainly, God did not intend for humans to be exact copies of one another. As diverse creatures, mankind would continually be faced with new facets of interpersonal experience marked by spontaneity and variety. The differences between humans would serve to stimulate a genuine interest between creatures and would form the basis upon which commitment would be built.¹ Any tension that would result from the presence of diversity would be resolved as in all other parts of creation--with balance and order. Instead of

¹A kind of commitment is evident in Adam's choice to enter into Eve's sin rather than be separated from her. See Gen 3:6. White says that Adam understood the nature of Eve's sin and realized that he was faced with a decision of either being separated from God or from her. "Love, gratitude, loyalty to the Creator--all were overborne by love to Eve. . . . He resolved to share her fate; if she must die; he would die with her" (Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 56).
tension giving way to separation and estrangement, it would actually serve to deepen interpersonal relationships.

A glimpse as to how this might work is found in White's description of the so called "counsel of peace." Here she describes a meeting between God the Father and God the Son in which they discuss the plan of redemption. Though both seem agreed as to the goal (i.e., that mankind must be saved), there is "tension" over plans (i.e., how mankind is to be saved). White alludes to this tension when she describes the Son "pleading with His Father" and the Father in a "struggle, ... to yield up His Son to die for the guilty race." This tension, however, did not result in a breakdown of communication. Instead, there is evidence that this tension contributed not only to a resolution that provided for mankind's salvation but also resulted in the defining of roles that the members of the Godhead would take in the plan of salvation.

1White, Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 63.

2Ibid. See also idem, Early Writings, p. 149. It can be argued that even this tension would not have occurred if it had not been for the fall. Admittedly, all creation has been affected in some way by the fall as has the Creator. However, it seems reasonable to assume that the tension evident in this interchange is not a corruption of the perfect harmony that exists in the universe but rather an underlying factor that helps preserve it. For instance, the result of this tension-interchange was the launching of a plan that sought to preserve harmony.
Tension—a potential for conflict. Even though tension may have contributed to the order and harmony of creation prior to the fall, it seems to have been through the avenue of tension that Satan broke the order and balance of creation which resulted in estrangement, separation, and alienation of interpersonal relationships.

It must be said here that one cannot attribute to Satan creative acts. There is only one creator and that is God. Satan is a creature and as a created being he has his limitations.\(^1\) It can be said, then, that Satan did not originate conflict in the sense of creating it. Rather, it seems reasonable to assume that he used the elements already present within creation to form his society in rebellion. In effect, the destruction of order and the introduction of conflict seemingly produced by Satan resulted from his ability to alter what God had ordered.

It can be argued, then, that God implanted in his creation the possibility of disorder and conflict by creating the diversity that produced the tension described earlier. Such would be in keeping with similar acts of God such as the creation of mankind as

\(^1\)Berkouwer has noted that the Christian church has largely rejected two errors concerning the origin of sin (Sin [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1971], pp. 68–69). The first is that God is the origin of sin and the second is that of dualism. Concerning dualism, Berkouwer states, "... she [the church] has denied any notion of a completely autonomous 'counterforce' which has nothing to do with God's originally good creation."
intentional beings with a free will and the creation of the tree of knowledge of good and evil planted in the garden of Eden to test that will.\(^1\)

Having said this, however, it cannot also be said that God is responsible for conflict by creating tension in his creation anymore than it can be said that God created licentiousness when he created human sexuality. Satan will have to assume the responsibility of degrading creation because he altered creation.\(^2\)

This corruption of creation seems to be the pattern of all sin and sinning. In a sense, sin is not a creation but a corruption of those things in creation that God had placed in perfect balance and order (see table 2).

It seems, then, that the doorway to conflict was tensions that God placed in his creation. Though tension was designed for the benefit of the creation, it acted as a doorway through which Satan succeeded in introducing conflict and discord.

**Conflict--a conceptual model**

Generally, theorists define conflict stressing

\(^1\)Gen 2:8-9, 15-17; 3:17.

\(^2\)According to Adventist theology, the azazel of Lev 16 represents Satan who must take the blame and punishment for sin, not as a savior/substitute, but as the cause of sin. *Questions on Doctrine* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald, 1957), p. 397. Berkouwer states clearly, "... God is not the Source, or the Cause, or the Author of man's sin" (*Sin*, p. 27).
either behavior or perception (see Appendix 1, exhibit 1). Kenneth W. Thomas points out that conflict is often defined as a "form of behavior," while noting that his preference is to think of conflict as "the condition in

TABLE 2
THE CORRUPTION OF CREATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>As Created</th>
<th>As Corrupted</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sexuality</td>
<td>Licentiousness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An expression of love</td>
<td>A expression of lust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diet</td>
<td>Gluttony</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eat to live</td>
<td>Live to eat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worship</td>
<td>Idolatry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An expression of gratitude</td>
<td>An expression of manipulation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Happiness</td>
<td>Self-gratification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serving mankind and God</td>
<td>Serving self</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individuality</td>
<td>Individualism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accountable to God</td>
<td>Accountable to self</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

which the concerns of two or more parties appear to be incompatible."¹ Though he does not state it specifically, it seems justifiable to understand "concerns" as the result of how one perceives situations. Thomas further notes that it is useful to think of conflict in such terms because

This definition has the advantage of separating conflict from the behaviors that people use to deal

with it, so that one can talk about the effectiveness of different "conflict-handling behaviors". . . .

It is apparent that Thomas chooses to view conflict in terms of one's perception of a situation rather than one's behavior in a situation for utilitarian reasons. One may wonder if a Christian interpretation of conflict might benefit as well by adopting the same distinction as Thomas between behavior and perception. For example, those in the Christian community who define conflict in terms of behavior generally support the first view of the origin of conflict above--conflict originated with human sin--and also, they tend to view conflict as destructive with little positive resulting from it.2

On the other hand, those who define conflict in terms of how one perceives a situation tend to hold to

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{1}}P. 56.

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{2}}McSwain and Treadwell, who support this position, seem on the surface to hold both views; conflict is conflictive behavior as well as perceptually based. They first define conflict as "... those experiences of individuals and groups trying to achieve goals which are incompatible" which stresses conflict as behavior. Then they quote Ross Stagner (Conflict is "a situation in which two or more human beings desire goals which they perceive as being attainable by one or the other but not by both") which is a definition of conflict in terms of perception. They resolve this tension between behavior and perception by including "attitudes" among what they see as one of the four sources of conflict. Therefore, in effect, their primary definition of conflict stresses behavior while admitting that attitudes are a contributing cause of conflict (Conflict Ministry, p. 25); Ross Stagner, ed., The Dimensions of Human Conflict (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1967), p. 136, quoted by McSwain and Treadwell, Conflict Ministry, p. 25.
the second view of the origin of conflict--conflict results from human limitations. These theorists also tend to view conflict as neither good nor bad but simply as existing in all human relationships. For this group, the outcome of conflict whether positive or negative depends to a great extent on how it is handled.1

If conflict is to be defined, it must be defined in relationship to a theological framework. Whether it can be adequately accounted for in the framework of the above theology is the question now addressed.

Table 3 sets forth a conceptual model that not only clarifies the nature of conflict by drawing a distinction between the cognitive processes and overt behavior but also seeks to distinguish between the perceptual and the thinking/reasoning (cogitative) functions within the cognitive processes. The distinction here is between how reality is understood and the rational powers that process understanding into action.

Reality is understood through the process of perception. J. W. Kalat defines "perception" as referring both to the "experience of gaining sensory information about the world of people, things, and

\footnote{For example, Richard and Olsen state, "We wish to emphasize that . . . conflict properly managed can become the key to new growth and at the cutting edge of positive human development" ("Go to Your Corners," p. 7).}
events, and to the psychological processes by which this is accomplished.\textsuperscript{1}

Unfortunately, the world is not perceived the same by all who view it. It seems logical to assume that differences in human perception were magnified as the

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\small
\begin{tabular}{l|c|c}
\hline
 & God's Kingdom & Satan's Kingdom \\
 & of Harmony & of Rebellion \\
\hline
Created & Cognitive processes & Overt behavior \\
 & (altered) & (corrupted) \\
\hline
Perceptual Processes & Cogitative Processes & \\
(altered) & (corrupted) & \\
\hline
Tension & Distortion & Discordant Behavior \\
Sexuality & Discordant Thoughts & Licentious Behavior \\
 & Prurient Thoughts & \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\caption{THEOLOGICAL CONCEPTUAL MODEL OF CONFLICT}
\end{table}

result of alterations that took place in the physical, emotional, and intellectual makeup of mankind as a consequence of the fall. Some authors, as noted earlier, attribute perceptual differences to the limitations of being human. It seems, however, that human differences at this level is best accounted for by admitting the role of sin in reducing the ability of the human organism to

\textsuperscript{1}Encyclopedia of Psychology, 1984 ed., s.v. "Perception."
collect and interpret data about its world.

Stating that the diminished capacity of the organism is a consequence of the fall is not also saying that perceptual deterioration is sin. Rather, it is simply a recognition that the human organism has a reduced capacity as an effect of sin. It may be compared to disease; though not itself sin, it is a consequence or complication of the fall. While perceptual differences indicate a problem of knowing, it is not necessarily a problem of thinking, and certainly, it is not a problem of doing.

The cogitative processes which involve the active thinking or contemplative functions of the mind have been changed as well. These thinking processes involve what humans allow their minds to dwell upon. Conflict entertained here is far more than merely a perceptual difference. Certainly, perceptual differences may lie at the base of cogitative thinking, but at this level of thinking these perceptual differences are nurtured, dissected, and reconstructed by the active thinking processes. It is akin to prurient (lascivious) thoughts in the sexual area. Prurience is more than a function of perception (perceiving that two people differ biologically), it is an active thinking of prurient thoughts about one's own sexuality or another's sexuality.

Dwelling on lustful thoughts results in awakening and nurturing certain emotions (e.g., desires, passions,
etc.) that may eventually lead one to commit a lustful act. Likewise, dwelling on discordant thoughts results in awakening and nurturing certain emotions (e.g., anger, bitterness, fear, etc.) that may eventually lead one to engage in discordant behavior.

This link between the cogitative process and overt behavior works in reverse as well. The discordant actions that reflect discordant thoughts in turn feed new discordant thoughts. Actions that produce disintegrating interpersonal relationships reinforce one's perception that produced the discordant actions in the first place and this in turn produces yet more discordant behavior.

The distinction that this theological model of conflict makes between perception, cogitation, and overt behavior is helpful for several reasons. First, on the basis of theological reflection it provides an understanding of conflict that allows the church not only to accept the presence of conflict but to welcome conflict in certain cases. Whether it is referred to as human limitations or perceptual differences, the fact remains that Christians often view situations differently. The differing viewpoints that result from differing perspectives should be welcomed as an opportunity of seeing a fuller representation of reality.

This position also seems to be supported by

1Alan C. Filley, Interpersonal Conflict Resolution (Glenview, Ill.: Scott, Foresman and Co., 1975), p. 8.
Pauline theology of the church as the "body of Christ."\(^1\) It not only recognizes great diversity within the church, but it also stresses that this diversity is God-ordained and works for the benefit for the whole. It seems as though the health, stability, and growth of the church organism is related to the way its diverse parts (or members) interrelate.\(^2\) Therefore, the problem as Paul sees it is not that the body is diverse in nature but how its various members relate to each other in their diversity.

Second, if the presence of differing perspectives is recognized as a valuable resource for the church that also has the potential for destructive conflict, then the concerned Christian leader will wish to develop an atmosphere in the church where differing opinions are welcomed and respected while at the same time avoiding corrupted thoughts. It is the thesis of this project that such an atmosphere can be developed in a congregation whereby people can engage in constructive disagreement over facts, methods, goals, or values without experiencing the complication of disintegrating human relationships, evil thoughts, or acts.

Third, the theological conceptual model also teaches that there is a potential for discordant behavior

\(^1\) 1 Cor 12:27. \\
\(^2\) Eph 4:11-16.
that can result in disintegrating human relationships. The Christian leader, then, would need to incorporate into his/her conflict-management strategy a process that would reconcile those who might become estranged by discordant behavior.

The biblical theme of reconciliation holds this hope. It is first seen as a work of God to bring man to himself.\(^1\) That is, God acted to break down the dividing wall by initiating mankind's redemption by inaugurating reconciliation.\(^2\) This has resulted in replacing hostility with peace between God and man.\(^3\) However, reconciliation is not just an activity of God. That is to say, God has also given the "ministry of reconciliation" to those reconciled to him.\(^4\)

The implication is that reconciliation must take priority in the context of a conflict between Christians. If a Christian leader is to be guided by this principle, then he/she will give priority to interpersonal relationships and the restorative nature of reconciliation.

\(^2\) Eph 2:14-16.
\(^3\) Col 1:20.
\(^4\) 2 Cor 5:18-19. See also Donald E. Bossart, *Creative Conflict in Religious Education and Church Administration* (Birmingham: Religious Education Press, 1980), pp. 130-133; Buzzard and Buzzard, pp. 10-12; Buzzard and Eck, pp. 51-52; Kraybill, pp. 12-14.
Conclusions

The theology of conflict discussed above appears to have acknowledged the positive elements of the three views of the origin of conflict discussed earlier in this chapter while at the same time avoiding their negative aspects. For instance, the first view (conflict originated with sin) acknowledges that sin has had an effect on the development of conflict. However, the above theology does not share the opinion that conflict itself is sin. Instead, it prefers to see conflict as a sum of various parts not all of which can be considered sinful.

It is at this point that there is common ground with the second view of conflict (conflict results from human limitations). For instance, one of the ingredients in the conflict model is the perceptual limitations of the human mind. However, while the second view emphasizes a manward approach, tracing limitations to the natural state of being human, the above theology seeks to understand human limitations first as God intended in his perfect creation and then as sin has degraded them. It seems that the error of the second view is that it minimizes the role that sin has played in the developmental aspects of conflict. If one minimizes the role that sin has played in the development of conflict, it would follow that one could also minimize the role redemption plays in the management or resolution of
conflict. The Christian leader must call to mind mankind's spiritual dimension (creation, fall, and redemption) as he/she determines the kinds of approaches (administrative and/or organizational strategies) selected and used in conflictive situations.
CHAPTER TWO

THEORETICAL CONSIDERATIONS THAT UNDERLIE
A STRATEGY OF CONFLICT TRAINING

Introduction

The thrust of this chapter is toward the development of a strategy that will underlie a process of educating church members in certain conflict management skills that will potentially enable them to maintain functional interpersonal relationships while they search for mutually acceptable solutions in conflictive situations.

Toward this end, this chapter first briefly considers recent trends in conflict theory and explores three widely held assumptions about conflict that have a bearing on the conclusions of this chapter. Second, educational sources are explored in order to develop a theoretical base for learning. Third, two approaches widely available to church groups for the purpose of teaching conflict management principles from a Christian perspective are analyzed. Finally, an educational philosophy is developed taking into account the foregoing material.
Conflict Theory in Current Literature

In order to adequately understand the thinking and assumptions of those presently writing on the subject of conflict, it is first necessary to briefly review some recent trends in conflict theory.

Brief review of recent trends in conflict theory

It should first be noted that it is commonly held among conflict theorists that every society has developed some mechanism for resolving conflict.\(^1\) This is recognized to be the case whether that society is considered primitive or technologically and socially advanced.\(^2\) However, at neither pole nor in the continuum of societies can one speak of a singular mechanism used to resolve all conflict. Instead, a society has a plurality of mechanisms each influenced by certain dynamics within society such as its legal, cultural, political, moral, and religious structures. This plurality of mechanisms is a reflection of the kind of pluralism and diversity inherent within society itself. The result is that social scientists find it difficult to generalize about how a specific society resolves


conflict. The best that can be said is that a study of a society's formal organizations may give some insight to the student as to how certain groups within a given society resolve or manage conflict.

What is clear, however, is that the strategies and principles for dealing with conflict used by various organizations within society generally reflect the basic values and philosophy of that society. If this is the case, then one would expect that if the values and philosophy of society change, one would see a corresponding change in the strategies and principles for dealing with conflict. This seems to be the thinking that marks the recent trend in conflict management theory.

A number of factors at work in the twentieth century have directly or indirectly influenced the values and philosophy of society. These factors include the development of the formal discipline of organizational sociology, the human relations movement referred to as Organization Development (OD), and the

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1Likert and Likert, p. 14. "Research in these organizations which brings improvement in their organizational theory and management systems brings with it corresponding improvement in the way conflict is managed" (p. 15).

business-management movement which has produced Management by Objectives (MBO). One thing that has resulted from the research and theories of these groups is a dramatic change in how conflict is perceived and handled.

The changes introduced in conflict strategies as a result of the work of these disciplines is discussed by George F. Wieland and Robert A. Ullrich in their college text, Organizations: Behavior, Design, and Change. These authors see three stages in the development of conflict theory. They refer to the first stage as the "rational, classical approach" to the management of conflict. This approach views conflict as undesirable and, hence, it teaches that the organization should be designed and managed in such a way that limits conflict. The second stage is the "organic or open-system model" which sees conflict as a "temporary disequilibrium to be rectified." Stressing the "dynamic homeostasis" view of conflict, this approach holds that "conflict between the system and its environment is ameliorated through adaptation." The final stage is the "human relations approach" which recognizes not only the continuing existence of conflict but also its importance. Further, Weiland and Ullrich suggest that this last approach has lately made a further adaptation. While this approach was also originally

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1 Hutcheson, pp. 45-46.

concerned with the reduction of conflict, certain views of motivation now indicate that mild levels of conflict in an organization may be more desirable than the complete eradication of conflict taught by earlier approaches.¹

Likert and Likert provide a helpful model illustrating the changes that have recently developed in management.² They plot the characteristics of management on a continuum of one to four—"from structurally rigid to open, responsive systems."³ According to Likert and Likert, primitive societies tend to rely on the punitive treatment of its members (System 1) while at the other end of the continuum (System 4) the supportive treatment and involvement of the members in an organization is emphasized.⁴

Likert and Likert's model illustrates the dramatic shift that has taken place in the theory and practice of

¹Wieland and Ullrich, p. 269.
²Likert and Likert, p. 18.
⁴Likert and Likert, p. 19. A brief description of System 4 follows: "The human organization of a System 4 firm is made up of interlocking work groups with a high degree of group loyalty among the members and favorable attitudes and trust among peers, superiors, and subordinates. Considerations for others and relatively high levels of skill in personal interaction, group problem solving, and other group functions also are present. These skills permit effective participation in decisions on common problems. Participation is used, for example, to establish organizational objectives which are
management. Whereas earlier approaches considered conflict harmful and dysfunctional in achieving organizational objectives and to be avoided,\(^1\) conflict has now largely come to be seen as pervasive in human relationships and perhaps even necessary in organizations.\(^2\) Whereas literature once emphasized conflict resolution, literature now emphasizes conflict management.\(^3\) Whereas managers once avoided conflict at all costs, now managers are taught to welcome certain kinds of conflict as an opportunity for innovation, for

a satisfactory integration of the needs and desires of all the members of the organization and of persons functionally related to it. Members of the organization are highly motivated to achieve the organization's goals. High levels of reciprocal influence occur, and high levels of total coordinated influence are achieved in the organization. Communication is efficient and effective. There is a flow from one part of the organization to another of all the relevant information important for each decision and action. The leadership in the organization has developed a highly effective social system for interaction, problem solving, mutual influence, and organizational achievement. This leadership is technically competent and holds high performance goals" (ibid., p. 16).

\(^1\)Anant R. Negandhi, Conflict and Power in Complex Organizations: An Inter-institutional Perspective (Kent, Oh.: Comparative Administration Research Institute of the Center for Business and Economic Research as the College of Business and Administration of Kent State University, 1972), p. 7.

\(^2\)Wieland and Ullrich, p. 269. "The human relations approach [to management], growing out of the classical and rational theories, recognizes the continuing existence and great importance of conflict and seeks to reduce its toll on members of the organization."

\(^3\)Thomas, "Introduction," p. 56.
the clarification of organizational goals,\textsuperscript{1} and for intimacy.\textsuperscript{2} Whereas differences were once smoothed over, now managers are encouraged to confront differences.\textsuperscript{3}

In this vein, notice Folger and Poole's analysis of the current trend:

Trainers, counselors, consultants, and authors of conflict textbooks point to the potential positive functions of conflict: conflicts allow important issues to be aired; they produce new and creative ideas; they release built-up tension; they can strengthen relationships; they can cause groups and organizations to reevaluate and clarify their goals and missions; they can also result in social change to eliminate inequities and injustice.\textsuperscript{4}

Assumptions of conflict that relate to this paper

There are certain assumptions about conflict that have led theorists to the above conclusions. Three that are commonly held by conflict theorists and that also underlie the approach in this paper, are as follows:

Prevalent nature of conflict. Both technical and popular literature teach that conflict is an inevitable feature of human social life.\textsuperscript{5} Conflict is seen as a

\begin{itemize}
  \item Webber, p. 446.
  \item Hoff, p. 17.
  \item See respectively Cosier and Ruble, p. 816, and
\end{itemize}
pervasive phenomenon both within and between individuals (intrapersonal and interpersonal conflict)\(^1\) and within and between groups (intragroup and intergroup conflict) as well as within organizations.\(^2\)

Since the church is an organization composed of humans, it should not be surprising to find that conflict thrives there as well. Church members and leaders may wish to ignore or avoid it, but as Savage says, "Only the innocent and naive would assume that, as Christians working in the church, they would never get into a conflictive setting." Further, he notes that "Regardless of how hard you try to avoid it, conflict will be your companion in church work."\(^3\)

If conflict is the inevitable companion of church leaders, then leaders would do well not only to study the dynamics of conflict but also to learn effective intervention strategies.

**Functional and dysfunctional conflict.** A number of theorists tend to view conflict as having the potential of being either functional or dysfunctional--

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\(^1\)Leas and Kittlaus, p. 29.


\(^3\)Savage, p. 42.
constructive or destructive.\footnote{Raymond W. Mack and Richard C. Snyder seem to characterize these two--functional and dysfunctional conflict--as alternative views or approaches to conflict. However, most authors seem to link these as alternative results of conflict. This, incidently, seems to be the position to which Mack and Snyder finally subscribe. "The Analysis of Social Conflict--Toward an Overview and Synthesis," in Conflict Resolutions: Contributions of the Behavioral Sciences, ed. Clagett G. Smith (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1971), pp. 4, 16-17. See also Morton Deutsch, The Resolution of Conflict (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1973: reprint ed., Binghamton, New York: Vail-Ballou Press, 1978), pp. 8-10; Savage, pp. 42-43; Folger and Poole, pp. 5-7.} For example, Walton lists five possible constructive consequences of conflict.

First, it may increase the motivation and energy available to do tasks required by the social system. Second, conflict may increase the innovativeness of individuals and the system because of the greater diversity of the viewpoints and a heightened sense of necessity. Third, each person may develop increased understanding of his own position, because the conflict forces him to articulate his views and to bring forth all supporting arguments. Fourth, each party may achieve greater awareness of his own identity. Fifth, interpersonal conflict may be a means for managing the participants' own internal conflicts.\footnote{Walton, p. 5. Kurtz lists three additional positive functions of conflict: (1) "conflict may help to sharpen the issues and enable people to distinguish more clearly between two points of view"; (2) "conflict enhances the principles of democracy and freedom"; and (3) conflict may be a means of "hastening change." "The Pastor as a Manager of Conflict in the Church," p. 114-116.}

Walton also points out that conflict can be destructive in that it can "rigidify the social system" and can "lead to gross distortions of reality."\footnote{Walton, p. 5.}

The fact that conflict has the potential of either
functional or dysfunctional results is as real in a church setting as in a secular setting. The appearance of numerous titles in the bibliography of this paper, which feature conflict ministry in the church, tends to substantiate this view.

The fact that conflict has the potential of either or both constructive and destructive results leads one to wonder if it is possible to manage conflict in such a way as to influence its outcome.

Conflict can be managed. The third assumption about conflict, widely held by theorists, is that conflict can be managed so as to influence its outcome by decreasing its negative effects and increasing its positive results. This is not to say that one can manage conflict so as to guarantee a positive outcome in every case. Rather, it is first a recognition that conflict does not generally resolve itself, and therefore a Christian leader must of necessity learn to creatively manage conflict.¹ Second, it is also a recognition that the creative management of conflict can influence its outcome.

Not only is it widely held that human conflict is inevitable, but it is also widely assumed that humans have the capacity to influence and shape, within the

¹Hoff, p. 16.
realm of human interaction, whether conflict will be
destructive or constructive.¹

Summary

It is precisely here that one can see both the hope
and challenge of conflict, especially as it relates to
the church. The hope is that conflict need not lead
inevitably to disintegration in human relationships and
to organizational dysfunction. The challenge is that
church leaders need to act intentionally in the face of
conflict so as to influence its outcome toward the
positive.

Unfortunately, by and large, neither the member-
ship nor the clergy are well equipped to handle conflict.
Concerning the clergy, Kurtz says that they have not
dealt effectively with conflict because "successful
management of conflict requires administrative skills and
a considerable knowledge of organizational strategies,
neither of which has generally been given very high
priority."²

Though Kurtz fails to indicate who is responsible
for setting these priorities, certainly clergymen have
some choice as to their continuing professional
enrichment and, therefore, bear some responsibility in

¹Lewis, pp. 1-2.
²Kurtz, "The Pastor as a Manager of Conflict," p. 111.
acquiring these skills. Others who might have some control over a pastor's continuing enrichment would be those professionals responsible for structuring programs for the continuing education of the clergy. These professionals need to give priority to offering such instruction that would help clergy deal with conflict in a professional manner.

Congregations also seem to lack the skills for dealing with conflict. This fact is obvious from the many church conflicts that end with destructive results. The observation that clergy and laity both handle conflict so poorly has led Leas and Kittlaus to espouse the use of a third party trained in conflict intervention. Leas and Kittlaus believe that the development and use of such professionals will lead to the "best and longest-lasting result of conflict management."¹

If Kurtz and Leas and Kittlaus are correct, then there is the need for instructional materials that will inform both pastors and laity in conflict concepts. In addition, these materials should develop certain interpersonal skills that will minimize the negative effects of conflict while maximizing the potential for positive change and growth that can come in the wake of conflict. The question is, What type of instructional

¹Leas and Kittlaus, p. 54.
materials and learning experiences results in changed behavior?

**Theoretical Base for Learning**

To answer the above question, it is necessary to explore the meaning and process of learning. Any program that has as its stated purpose not only the dissemination of information but also the hope of changing human behavior must be built on sound instructional principles. Those in educational circles hold that instructional success includes more than merely cognitive learning. Robert F. Mager highlights the importance of behavior in the learning process thus: "If instruction doesn't change anyone, it has no effect, no power."\(^1\) This change, however, must be focused and have direction; it is not random change merely for the sake of change. Mager adds that if instruction results in undesired change, then "it is called poor, undesirable, or even harmful instruction."\(^2\)

In the same vein, Martha M. Leypoldt writing on the subject of education in a church setting says, "When a person has learned, he is a changed person: he is


\(^2\) Ibid.
transformed."  After quoting Rom 12:1-2, ² Leypoldt further notes that it is especially appropriate to speak of "change" in a Christian context because scripture calls for productive change.³

According to these two authors, the objective of instruction is not merely the dissemination of information on the cognitive level, but it is ultimately concerned with change toward a desired and predetermined direction in the one learning. According to Leypoldt, these changes include changes in knowledge, in feelings, and in action.⁴ Other educators refer to cognitive and affective learning. Cognitive learning has to do with acquiring knowledge and skills while affective learning has to do with the changes in attitudes and feelings.⁵ For these educators, complete learning takes place as both the cognitive and affective processes are positively affected.


²"Therefore, my brothers, I implore you by God's mercy to offer your very selves to him: a living sacrifice, dedicated and fit for his acceptance, the worship offered by mind and heart. Adapt yourselves no longer to the pattern of this present world, but let your minds be remade and your whole nature thus transformed" (Rom 12:1-2 [NEB]).

³Leypoldt, p. 27.

⁴Ibid.

This concept seems to be accepted both in secular and in religious education. For instance, Bossart points out that

We are after not only the cognitive skills, but the emotional maturity which is the affective development in the growth of the student in religious education. This affective development (or, "emotional maturity" as Bossart refers to it) is seen as the basis for responsible behavior.

Richard C. Remy prefers the term "citizenship competencies" which he uses with much the same meaning. He defines it as

... the particular capacities an individual (sic) requires if they are to behave in such a way, or use their efforts in such a manner, as to produce consequences they intend in their role as citizens.

Remy lists the kinds of competencies that are to be developed through the educative process: acquiring and using information, assessing involvement, making decisions, making judgments, communicating, cooperating, and promoting interests. It must be recognized that these competencies evolve from the learning that takes place in the cognitive and affective processes.

If this is true, then it seems clear that the goal

1Bossart, p. 155.


3Ibid., pp. 3-4.
of instruction is in some way to shape behavior. It would also seem reasonable to suggest that behavior can be shaped by intentionally structuring instruction with that in view. James Michael Lee seems to agree with this point of view when he says, "teaching consists in the deliberate, conscious structuring of a learning situation so that the desired learning outcomes are effected."¹

Interestingly, this emphasis on structuring the learning experience appears to represent a shift in educational philosophy to the consideration of the needs and experience of the student. The "structuring of a learning situation" is the process of leading the learner through various experiences that culminates in learning. Notice the emphasis that Ralph W. Tyler places on the experience of the learner in the process of learning when he says, "Essentially, learning takes place through the experiences which the learner has: that is, through the reactions he makes to the environment in which he is placed."² For Tyler, the means of education become what he refers to as "educational experiences" which are had by the learner.³

³Ibid.
Tyler calls this the "learning experience."¹ This refers to the interaction between the learner and the external condition in the environment to which he can react.² Learning, then, for Tyler takes place through the active behavior of the student; it is what he does that he learns, not just what the teacher does.³ The teacher provides the educational experience by setting up an environment and structuring the situation so as to stimulate the desired type of reaction.⁴

If Tyler's reasoning is correct, then it would follow that an educational program that is designed to achieve certain given objectives--both cognitive and affective--must not only consider the kind of information that is be taught but must also give priority to the structuring of educational experiences that engage the learner in the process of learning.⁵

It seems clear, then, that if the end product of

¹P. 63.
²Ibid.
³Ibid. See also Robert Glaser, "Learning," in Design and Development of Curricular Materials: Instructional Design Articles, ed. Doris T. Gow (Pittsburgh: University Center for International Studies, 1976), p. 82. "The learner acts upon his instructional environment, changes it, and is changed in turn by the consequences of his actions. Certain processes alter behavior so that it achieves a useful interchange with a particular environment."
⁴P. 64.
⁵P. 63.
learning is to be exhibited by the kinds of changes made in the learner's behavior, instructional objectives should be written as a description of the kind of performance the instructor wants the learners to be able to exhibit. In other words, objectives are a description of an intended result of the instruction, rather than a description of the process of the instruction itself.¹ This is not to say that process is not important in the learning, rather, it recognizes that processes must be chosen by the instructor to either initiate or reinforce certain desired behaviors.²

In conclusion, it would seem that the proper development of a program designed to change the way people behave in conflictive situations would be: (1) to develop a set of objectives based on the kind of behavior Christians should exhibit in conflict³ and (2) to develop instructional situations that lead the learner to experience and integrate new reactions to conflictive situations.

### Analysis of Two Conflict Currricula

Two curricula, available to churches for the purpose of developing conflict awareness in a seminar

1Mager, p. 5.

2Ibid.

³See chapter 3 for a statement of the instructional objectives.
setting, are presented here. Certainly other programs also available could be considered, but these two were chosen because of their availability and because they appear to be representative of attempts to develop a curriculum on conflict management from a Christian perspective.

"Resolving Our Differences"

The Resolving Our Differences curriculum is a joint effort of Lynn Buzzard, Juanita Buzzard, and Laurence Eck. Lynn Buzzard is the executive director of the Christian Legal Society; Eck is a practicing attorney who shares similar views to the society; and Juanita Buzzard is a Christian education director at Western Springs Baptist Church, Western Springs, Illinois.

Description of the curriculum

The three components of this curriculum are: a cassette tape, Resolving Our Differences, prepared by Lynn Buzzard and Eck; a book, Tell it to the Church, written by Lynn Buzzard and Eck; and a manual of Christian training materials, Resolving Our Differences,

\(^1\)The Christian Legal Society is a network of evangelical lawyers which provides mediorial or arbitral services in several metropolitan areas nationwide as an alternative to litigation in the courts. The Christian Conciliation Service is one of the services it offers.
prepared by Lynn Buzzard and Juanita Buzzard.

The cassette tape--Resolving Our Differences. The cassette tape features a discussion between Lynn Buzzard and Eck that centers primarily on the biblical teaching of reconciliation and how this teaching can be applied in a church setting to settle disputes. The church, they say, has a responsibility to settle disputes that develop within the congregation. In Buzzard's words:

Disputes are the property of the Church. The church really owns these disputes. The courts don't own them. The secular counseling profession doesn't own them. This is right at the heart of the church's ministry.¹

A number of examples are cited to demonstrate the positive and satisfactory results that can develop when those involved in a dispute seek to settle their differences in accordance with what Buzzard and Eck describe as "biblical principles." Not only are the issues or elements that led to the dispute resolved, but the parties experience a reconciliation marked by healing and the restoration of relationships. They claim that this is the purpose of the church and for which the courts are not equipped.²

The concluding comments of Buzzard and Eck concern what they believe should develop in churches that become

¹Resolving Our Differences, Cassette tape available from David C. Cook, Elgin, Ill., 1982.
²Ibid.
aware of the biblical teaching of reconciliation. First, they suggest that those who have themselves experienced conflicts in their personal lives become resource and support persons to act as "wounded healers" for those currently experiencing similar difficulties. Second, they suggest that leaders in the church should become equipped and prepared to deal with conflict and disputes. They further suggest that leaders should handle disputes through a structured ministry of peacemaking just as there is a ministry of stewardship in many congregations. Third, the church should seek to implement some preventative measures such as teaching the biblical principles of peacemaking, structuring a ministry of peacemaking, and encouraging covenanting or contracting between members of a congregation so that if a dispute should arise they would submit it to the church for resolution rather than to a court.

*The book--Tell It to the Church: Reconciling Out of Court.* Lynn Buzzard and Eck continue a similar approach in their book, *Tell It to the Church: Reconciling Out of Court.* Basically, the book promotes the fundamental principles championed by the Christian Conciliation Service which aims to resolve disputes between Christians in the church setting rather than in the courts.

Buzzard and Eck point out that the courts are
being used more frequently to settle disputes because "many of the primary social structures (extended family, neighborhood groups, social organizations), which in an earlier generation absorbed much of the interpersonal conflict" are now gone.\(^1\) However, as Buzzard and Eck point out, one social structure that still is present in society is also best equipped to deal with conflict and that is the church.

Christian doctrines and convictions are almost custom-made for conflict resolution and healing: the doctrine of reconciliation, the doctrine of forgiveness, and the doctrine of the covenant and its application in restoring broken relationships. The church is the gifted and equipped body of Christ.\(^2\)

The book features successful instances of when reconciliation worked, a discussion of the theological basis of peacemaking, and an appendix of resource material that may prove helpful to churches attempting to set up a reconciliation service.

The manual—Resolving Our Differences. The manual written by Lynn and Juanita Buzzard is the heart of the curriculum package. It contains lecture material, lesson plans, suggested material for further study, suggested discussion questions, transparencies for overhead projection, and duplicating masters ready for use.

The material is designed to be used in a group

\(^1\) P. 12.

\(^2\) Buzzard and Eck, p. 15.
setting and is based on Bible study and group discussion. The stated goal of the material is to

... acknowledge the reality and scope of conflict, examine the biblical call to a converted way of dealing with disputes, and to see the opportunity that conflict offers for the church to exercise its biblically mandated gifts of healing and reconciliation.

The material is divided into eight sixty-minute sessions, and it is suggested that the sessions be separated by a week to allow for reflection as well as between-session assignments. The sessions' titles and themes are as follows:

Session One--"Conflict: It's Inevitable and O.K." The student is challenged to examine his/her understanding of conflict by accounting for both the negative and positive results that can come from conflict, by considering five conflictive situations in the New Testament, and by analyzing various types and sources of conflicts.

Session Two--"Responding to Conflict." The student identifies the five possible responses to conflict situations and is encouraged to consider not only which is his/her response style but to adjust those styles if they are out of character with Christian values.

Session Three--"Forgiveness--Forgive and Forget." The student is encouraged to see forgiveness as a bibli-

1Buzzard and Buzzard, p. 1.
cally mandated response to conflict. As such, forgiveness is not conflict avoidance but, rather, a proactive response to conflict. Forgiveness offers to set aside the right of judgment, vengeance, and payment for the purpose of healing and reconciliation.

Session Four—"Reconciliation." By exploring the biblical principle of reconciliation, it becomes clear that in the context of conflict situations more is called for than simply the resolution of a dispute. Biblically speaking, reconciliation reestablishes disintegrating interpersonal relationships to wholeness.

Session Five—"Tell It to the Church." The student is encouraged to see the biblical role of the church in the process of reconciliation. That is, only the church is empowered by God to engage effectively in peacemaking. If this is the case, then points of dispute should be submitted to the church for resolution so that reconciliation of antagonists can take place.

Session Six—"The Church as Peacemaker." Whereas the previous session explored the fact that the church is the vehicle of creating peace and healing conflicts, now the ingredients that make the church so equipped are brought to view.

Session Seven—"Blessed Are the Peacemakers." The student is challenged to look at the kinds of gifts and skills that are necessary to be a peacemaker. Basically,
these skills are delineated in the way Jesus handled conflict.

Session Eight--"Agents of Reconciliation." In the final session, the student explores the meaning and process of arbitration with the encouragement that if he/she is so equipped he/she will become an agent of arbitration within the church setting.

Analysis of the curriculum

The manual containing the lecture material, transparencies, and duplicating masters is the center of the curriculum package. The material seems to be carefully arranged to take advantage of current learning theory. For instance, processes such as group discussions, inductive studies of scripture, feedback sessions and reflective-at-home assignments are designed to encourage learner involvement. By encouraging the learner to participate in the learning process, this curriculum seeks to accomplish both cognitive and affective learning. One may question, however, the direction they choose to take in their material.

The curriculum package under discussion evolved as a result of the needs and concerns addressed by the Christian Legal Society. The nature of these needs and concerns are clearly outlined in both the book, Tell It to the Church, and the cassette, Resolving Our Differences. Basically, Lynn Buzzard and Eck approach
conflict in the church from a legal/arbitrational viewpoint. That is, they see many Christians who are engaged in disputes going to the court system for settlement. Buzzard and Eck argue that the Christian should not go to the courts but instead to the church for arbitration. The reason, they argue, is that the church is better equipped to handle disputes because of divine insight given by the Holy Spirit and because the church is empowered to bring not only resolution but also to effect reconciliation.

Also, the material of Buzzard and Eck is based on the premise of a third-party arbitration model. In their view, either that arbitrator is the court system or the church system. Certainly, there are many cases where arbitration is necessary and, perhaps, even essential. However, one wonders if the mechanism proposed by Buzzard and Eck may in the end cause members to be even more dependent on a third party to resolve conflict rather than developing interpersonal skills that may allow them to settle the issue themselves.

It appears that Buzzard and Eck have been driven to this viewpoint because of their overriding concern about Christian litigation in the courts. Certainly, based on this concern, they have developed a package that has the potential of meeting the need as they perceive it.

However, the need they are addressing is not the
need addressed in this project. Whereas, Buzzard and Eck are concerned with the type of conflict that arises from business dealings and contractual relationships, this project is concerned with perhaps more minor, albeit more common, conflict that arises in every segment of interpersonal relationships. This type of conflict may never require a court or a third party for arbitration, but it does require certain common and simple skills that can turn a potentially destructive conflict into a constructive interchange.

"How to Manage Conflict in the Church" curriculum

The How to Manage Conflict in the Church curriculum is authored by Norman Shawchuck, director of Spiritual Formation, Indiana area, of The United Methodist Church. Shawchuck also is an adjunct instructor at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School and at McCormick Theological Seminary. His interest in church management, which is evident in another recent work\(^1\) including the one under discussion, clearly flavors his approach to conflict and accounts for his strong emphasis on management concepts, such as intervention strategies, in dealing with conflict.

\(^1\)Alvin J. Lindgren and Norman Shawchuck, Management for Your Church (Nashville: Abingdon, 1977).
Description of the curriculum

There are four components to this curriculum and they are as follows: a study guide sheet, *How to Manage Conflict in the Church*; a cassette tape; an analysis tool that includes a questionnaire, *How You Can Help Me Manage Conflict More Effectively: a Self-Analysis Tool*, a sample of a cover letter that accompanies the questionnaire, and a guide sheet to analyze the results of the questionnaire; and a manual in two volumes used for self-instruction.

Unlike the previous curriculum that supplied a manual complete in itself with additional resource materials (i.e., the cassette tape and book) that certainly would prove helpful but not essential to the program, Shawchuck's curriculum materials are integrated and interrelated.

Though the materials are designed for self-instruction, Shawchuck encourages the formation of a small group for the purposed discussion and feedback. However, since the materials are designed for self-learning, he states that each student must have his own set of materials and do his own study privately.

The study guide serves as a map or plan of the program of study. It details the subject of each session.

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¹*How to Manage Conflict in the Church*, cassette tape available from Spiritual Growth Resources, Indianapolis, 1984.
listing the pages to be read in the manuals, time needed for completion of the study, the extra materials needed (i.e., Bible, cassette tape player, paper and pencil), and a brief statement as to the study design for each session.

The cassette tape "talks" the student through each session giving background and introductory information about the materials to be studied or the exercises to be completed. If there is a heart to this program, it would certainly be this tape.

The program is divided into five sessions called "learning modules" of two and a half hours in length. Shawchuck suggests that these be covered over a period of about two weeks leaving from two to three days between sessions to allow for "reflection and mental digestion of the materials."¹ The sessions' titles and themes are:

Session One—"Developing a Biblical Understanding of Conflict." The student first reads a written theology of conflict and then studies Acts 15:1-41 answering questions that guide him or her toward its meaning in terms of conflict.

Session Two—"Developing an Understanding of Your Conflict Behavior." The student answers questions on a questionnaire and scores himself or herself to find his

¹Shawchuck, "A Guide to Using 'How to Manage Conflict in the Church,'" an instruction sheet accompanying How to Manage Conflict in the Church.
or her preferred style of handling conflict. The tape lecture discusses the meaning of the various styles and stresses that the conflict situation should determine the style one chooses.

Session Three--"Understanding the Stages of Conflict and Their Effects upon Your Conflict Management Styles." In this session, conflict management theory is introduced to help the student discover various ways of managing conflict at its various levels.

Session Four--"Designs and Skills for Managing Conflict." More conflict management theory is introduced to help the learner see the strength of various intervention strategies for various size groups.

Session Five--"A Review of Your Learning in the Study of How to Manage Conflict in the Church." The student is led through a review and synthesis of the material presented.

The final step in Shawchuck's program is to solicit six persons in the church to fill out a questionnaire on the conflict-handling style of the student taking the program. After the results are collated, the student not only has a picture of how others view his/her style but he/she is also able to compare it with his/her own personal evaluation.

Analysis of the curriculum

This curriculum seems to have been developed for
church leaders—pastors, administrators, committee chairpersons—who are responsible for guiding and directing the organization. Shawchuck's discussion of conflict theory and intervention strategies are particularly helpful for this group. By and large the material is prepared for individualized study. Allowances are made, however, for some group work but only for feedback and discussion; most of the material is to be studied on one's own. Because of these two points, the program seems most helpful for the motivated church leader who is anxious to discover ways of dealing with the conflict that may at times frustrate his/her work.

The key concept of Shawchuck's program is the management of conflict. The skills that this program endeavors to teach are more suited for those who are in the role of leadership. The average congregation member who is more concerned about how to deal with interpersonal conflict than how to deal with conflict between groups on an administrative level would probably find the program inappropriate.

Perhaps a more substantial flaw in Shawchuck's curriculum as it relates to a theoretical base for learning is that his material appeals primarily to the cognitive processes (acquiring of knowledge and skills). In other words, he seems to assume that his readers have already acquired the attitudes and feelings (affective learning) necessary to integrate the knowledge and skills
that he offers in his curriculum into a new behavior.

**Conclusion Concerning Curricula**

Though both programs discussed may be beneficial for the groups for which they are intended, neither seems to meet the needs addressed by this project. Since this is the case, there is need for a program based on a strategy of cognitive and affective change that teaches simple interpersonal skills that will help the individual deal with the effects of conflict in such a way as to safeguard interpersonal relationships.

**Conclusions: An Educational Philosophy**

An educational philosophy may be likened to the foundation of a building; its shape determines the shape of that which is built upon it. While what follows is not meant to be a complete statement of the educational philosophy that undergirds this project, it is a suitable conclusion of the considerations of this chapter. From this material two foundational principles can be synthesized that have a bearing on the goals and objectives developed in chapter 3.

**Education changes behavior**

Since the emphasis of this project is on the development of certain communication skills in the learner, it seems logical to assert that the goal of the
educational process is not merely the dissemination of information but, rather, to devise a process that results in changed behavior. If this is the case, then the strategy of the educational process must be to use instructional procedures that enable the learner to translate concepts into action. This allows for a balance between information giving and certain other structured learning experiences such as role playing in small groups and reflection exercises. The latter are processes with which the learner interacts. Together these culminate in cognitive (knowledge and skills) and affective (attitudes and feelings) learning.

As important as learning experiences are, however, they must have focus if they are to have a desired effect upon the learner. If would appear that an educational strategy that is to result in behavioral change must aim at that which brings about change.

As was noted above, the basic values and philosophy of society affect the strategy and principles it uses for dealing with conflict. It was also noted that a change in the former results in a corresponding change in the latter; as the values and philosophy of society change, likewise, the strategy and principles it uses for dealing with conflict change. Since the church is a society, it should be expected to exhibit the same kinds of behavior as societies in general. Therefore, one can expect that as the basic values and philosophy of
the congregation toward conflict change, likewise the way it deals with conflict will change.

How values might affect the way conflict is dealt with is illustrated by the fact that it appears as if the church prefers and, perhaps, even idealizes certain conflict management approaches over others. For instance, avoiding or ignoring conflict may be encouraged by certain values such as unity among the brethren \(^1\) or pacifism ("turning the other cheek").\(^2\) On the other hand, collaboration may be preferred because it implies a working together toward a mutually acceptable solution. In many situations, however, these approaches limit the church in its ability to deal with conflict, perhaps even making a resolution impossible. Also, if a nonpreferred conflict management style is inadvertently used (such as, compelling or competing), then a feeling of failed expectations and disappointment with the system often ensues.

A teaching strategy, therefore, should give some attention to the restructuring of the values and philosophy that the people have regarding conflict. The goal is to develop a realistic understanding of the dynamics of conflict enlightened by theology and supported by current, compatible conflict theory so that

\(^{1}\)Ps 133:1; Eph 4:13.

\(^{2}\)Matt 5:39.
all of the various conflict management styles will be available for use depending on the situation.

A Christian approach to conflict values the person

A second educational principle that undergirds this project is that a Christian approach to conflict management will emphasize interpersonal relationships. As noted above, values shape the way conflict is managed. Further, however, Christian values have a unique regard for the preservation of interpersonal relationships. While Christians may hold an issue as important and may even disagree, they still give priority to relationships and the restorative nature of reconciliation. The educational processes used, then, must develop the concepts of conflict management in such a way that the learner will not only acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to manage conflict but also will adopt values that place a higher regard upon maintaining and/or restoring interpersonal relationships.
CHAPTER THREE

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT

Introduction

The presence of conflict within organizations and institutions is influenced by a number of factors: change,\(^1\) organizational structure,\(^2\) interdependence of working groups,\(^3\) the availability of necessary resources,\(^4\) and the use of power\(^5\) are some of the factors that relate specifically to the church. A meaningful description of this project certainly needs to take into consideration these factors as they may relate to the church and to the seminar participants. Therefore, the first two sections of this chapter are developed with this in view: 1) a description of the Ardmore Adventist Church, and 2) a description of the participants of the Conflict Skills Seminar. The final two sections are:

\[\begin{align*}
1&\text{Johnson, pp. 16-17; Deutsch, p. 71.} \\
2&\text{Deutsch, p. 77.} \\
3&\text{Webber, p. 445.} \\
4&\text{Ibid., p. 448.} \\
5&\text{Wieland and Ullrich, p. 226.}
\end{align*}\]
a description of the Conflict Skills Seminar, and 4) a schedule of events.

**Description of the Church**

It is hardly possible to get a clear view of the Ardmore Adventist church without also looking at some of the major elements that affect it. Certainly, this would include such things as the institutions and services that the church provides, but it also includes the community of which the church is a part.

**The Community**

The town of Ardmore is situated on a gently rolling topography about thirty-five miles from the Oklahoma/Texas state line on Interstate 35. It is the largest community between Oklahoma City to the north and the Red River to the south that forms the boundary between the two states. Within the city limits of Ardmore resides a population of 25,400 with an additional 66,500 living within a thirty-mile radius. Ethnically, the population parallels the rest of the state; 8 percent black, 5 percent indian, and 1 percent hispanic.¹

1 Interestingly, many of the local black persons can trace their migration as slaves of two of the five so-called "civilized" indian tribes (Chickasaw and Choctaw) that settled in what became the Ardmore area. These tribes were forced from their land in the southeast by the U.S. government in the mid-nineteenth century.
various services offered in the public and private sectors. Although at first glance the countryside appears to be agricultural, the income to local inhabitants from farming and ranching is small in comparison to the major sources of income listed above.¹

Religion plays a major role in the lives of local inhabitants. There are seventy-one Protestant churches, one Catholic church, and one synagogue in the community. The strength of the religious influence is illustrated by the fact that due primarily to the resistance of the churches, the sale of liquor-by-the-drink was repeatedly voted down until it finally passed September 1985.

The citizens of Ardmore exhibit an independent flair that some attribute to the frontier spirit. For instance, this independence is perhaps witnessed by the fact that of the sixteen major local manufacturers only five are unionized. It may also be an element in the fact that local pastors have successfully resisted efforts to organize a local ministerial association. This desire for independence and autonomy may also be at the base of the suspicion and the lack of cooperation exhibited between the two local hospitals (Memorial Hospital and the Ardmore Adventist Hospital).

There is, however, a disarming sincerity and open

¹Bureau of Economic figures indicate that personal income from farming/ranching for Carter county in 1980 was only $686,000 compared to $82,782,000 from manufacturing and $81,157,000 from the oil industry.
expression of hospitality exhibited by local residents that is quite winning. There seems to be on the surface a desire to be warm and affable. However, although people are generally open about their feelings regarding life's mundane experiences, many mask their feelings about the issues or problems that are causing them the deepest emotional pain.

When compared to other sections of the country, Ardmore might be characterized as a fairly stable community. Though change is present (the fluctuating oil market and sale of liquor-by-the-drink) the economic, political, and social structures do not seem to be experiencing threatening levels of change that often result in conflict.

Church Institutions and Services

Ardmore Adventist Hospital

The most influential Adventist presence in the community is certainly the Ardmore Adventist Hospital. Founded in 1946 as a nonprofit, self-supporting institution, it has sought to meet the health needs of the community as well as provide the church with a high community visibility.

In 1957, ownership of the hospital was assumed by the Oklahoma Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. The conference continued to operate the institution until 1979 at which time the administration--but not the
ownership--of the hospital was transferred to the Adventist Health System/Sunbelt, part of the Adventist hospital network. The conference, however, continues to maintain three positions on the eleven-member board of directors; one of the positions is vice-chairman held by the conference president.

The hospital has seventy-two beds with an average census of thirty-two patients. Thirty-one of the 125 full-time equivalent employees are Adventists as are all administrators and most of the departmental directors. The hospital operates an aggressive health education program in the community that includes such programs as child birth, stop smoking, nutrition, and heartbeat classes. These are offered on a regular basis with most classes using church facilities.

**Ardmore Sanatarium and Hospital Corporation Board**

The Ardmore Sanatarium and Hospital Corporation Board was originally the legal entity of the self-supporting hospital founded in 1946. Though its assets were transferred to the Oklahoma conference in 1957, the corporation board continued to function primarily under the guidance and support of a local, prominent Adventist, Otey Johnson. In 1984, new life was given to the corporation when Johnson bequeathed a substantial portion of his estate to the corporation.

The board is composed of five Adventists who have
an interest in developing locally a health center operated separately from the church organization. Since this facility is likely to be patterned along the lines of the institutions developed at Weimar, California, and Rapidan, Virginia,\(^1\) it is felt by the Ardmore Sanatarium and Hospital Corporation Board that it will not be in competition with but an adjunct to the Ardmore Adventist Hospital. Though there is the potential for friction and competition between this board and the Ardmore Adventist Hospital, the relationship has been one of cooperation. For example, the Ardmore Sanatarium and Hospital Corporation Board donated about $65,000 during 1985 to the Ardmore Adventist Hospital for the purchase of medical equipment and other improvements.

The Ardmore Sanatarium and Hospital Corporation holds a number of properties in the Ardmore area including prime expansion property around the Ardmore Adventist Hospital. The corporation also holds some oil producing properties. However, its major source of income is from the Otey Johnson Oil Producing Property Trust. This trust is managed by a five-member board on which three Adventists serve. The purpose of this board is to generate funds for the corporation.

\(^1\)Weimar and Hartland Institutes, respectively. These centers stress preventative measures based on diet, exercise, and other "natural remedies" to ward off disease.
Beavers Memorial Junior Academy

Beavers Memorial Junior Academy (BMJA) is a ten-grade school operating in a rural location about five miles north of the church. During the school year 1985-86, thirty-four students were enrolled under three teachers: first through fourth grades, eleven; fifth through eighth grades, seventeen; and ninth through tenth grades, six students.

The facility which was built in the early seventies from funds donated by Nelle Beavers as a memorial to her late husband could easily accommodate twice its current enrollment. The size of the building is certainly a contributive factor that resulted in a non-tuition policy. By not charging tuition, enrollment was increased; it was reasoned that this was not only a better use of the building but that it provided a wider service to Adventist families who might have otherwise sent their children to public school. The cost of the school's operation is borne by the church and represents about 75 percent of the church budget.

As a consequence of this financial arrangement, the school board has diminished power; it no longer has control over the financial operation of the school nor over the process of setting up the school budget. Instead, budgetary items now are handled by the church finance committee. Therefore, the school board primarily
concerns itself with policy matters and minor purchases that fall within the budgetary limits.

Kinderland House of Care

While BMJA was under construction, classes were temporarily held in the church in order to free the old school structure for the development of a child-care center. The building is ideally suited for such a purpose. It is a three-classroom structure complete with kitchen located in town about three miles south of the church. Kinderland is licensed for eighty-one children and generally operates at capacity employing eight full-time and three part-time employees. The church board is also the operating board for Kinderland and oversees various business matters including wages and child-care costs. The center donates $500 per month to the operation of BMJA and has in the past at the will and discretion of the church board donated other money to BMJA for various improvements.

Community Service Center

The Community Service Center occupies a building around the corner from the child-care center. Though the structure looks like a house, it was built by the church in the late sixties for the specific purpose of housing the center. Since the hospital runs an aggressive community education program, the center limits its activities primarily to the distribution of clothing and
food; ten volunteers help about 1,800 community people annually. Though technically the church board is responsible for the center's operation, there is little interchange between them. Instead, the tacit understanding is that the church pays the center's utilities and if other funds are needed, they are donated privately.

The Community Church

The black work in Ardmore is represented by the Community Church. The present structure was built prior to 1963 by donations from largely non-black sources. The church has not been able to flourish through the years and is currently closed. The few black Adventists in the community attend the white church.

Analysis of the Ardmore Adventist Church and the Potential for Conflict

The Ardmore Adventist Church with a membership of 300 is located on a quarter residential block at the north edge of town. The brick structure has a pleasant appearance; a high-peaked, sanctuary roof dominates the structure's appearance with the Sabbath School divisions and fellowship hall extending to the east.

The Adventist presence in the Ardmore community can be traced to J. B. Yates, Sr., a school teacher who arrived from Tennessee in 1893. However, it was not until 1918 that a church was organized with ten charter
members; services were held in a small church purchased from the Methodists on the corner of Sixth and "r" Streets, NW. In 1923, the membership moved into a newly built structure near the center of town on "B" Street, and that continued to serve the needs of the congregation until the present church was built in 1967.

The presence of the Ardmore Adventist Hospital is certainly an important factor in the financial health and stability of the church. While a deceptively small percentage of the membership of the church works in the hospital (10 percent), several factors indicate that the impact of the hospital is greater than the percentage may first indicate. (1) Seven Adventist physicians live in the community, five of which have practices that are directly linked to the Adventist hospital. (2) Thirteen of the thirty-four pupils (38 percent) in BMJA are from families employed by the hospital. (3) Cash contributions from those employed by the hospital were in excess of $95,000 in 1985 (35 percent of the total contributions collected by the church). (4) Hospital employees or spouses account for 41 percent of all church officers.

It is clear, then, that the hospital is an important factor in the health and vitality of the church. In fact, all of the institutions and services operated by the church or its members have their effect on the life of the church--perhaps to a lesser degree than the hospital, but nonetheless, significant. Such
factors as the organizational structure and the gathering and distribution of resources (i.e., church budget funds, volunteer labor) demonstrates a high degree of interdependence between these working groups.

Also, there is the ever present possibility of change. For instance, a falling hospital census due to a number of possible factors could have concomitant effects on church revenues perhaps necessitating a change in the nontuition policy of BMJA among other things. This kind of change could certainly spark conflict.

There is also the added factor of how power and authority are used. While Sunbelt is analyzing the financial health of the smaller hospitals in its system, including Ardmore Adventist Hospital, the Ardmore Sanatarium and Hospital Corporation Board has the substantial financial reserves of Otey Johnson Trust. Thus far, a spirit of cooperation exists between these entities. However, certain philosophical differences may in the end drive them apart. While it is possible that these same philosophical differences could polarize the church, capable and compassionate leadership rightly trained could help maintain a climate of cooperation and communication that could forstall or even stop a division from forming in the church. Of greater importance, however, is the fact that such leadership by modeling and teaching could lead members of the congregation into a spirit of openness and acceptance that would allow them
to disagree over facts, means, goals, and even values without experiencing a disintegration in their interpersonal relationships.

Clearly, a number of elements in the Ardmore Adventist church make conflict a likely possibility. The changes in the hospital and the developing plans for a separate health center, the collapse of the black church and the movement of the remaining blacks to the white church, and the conflicting roles of the church board and school board over control of the school are all possible environments in which conflict could emerge.

Description of the Participants

A number of factors concerning the seminar participants are summarized in tables 4 and 5. These factors are compared and analyzed in four categories: general statistics, employment, church relationship, and seminar attendance.

General Statistics

Of the twenty-four people participating in the seminar, twelve were male and twelve were female. Male participation in the seminar was a significantly higher percentage than the percentage of males in the Ardmore congregation (38 percent).

Age was also significantly different. While only 28 percent of the congregation is under the age of forty, 41 percent of the participants were under forty. The
# TABLE 4

## ANALYSIS OF THE SEMINAR PARTICIPANTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Part.</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>SDA</th>
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<th>Officer Position</th>
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<td>48</td>
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<td>F</td>
<td>C</td>
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<td>F</td>
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<td>69</td>
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<td>F</td>
<td>G</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>Medical Path. Dir., Church Board</td>
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<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>M</td>
<td></td>
<td>52</td>
<td>Physician Elder, Church Board, School Board, H&amp;S Board</td>
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<td>I</td>
<td>F</td>
<td></td>
<td>35</td>
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<td>J</td>
<td>M</td>
<td></td>
<td>32</td>
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<th>Part.</th>
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<th>SDA ED in Yrs.</th>
<th>Profession Officer Position</th>
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<td>M</td>
<td>F</td>
<td></td>
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<td>32</td>
<td>11 14</td>
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<td>F</td>
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<td>31</td>
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<td>38 18</td>
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TABLE 4--Continued

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<td>W</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>Personnel</td>
<td>Asst.</td>
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</table>

average age of the seminar participant was forty-six.

Eight married couples were in attendance at the seminar. This translates to 66 percent of the participants. While 67 percent of the congregation is married, 28 percent of these have spouses that are not members of the church. Compared to the church, then, the seminar was composed of a higher percentage of married couples.

The educational level of the participants was high. Twenty-one of the participants have at least one year of college and sixteen (66 percent) have a college degree. This high level of education is not surprising in view of the professional orientation of the congregation.

Employment

Fourteen participants (58 percent) were employed in the Adventist hospital, a health-related field, or were spouses of such people (three physicians; two anesthetists; a hospital chaplain, an accountant, a personnel director, a personnel assistant, and a director.
of nursing; and four of their spouses). Of the three participants not currently employed, two were retired and one was a spouse of one of the physicians. Of the remainder, three were teachers, a chemist, a sales representative, a child day-care director, a phone company service representative, one in purchasing, and one systems operator.

It is interesting to note that none of the participants were employed in either blue collar or agricultural vocations. While the employment of a number of church members does fall into these categories, the seminar participants were from the service sector and many were professionals.

Church Relationship

All but four participants held church offices. Nine participants were church board members representing 50 percent of the board. Four of the six church elders were present, as was the head deacon, superintendent of the Sabbath School, social committee chairman, and school board chairman.

All three church-school teachers were present as was the director of Kinderland, the community services director, a member on the Otey Johnson Oil Producing Property Trust, as well as a member from the Ardmore Hospital and Sanatarium Corporation Board.

Fifteen participants (63 percent) were reared
Adventists. Only three had been members of the church for ten years or less.

Attendance

The attendance record is recorded in table 5.

**TABLE 5**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant Letter</th>
<th>Session 1</th>
<th>Session 2</th>
<th>Session 3</th>
<th>Session 4</th>
<th>Session 5</th>
<th>Session 6</th>
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Attendance was 88 percent (out of a possible 192 person/sessions, twenty-two sessions were missed). A

1 Note the SDA column in table 4. (SDA, Seventh-day Adventist; R, reared.)
third of the participants missed no sessions at all and 79 percent missed one or less. The highest number of sessions missed by any student was three and only one student fell into that category. The rate of attendance during the first half of the program (sessions one through four) was 95 percent. During the second half, the attendance rate dropped to 81 percent. The session at which the largest percentage of participants missed was session seven; nine participants (38 percent) were not at that session. Spring break certainly accounts for the high absentee rate for that session. In six of the eight sessions, three or fewer of the participants were absent.

Conclusions

While on the one hand it is true that those participating in the seminar are clearly not a representative group from the Admore church, it is equally clear that they represent a large portion of the leadership of the Ardmore church. Since informed leadership modeling conflict skills is a key element in conflict training in the church, it would appear that the high percentage of church officers participating in the seminar is crucial to the purpose of the program.

It would also be fair to assume that since participation in the seminar was voluntary, those who would attend would have a high degree of motivation not
only to participate in the group activities but also to attempt to apply the principles discussed in their life situation. The attendance statistics appear to bear this out. For instance, the attendance rate was 91 percent among the twenty-two who took the Conflict Attitude Test at the conclusion of the seminar.

It is also evident that all of the institutions and service organizations associated with the Ardmore church had participants in the seminar (ten from the Ardmore Adventist Hospital; one from the Ardmore Sanatarium and Hospital Corporation Board; one from the Otey Johnson Oil Producing Property Trust; six from Beavers Memorial Junior Academy--three teachers, four school board members; one from Kinderland House of Care; one from the Community Service Center; and nine from the church board). Personnel with conflict training could certainly have a positive effect not only within the organization in which they serve but their influence could also have an effect on the interrelationship of the various organizations listed above.

**Description of the Conflict Skills Seminar**

Following is (1) a statement of the objectives of the Conflict Skills Seminar, (2) a summary of each of the eight sessions that comprise the seminar, and (3) a brief analysis of the instructional rationale used in the development of the seminar.
Seminar Objectives

Introduction

The philosophy upon which the following instructional objectives are written is elaborated by Mager. His philosophy is that since all instruction is "effective to the degree that it succeeds in changing students in desired directions," instructional objectives should be written so as to "clearly specify the outcomes" that are desired in the student. He continues by suggesting several reasons why such thinking is beneficial. First, the writing of such statements is the first step that enables the teacher to select and arrange learning experiences for the student in accordance with principles of learning. Second, such statements provide the basis for testing and evaluating whether learning has taken place. Third, such statements provide students with the "means to organize their own efforts toward accomplishment of those objectives."

Statement of the instructional objectives

1. Be able to give an account of the origins of conflict from an Adventist perspective.

\[\text{Reference sources:}
\begin{align*}
1 & \text{P. 1.} \\
2 & \text{Ibid.} \\
3 & \text{P. 6.} \\
4 & \text{Ibid.}
\end{align*}\]
2. Be able to identify the types and sources of conflict from case studies.

3. Be able to account for diversity in the church from a biblical perspective.

4. Be able to identify human differences in terms of the temperaments.

5. Be able to list five positive and five negative results that can develop because of the differences that naturally exist between individuals.

6. Be able to list five positive benefits that can result from tolerable levels of conflict.

7. Be able to demonstrate five approaches to the management of conflict in role-playing situations.

8. Be able to identify one's preferred conflict management style.

9. Be able to evaluate one's own preferred conflict management style in terms of its effectiveness in resolving conflict as well as its effectiveness in maintaining interpersonal relationships in a conflict.

10. Be able to indicate from scripture (Matt 5:43-48) the values that determine how a Christian views an antagonist.

11. Be able to demonstrate skill in drawing out and understanding another's viewpoint by the use of paraphrasing and perception checking in a role-playing situation.
12. Be able to demonstrate power-building techniques in a role-playing situation.

13. Be able to demonstrate ability to help a role-playing antagonist to identify his/her feelings about a conflict issue.

14. Be able to demonstrate skill in absorbing emotionally charged language by the use of fogging and "I feel" statements in role-playing situations.

15. Be able to recount the sources of anger.

16. Be able to recite nine elements that seem to indicate open communication.

17. Be able to explain how anger relates to human temperaments.

18. Be able to recite the key elements of "Rational Emotive Training" and how it affects the way one views anger.

19. Be able to defend the concept of confrontation from scripture.

20. Be able to analyze one's conflicts based on the "Loyalty Fighting Profile."

21. Be able to recite the biblical concept of reconciliation using at least two scriptures.

22. Be able to explain how reconciliation relates to conflict management.

23. Be able to demonstrate the role of body language in the process of communication using emblem gestures.
24. Be able to show from scripture the function of leadership in the church as related to conflict.

25. Be able to recite the five functions of leadership as it relates to conflict.

26. Be able to demonstrate skill in the affirmation/assertive technique.

27. Be able to demonstrate the attending skills in a role-playing situation.

Objective categories

Table 6 demonstrates how these objectives are arranged in the Conflict Skills Seminar. From two to four objectives are met in each of the eight seminar sessions: two objectives are met in one session; three objectives are met in three sessions; and four objectives are met in four sessions.

Further, the objectives are sub-divided into three categories; biblical concepts, conflict theory, and communication skills. The four objectives met under the biblical concept category are the theology of conflict, diversity within the church, a Christian's attitude toward an "enemy," the biblical concept of confrontation, reconciliation, and the biblical concept of leadership.

The objectives under the category of conflict theory explore a number of concepts taken from current conflict literature that are consistent with the theology of conflict developed in session one. These objectives
stress the application of knowledge in such areas as the
identification of conflict types and sources, the identifi-

TABLE 6
CATEGORIES OF THE OBJECTIVES

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fication of one's own conflict management style, the
listing of positive benefits of conflict, the demonstra-
tion of power-building techniques, and so forth.

The objectives under the category of communication
skills relate to both receiving and sending information.
For instance, the process of receiving messages is
covered by such listening skills as paraphrase,
perception check, clarifying, and reflection; sending
messages is covered by such skills as "I feel"
statements, "fogging," the use of the "Fight Elements
Profile," and body language. The distribution of the
objectives over eight sessions assures that the sessions
are not overloaded and that the material can be
assimilated and put into practice and at a reasonable
rate.
Summary of Each Session

Following is a summary of the eight sessions of the Conflict Skills Seminar.¹

Session one--"Conflict: Friend or Foe?"

Theme: Introduction to conflict

Purpose: (1) To help participants develop a theology of conflict that allows for the positive benefits that can come from conflict while at the same time not excusing the negative consequences of conflict. (2) To familiarize the seminar participants with conflict terms and definitions. (3) To inform the participants as to the three major ways in which conflict is experienced (intrapersonal, interpersonal, and substantive) with the primary consideration on substantive conflict. (4) To develop small-group dynamics through the use of ice-breakers.

Session two--"Pricked by Our Differences"

Theme: Diversity in the human family is often a source of conflict

Purpose: (1) To show that since diversity is an integral part of God's creation it should be expected that diversity is also evident in the church. (2) To demonstrate that conflict often develops as a result of

¹See appendix 2 for the handouts used during the Conflict Skills Seminar.
the differences that naturally exist between the perception and goals of one party and those of another party.

(3) To encourage the seminar participants to explore their own unique temperament profile and, thereby, to increase their tolerance and appreciation for diverse temperaments of those around them.

Session three--"You Can Change the Course of Conflict"

Theme: The outcome of conflict can be influenced by the participants actions, reactions, and nonaction

Purpose: (1) To show that conflict can lead to both positive and negative results. (2) To discuss the possible intervention strategies for dealing with conflict. (3) To test the participants for their preferred conflict management style. (4) To lead the participants in small-group practice of the conflict management styles for the purpose of increasing the number of skills available to them in conflict situations.

Session four--"From Win-Lose to Win-Win"

Theme: Power-building not only seems to reduce the intensity of conflict but also corresponds to Christian values

Purpose: (1) To show from scripture the Christian values that dictate how we are to look upon a fellow Christian with whom we disagree. (2) To
demonstrate from conflict theory the possible goals or outcomes of conflict (e.g., lose-lose, lose-win, win-lose, win-win). (3) To reveal the kinds of negative results that can come when one uses power to win a conflict. (4) To explain methods of power-building that have the effect of equalizing the power between two conflictive parties and that also seem to reduce the intensity of conflict and thus make problem solving easier. (5) To practice in role-playing situations the methods discussed above.

Session five--"Dealing with Emotion in Conflict"

Theme: Effective handling of conflict requires that attention be given to complicating emotions

Purpose: (1) To discuss the sources and implications of anger in conflict. (2) To discuss ways of coping with and reducing one's anger and hostility. (3) To practice in small-group settings the processes of deflecting anger. (4) To discuss and practice in small-group settings the procedure of exploring not only the facts of the issue in contention but also the feelings that people have about it.

Session six--"How to Fight Fair"

Theme: Effective communication is fundamental to interpersonal maintenance.

Purpose: (1) To illustrate from scripture the
process of loving confrontation. (2) To demonstrate the meaning of "loyalty fighting." (3) To engage the participants in small-group role-playing "fights" scoring their "fairness" on the "Fight Elements Profile." \(^1\)

**Session seven--"Reconciliation --the Goal of Christian Conflict"

Theme: A Christian should give attention to both the preservation of interpersonal relationships and the issues of the conflict.

Purpose: (1) To demonstrate from scripture that the Christian is to engage in the work of reconciliation. (2) To show how reconciliation might relate to the process of conflict management. (3) To show strategies for guarding interpersonal relationships in conflictive situations. (4) To demonstrate the role that nonverbal communication plays in the total communication process. (5) To practice these skills while role playing in small groups.

**Session eight--"The Christian Leader in Conflict Situations"

Theme: There are various processes available to the Christian leader that he can use in the management of conflict.

Purpose: (1) To demonstrate from scripture the

role of leadership in the church as related to conflict.

(2) To demonstrate from conflict theory the general approach a leader should take to prepare the church for conflict. (3) To demonstrate and practice in small groups the attending skills that increase the effectiveness of communication exchange.

Analysis

Since the goal of the seminar is help the participants develop positive and constructive conflict behavior, the seminar curriculum presents a blend of theory and information as well as the acquisition of certain skills. Information is seen as a catalyst that changes or shapes the attitude that in turn seems to play a role in shaping behavior. Add to this the fact that role playing also seems to be a vital factor in the process of integrating information into behavioral change and key elements are present upon which this seminar is built.

The kind of changes in attitude deemed important for behavioral change are: (1) attitudes toward conflict; (2) attitudes toward the differences that naturally exist between people; and (3) attitudes toward the antagonist in a conflict. Changes in the attitude along these lines increase the tolerance for conflict and encourages the kind of confidence necessary for one to participate constructively in a conflictive situation.
The behavioral changes sought for are those that interfere with open and effective communication and thus prevent a solution from surfacing. Christian values are taken into consideration resulting in placing even greater value on the interpersonal relationships of those involved in a conflict.

Schedule of Events

The events that pertain to this section are those that either inform the congregation and/or church officers concerning the Conflict Skills Seminar or the events that surround the conducting of the seminar itself.

The congregation's first knowledge of this project came the Sabbath I assumed the pastoral responsibilities of the Ardmore Adventist church on August 3, 1985. In his introduction of the new pastor to the congregation, Robert Rider, president of the Oklahoma Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, mentioned that the new pastor was involved in the Doctor of Ministry program through Andrews University.

A week later, August 10, the Ardmore church elders met at my home for the purpose of getting acquainted and to discuss a number of items related to the church. One of the items discussed was the project that I wished to conduct in the church. The requirements of the Doctor of Ministry degree were discussed as well as the project
outlined in this thesis. It was noted that there would be certain benefits to the congregation as they participated in the Conflict Skills Seminar but that there would also be certain liabilities, especially as it related to the time necessary for the development of the seminar and the subsequent reporting on the seminar to fulfill the requirements of the degree.

A similar discussion took place with the Ardmore church board on October 21. The discussion concluded with a positive vote to allow the pastor to run the Conflict Skills Seminar during the winter of 1986.

On February 1, 1986 the following announcement appeared in the Ardmore church bulletin: "A Conflict Skills Seminar taught by Pastor Johnson will begin this week. If you wish to join, meet in the pastor's study right after church to select the day for the meeting. The class meets weekly for eight weeks." Further information was given verbally during the announcement period between Sabbath School and the worship service. The points covered by the verbal announcement were as follows: (1) The seminar was for all who wished to develop skills that would help them preserve interpersonal relationships though engaged in a disagreement; (2) The seminar would be particularly helpful for church officers who must deal with conflict in a church setting; and (3) Participants in the seminar would be expected to make up sessions missed. Following the church service,
twenty-two prospective participants met in the pastor's study and selected Wednesdays, 6:00-7:30 p.m., for the sessions.

Another announcement appeared the following Sabbath: "The Conflict Skills Seminar continues this Wednesday, 6:00 p.m. in the fellowship room. If you would like to join, see Pastor Johnson today." As a result of this announcement, two more joined the seminar bringing the total number of participants to twenty-four. New participants along with those who missed sessions attended make-up classes which met at other than class time.

The first session of the seminar met on Wednesday evening, February 5, 1986. Sessions continued each Wednesday for the next five weeks. The remaining three sessions met Thursday evenings with the agreement of the participants due to scheduling difficulties.

The Conflict Attitude Test was administered to the seminar participants at the opening of the first session and again at the conclusion of the last session. The results of this test are discussed in chapter 4. The same test with a cover letter (see appendix 3, exhibit 2) was hand delivered by seven pastors who agreed to help with the task to forty prospective control group members in the state of Oklahoma. The test was handed to people who came to the February 8 church service on a random basis. Thirty-four of the original forty responded by
returning their test in a self-addressed stamped envelope provided for that purpose. On March 6, a second copy of the test was sent to the control group with a cover letter (see appendix 3, exhibit 2). Of the thirty-four tests sent, twenty were returned. The results of this test are discussed in chapter 4.
CHAPTER FOUR

ANALYSIS OF THE PROJECT

This chapter analyzes the results of the Conflict Skills Seminar to ascertain whether the attitudes of the seminar participants toward conflict were significantly affected. This analysis is based on three factors: (1) testing results; (2) the outlook of the participants; and (3) the conclusions of the pastor. Recommendations for a second implementation of this seminar conclude this chapter.

Testing Results

The testing instrument was the Conflict Attitude Test developed for the purpose of testing for changes in the attitudes of the seminar participants toward conflict and comparing the results with a control group. Originally, this instrument was composed of thirty-five questions. During the final statistical analysis, however, only questions that exhibited a greater than .29 multiserial R score were retained (see table 7). While

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1A justification and description of the testing instrument is found in appendix 3. Basically, the Conflict Attitude Test was a quasi-experimental test using a nonequivalent control group design with a pretest and posttest.
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>.5512</td>
<td>.3941</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>.8195</td>
<td>.4973</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>.6098</td>
<td>.2033</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This reduced the number of questions from thirty-five to twenty-three, it effectively raised the reliability coefficient alpha from .7986 to .8570.

The test was applied to twenty-two participants in
the treatment group and nineteen in the control group for a total of forty-one applications. Total possible points for any one score was 115. The range was forty-eight to one hundred. The raw mean (see table 8) indicates a

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Treatment group</th>
<th>Control group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pretest</td>
<td>77.3636</td>
<td>80.2631</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Posttest</td>
<td>89.5908</td>
<td>78.5789</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

shift of about twelve points (+12.2272) upward from the pretest to the posttest in the treatment group while the control group dropped slightly (-1.6842) between the two applications.

A more significant measurement, however, is the figures produced when the effect of the covariant is removed (see table 9). This produces an adjusted group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Group mean</th>
<th>Adjusted group mean</th>
<th>Std. Error mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Treatment</td>
<td>89.59084</td>
<td>90.44745</td>
<td>1.65436</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>78.57887</td>
<td>77.58696</td>
<td>1.78106</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

mean that allows for a more accurate comparison of any changes that may have occurred between the two groups.
from the pretest to the posttest applications. The resulting figures indicate that the treatment group shifted 12.89 points in comparison with the control group. This shift indicates that the treatment group seems to have experienced a significant change in their attitude toward conflict between the two applications of the test. Furthermore, results also indicate that the attitude of the control group toward conflict remained nearly constant during the same period. It may be inferred that the shift experienced by the treatment group is a result of their exposure to the conflict skills seminar.

The internal integrity of the testing instrument is open to view by the analysis of covariance (ANOVA). This statistical procedure analyzes the difference between scores in a given sample (or group) in comparison with other scores in the same group. Likewise, it analyzes the difference between the means of the various samples (or groups) in comparison with other means. Table 10 contains the ANOVA data.

The mean square score is derived by dividing the sum of the squares by the degrees of freedom. The F ratio is computed by dividing the between-group means square by the within-group means score. The resulting figure (F ratio) in this testing is 27.8033. The greater F is than 1.0, the higher the probability that the treatment group was affected by the implementation of the
Also, adding significance to the validity of  
the F ratio is the level of significance of the test  
which computed to be .00005. It is generally felt  
that .05 is sufficiently conservative on a behavioral  
test to validate its findings.

TABLE 10

ANALYSIS OF COVARIANCE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of Variance</th>
<th>SS</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>MS</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>LS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Equality of</td>
<td>1663.6301</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1663.6301</td>
<td>27.8033</td>
<td>.00005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adj. Cell Means</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zero Slope</td>
<td>2568.1968</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2568.1968</td>
<td>42.9209</td>
<td>.00005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error</td>
<td>2273.7524</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>59.8356</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equality of</td>
<td>25.2288</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>25.2288</td>
<td>.4151</td>
<td>.5233</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slopes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error</td>
<td>2248.5237</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>60.7709</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Key: SS = sum of squares  
df = degrees of freedom  
MS = mean square  
F = F ratio  
LS = level of significance

One further statistical item also seems to  
validate the hypothesis of this paper. The t value  
computed on thirty-eight degrees of freedom with a .00005  
level of significance is -5.2729. The critical t value

1 David W. Martin, Doing Psychology Experiments,  

2 Joan Welkowitz, Robert B. Ewen, and Jacob Cohen,  
Introductory Statistics for the Behavioral Sciences (New  
for this test is $4.389$. The $t$ test determines whether the measurements of the pretest and posttest differ systematically. A $t$ value in absolute value (that is, ignoring the sign)$^2$ that is larger than the critical $t$ is an additional reason for accepting the validity of the findings of the testing instrument.

**Outlook of the Participants**

Along with the Conflict Attitude Test, a feedback sheet was handed to the seminar participants at the conclusion of the last session (see appendix 4, exhibit 1). The directions on this sheet asked the participants to give their opinion on seven points: five dealing with key seminar elements (handouts, lectures, group activities, homework, and time allocation); one with how the seminar affected the participant's conflicts; and one asking suggestions regarding future conflict seminars.

No claim is made for the scientific accuracy of the feedback sheet or the responses. Instead, these responses are included for informative purposes with the understanding that they are simply subjective responses to selective questions.

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$^2$Welkowitz et al., p. 136.
Handouts

Generally, comments regarding the handouts were positive (see appendix 4, exhibit 2). Such comments as "helpful," "fine," "OK" characterize nearly a third of the responses. Four participants wrote that they intended to use the handouts as resource material by referring back to them in the future. Another respondent wrote that the handouts "helped gel some ideas that couldn't be covered in class."

The negative comments regarding the handouts centered in three areas. The first was the volume of material contained in the handouts. Four participants complained that there was too much material. Three of these added that there was too much material for the amount of time allocated to its study. The second area dealt with the pagination of the material. One respondent stated, "I was always confused about what is information only, homework, activities, etc." The third area dealt with the fact that a folder was provided in which the handouts were stored. One person suggested that a three ring notebook would have been more convenient.

Of the three areas of negative comment regarding the handouts, the amount of material in relationship to the amount of time available for the seminar seems to be significant. The fact that more material was presented in the handouts than could easily be covered in the
lecture/discussion segments of the seminar seemed to be a source of concern and frustration to a significant number of participants.

Lectures

All of the participants' comments expressed positive elements regarding the lectures (see appendix 4, exhibit 3). Perhaps the more helpful comments were regarding the interaction of the participants with the teacher during the lecture segments of the seminar. Two comments suggested satisfaction with the manner in which participants' questions and comments were handled. On the other hand, one comment suggested that more time was needed for questions.

Three comments also centered on the relationship of the lecture to the handouts. One participant wrote that the lectures gave "all material" attention. Another commented that although the lectures were "splendid," the handouts gave the opportunity to refresh the memory. A third commented that the lectures were helpful "in bringing together materials such as handouts, etc."

These comments may indicate some confusion regarding the nature of the handout material and its relationship to the lectures. All lectures had handout material which was to be used by the participants for reference. Not all handout material, however, was included--or designed to be included--in the lectures. For instance, the group
activities and the homework assignments were distinct from the lecture handouts.

Group activities
There was more divergent opinion expressed regarding group activities than in any other area (see appendix 4, exhibit 4). For instance, while some said that the group activities were "excellent and fun," "enjoyable," and "very good"; others said that they were "not particularly helpful," "mediocre," and "too limited." The positive comments cited three benefits of the group activities: (1) they gave opportunity to glean ideas from other participants; (2) they reinforced the points made during the lectures; and (3) they forced seminar students to participate. While it was true that the group activities forced participation, one student complained that though it was "always helpful," nonetheless it caused him/her to feel "awkward and uncomfortable" at times. It is clear, however, that the group was divided on this issue because instead of less group activities, five participants either urged more group activities or for more time for what activities there were.

Homework
One participant suggested that the "information load (of the seminar) would be inadequate without ... (the homework assignments)." However, the fact is 40
percent of the participants either admitted they did not complete the homework assignments or questioned whether others completed them (see appendix 4, exhibit 5). It seems as though the major complaint of this group was not with the quality of the assignments but that they did not take the time to complete them. One participant suggested that time should be allotted prior, during, or after class for completion of these assignments.

Time allocation
The participants were asked to respond regarding their satisfaction with the amount of time allocated for the seminar (see appendix 4, exhibit 6). Fifty percent responded that the time was adequate. The remaining 50 percent suggested that either longer sessions or more sessions should be held to handle the amount of material presented. Noticeably lacking was any recommendation to reduce either the length or the number of sessions.

Personal reflection
The responses to the question, "How have the concepts covered in this seminar affected your conflicts?" seem to fall into two categories (see appendix 4, exhibit 7). First, the majority of respondents (68 percent) wrote statements that indicated that their attitudes toward conflict had changed. For example, representative comments include: "I look at conflict in a totally different way, I feel I can deal
with it better and it's helped in my relationship with my wife"; and "I understand a little better how conflicts can be healthy." A correlative effect of a new attitude toward conflict is a new self-assurance as conflict is addressed. Representative comments include the two cited above and the following: "I feel that having a conflict can and should be constructive. And I feel more confident that I can engage in conflict with someone who has not had this seminar"; and "I feel more comfortable in dealing with hostility and anger with better understanding of (the) mechanics of dealing with these problems."

Second, respondents indicated that the seminar helped them form new attitudes toward others, especially as it relates to differences between people. As in the case above, these new attitudes are translated into a more confident way of relating to people. Representative comments are: "I believe for the first time in my life I now begin to understand many differences that exist between all of us"; and "(The seminar) helped me understand my spouse better and fellow workers better and how to relate to others and their feelings."

Suggestions

The final question on the feedback sheet asked, "What suggestions do you have for future conflict seminars?" Eight participants offered suggestions
regarding the time/material ratio (see appendix 4, exhibit 8). By and large, these comments paralleled those offered in response to question five suggesting a more thorough coverage of the material and/or more time for group activities by increasing the length of the seminar.

Two participants suggested that something ought to be done about the domination of the question and discussion time by a few vocal participants. Another commented that private conversations ought to be discouraged during the seminar. These responses point out a dilemma inherent in the open nature of the seminar format. While the participants are encouraged to ask questions and offer comments at any time, the danger is that those who are more vocal do dominate while others who are less inclined to speak remain silent.

One participant suggested that the seminar ought to be offered on a regular basis and another suggested that a short follow-up course be added presumably for the benefit of those who took the regular course. Another suggested that the seminar could be reduced in length for the purpose of exposing more of the church membership to the seminar. Perhaps this person was reasoning that a shorter seminar would appeal to more people and thus participation would be increased.

Another suggestion was that Ellen G. White could be used to better advantage as an authoritative source of
instruction, especially in the area of church conflict. Though her material was considered in the development of the theology of conflict (thus her influence underlies the entire conflict seminar), little effort was made to use her writings in a validative capacity.

A final comment worth noting was offered by an obviously troubled person who found the kind of help he/she needed in the seminar.

If it hadn't been for this seminar, I may have been a good suicide candidate. The conflicts I have (had) through the last five months have been so huge in my life (that) I don't think I could have made it. The help you have given and the guiding of the Holy Spirit is really making a change in my outlook. Thank you from the bottom of my heart. Just pray for me.

Conclusions of the Pastor

The personal reflections contained in this section are divided into four categories: (1) mechanics and materials of the seminar; (2) quality and enthusiasm of the group; (3) application made of the material; and 4) general appraisal. This section is not intended to be evaluative in nature nor an analysis of either the seminar processes or results. Instead, it is intended to reflect the personal reaction, reflections and conclusions of myself as the pastor who conducted the seminar.

Mechanics and Materials of the Seminar

The seminar setting has positive elements that make it the format of choice for the application of the
task outlined in this project. However, there are several weaknesses inherent in the seminar that are counterproductive. Interestingly, the weaknesses of the seminar are an outgrowth of the strengths that led to the use of the seminar format in the first place. First, while the seminar format encourages an atmosphere in which the participants can talk, it is not always possible to control either what it said or the length of time it takes for the participant to say it. Second, while it encourages those who are vocal to be more vocal, it does not always lead the less vocal to speak. In fact, the domination of the time by the vocal may even discourage others from making a contribution. Third, there is a trade-off between group participation and time; the more participation there is by the group the less time there is for the teacher to disseminate information.

The materials that seemed to create the most interest were those that engage the participants in self-evaluation (Temperament Inventory instrument, the Conflict Management Style Test, and the Anger Inventory). The fact that these were placed near the beginning of the seminar may have contributed to the high degree of interest and enthusiasm seen in the participants throughout the duration of the seminar. Another item that generated considerable discussion was the Rational Emotive Training (RET) material presented in session
five. The fact that the concepts of RET run counter to established thinking probably accounts for the difficulty the participants experienced in understanding and applying the RET concepts. In a second application of the seminar, this material should be presented with authoritative references for support.

Quality and Enthusiasm of the Group

It was personally gratifying to have the quality of participants that attended the seminar. The high number of church officers (many of whom were also church board members), the high educational and professional level, and the mix from related Adventist institutions and groups served to make the seminar a success both in terms of the quality of interaction and in terms of the long-run results as the participants continue to work together in potentially conflictive situations. As leaders of the church, these people have the potential to shape not only the course of conflict but also the way in which people engage in conflict.

Also, this group exhibited enthusiasm for what they were learning. Their participation in the discussions and group activities, their high rate of attendance, and their readiness for introspection and self-evaluation all serve to indicate that they felt what they were learning was meaningful and valuable.
Application Made of the Material

A number of conversations subsequent to the seminar have indicated that efforts have been made to apply the information provided in the seminar. For instance, one participant who avoided most conflict both at home and at work said that as a result of taking the seminar he now on occasion chooses to be more assertive by engaging in rather than avoiding conflict. Another participant who had the habit of alienating people because of his combative and arrogant demeanor has attempted to integrate communication skills that project him as open and caring. A final example includes a woman who found herself repeatedly hurt and angry as a result of her husband's remarks. She has now come to use certain skills that help her deal with her own emotions while engaged in conflict.

General appraisal

Certainly a pragmatic and perhaps a most meaningful appraisal of any program is whether it is was productive enough in its results to be used again. Pastors do not want for programs; there are many coming from church as well as nonchurch sources. However, since the church must be conscious of its stewardship responsibilities, the results of a program must offset its costs. There is also the additional factor that since the church must not be deterred from its primary
task of mission, programs must be evaluated at least partially on the basis of whether they contribute to or hinder progress toward the mission of the church. It is my judgment that this seminar fulfills both criteria. The most valuable resource used in the Conflict Skills Seminar is time. It is time well spent, however, since it may save a great deal of time in the future—not to mention other church resources—that might otherwise be spent in fruitless conflict. Also, a church in dysfunctional conflict is not likely to make significant progress toward the fulfillment of its mission. Therefore, I not only plan to continue using the seminar in the churches I pastor but also I intend to make the material available in a form that other pastors can use in their churches.

**Recommendations for a Second Implementation**

The recommendations that follow are based on the preceding analysis of the conflict skills seminar. For convenience, the recommendations are categorized under three headings paralleling the headings covered in this chapter: (1) Recommendations based on testing; (2) recommendations based on the participants' outlook; and (3) recommendations based on the pastor's reflection.

**Recommendations Based on Testing**

A first recommendation is that a second application of the seminar be made to ascertain whether
the results achieved in the first application can be reduplicated. Very little can be inferred about the potential of the seminar for use in the church generally from one application. It is possible that such elements as the educational level of the seminar participants, the loyalty of the participants to the teacher and their desire to see him succeed, and the teacher's ownership of the program he developed has an unknown (and perhaps substantial) influence on the success of the program.

A second recommendation is that this second application of the seminar be made by the pastor of the group selected. Since the project purports to be a program that pastors may be able to use with their congregations, it seems reasonable to assert that the success of the program is not fully tested until verified in actual field conditions.

A third recommendation is that the program be tested in multiple church environments. There are a number of factors that may make the Ardmore Adventist church out of the ordinary as compared to other Adventist churches (e.g., size, institutional setting, educational level). Most churches in the Adventist system have memberships of under 150 and lack a church-related institution for employment. The fact that the seminar seems effective in the Ardmore church does not mean that it will also be effective in the majority of these other situations.
A fourth recommendation is that there should be long-term testing and evaluation to ascertain whether the results indicated by the initial testing are lasting changes. The question is whether a twelve-hour seminar over a period of eight weeks can result in lasting changes in people's conflict management style.

Recommendations Based on the Participants' Outlook

A fifth recommendation is that the seminar be repaced so that the time/material ratio be more in keeping with the participants' ability to react and absorb the material presented. This could be achieved in one of three ways: (1) The amount of material could be reduced per each one and a half hour session by adding sessions; (2) the amount of material could remain the same per session by lengthening each session; and (3) the amount of material could be selectively reduced leaving the length of the sessions and the number of the sessions unchanged.

A sixth recommendation is that more time be allotted to group activities. While some of the participants admit that the practice sessions were at times awkward, it seems that permanent life-style changes can be achieved best as the students interact with the material presented. The amount of material presented combined with the time restraints sometimes resulted in rushed practice sessions.
A seventh recommendation is that greater use of recognized authoritative sources be used. In the context of an Adventist group, this might be reflected in the use of Ellen G. White material on the subject of conflict. This is necessitated by the fact that the seminar presents a number of ideas and concepts that are new and, perhaps, even contrary to personally held views. The use of material that is viewed as authoritative by the seminar participants would be an aid in reshaping their attitudes as well as providing illustrative instances.

Recommendations Based on the Pastor's Conclusions

An eighth recommendation is that priority be given by conference and/or union administrators to the training of pastors in the area of conflict management. By and large, pastors are not well-equipped to deal with interpersonal conflict in the church. Generally, the style they employ for its management is limited to what they have found has worked in the past. Conflict training could open new methods of managing conflict by enabling pastors to select the most appropriate method of managing conflict based on the type of conflict they face.

A ninth recommendation is that a conflict training curriculum be published by the church for the purpose of conflict training in local congregations. The church has always been concerned with the education of its
membership. This education is not restricted just to matters of doctrine or faith. Instead, the church must ultimately concern itself with how its doctrines and faith are translated into relational matters. Education in the area of conflict training is certainly an acid test of the church's ability to translate its faith into terms that relate to what is potentially the best and worst in human relationships.

1Matt 28:19-20.
APPENDIX 1

INFORMATIONAL EXHIBITS

1. Definitions of Conflict

2. Letter to the Church Officers
EXHIBIT 1

DEFINITIONS OF CONFLICT

I. Definitions favoring behavior.

". . . conflict exists whenever incompatible activities occur."

"Conflict is the interaction of interdependent people who perceive incompatible goals and interference from each other in achieving those goals."

Conflict is a "... protracted struggle, clash, fight, opposition between personalities, ideas, and interests."

"Social conflict results from the pursuit of what are perceived to be incompatible goals such that gains to one party occur at the expense of another."

"Conflict describes those experiences of individuals and groups trying to achieve goals which are either incompatible or appear to be so."

"Conflict is viewed as the active striving for one's own preferred outcome which, if attained, precludes the attainment by others of their own preferred outcome, thereby producing hostility."

II. Definitions favoring perception.

"Conflict occurs when two or more parties believe that what each wants is incompatible with what the other wants."

"Interpersonal conflict refers to the conflict which exists between individuals because of competing goals or differing viewpoints on how similar goals should be achieved."

Conflict is "... a situation in which two or more human beings desire goals which they perceive as being attainable by one or the other but not by both."

1See references respectively: King, "Three Cheers for Conflict!" p. 15; Joseph P. Folger and Marshall Scott Poole, Working Through Conflict (Glenview, Ill.:
January 29, 1986

John Smith
Rt. 1, Box 75
Ardmore, OK 73401

Dear John,

The Conflict Skills Seminar that I have been working on in conjunction with my class work at Andrews University is now ready.

If you choose to be a part of this seminar, you will not only learn new and exciting information that will change your outlook toward conflict, but also you will learn and practice skills that can make your conflicts an opportunity for personal and interpersonal growth.

This seminar should be particularly helpful to you as a church officer. That is to say, because of your position in the church, you not only deal with conflictive and potential conflictive situations, but also you are bound by your faith to deal with conflict in a manner consistent with Christ's principles of love. This seminar will give you the knowledge and skills to deal with conflict in a Christian manner.

This seminar is composed of eight sessions with each session one and half hours in length.

If this seminar interests you, please meet with me for a few moments after church this Sabbath in the Pastor's Study for the purpose of selecting the day and time of the seminar meetings.

In Christ,

Jan G. Johnson, Pastor
APPENDIX 2

CONFLICT SKILLS SEMINAR HANDOUTS

1. Session I
2. Session II
3. Session III
4. Session IV
5. Session V
6. Session VI
7. Session VII
8. Session VIII
PLEASE NOTE:

Copyrighted materials in this document have not been filmed at the request of the author. They are available for consultation, however, in the author's university library.

These consist of pages:

Appendix 2, pages 146-322
APPENDIX 3

EVALUATIVE EXHIBITS

1. Descriptions of the Conflict Attitude Test
2. February 2, 1986, Control Group Letter and Conflict Attitude Test
3. March 6, 1986, Control Group Letter and Conflict Attitude Test
EXHIBIT 1

DESCRIPTION OF THE
CONFLICT ATTITUDE TEST

Underlying Assumption

People tend to live in accordance with their perception of reality. To do otherwise results in a psychological state called dissonance--inconsistency between one's actions and one's beliefs. Consequently, intrapersonal conflict develops that is only resolved when (1) one's perception changes to correspond to one's behavior, or (2) one's behavior changes to correspond to one's perception. Since people tend to live so that their perceptions and behavior agree, an instrument testing for one of these elements will tend to indicate the other.

Purpose of the Test

The thesis of the project is as follows:

As members of a congregation are enlightened by a biblical perspective of the nature of the church and by contemporary knowledge of human behavior, they can learn to disagree over perceived facts, methods, goals, or values without experiencing the complication of disintegrating human relationships.

The purpose of this project was to develop a seminar that would teach church members methods of coping more effectively with interpersonal and/or intergroup conflict that inevitably accompanies social life. Coping was considered effective if one used certain
communication/confrontational techniques that tend to lead conflict toward resolution without the antagonists experiencing the disintegration and dissociation in relationships that often accompanies conflict.

**Results Desired**

The instrument was to test the effectiveness of the seminar by attempting to ascertain if significant and measurable change occurred in the participants' perception of conflict and toward the antagonists. The instrument could indicate one of three things: (1) no change in attitude; (2) a negative change in attitude; or (3) a positive change in attitude. A test result that might indicate a positive change in the participant's perception of conflict could be taken as an indication that a positive correlation exists between the seminar and that change.

The polarity of the test questions included both positive and negative statements. This assured that the respondents must agree and disagree with certain statements in order to show either a positive or negative change in attitude toward conflict.

**Method of development**

The instrument was applied on two occasions to two groups—a control group and the seminar group. It was designed so that the respondents could indicate their answers on somewhat of a continuum known as the Likert
scale. This allowed for a simple design and an uncomplicated testing of the instrument.

The instrument was developed in four stages.

Stage one. The preliminary instrument was designed in counsel with Dr. Roger Dudley, director of the Institute of Church Ministry at Andrews University.

Stage two. In order to refine the instrument, a test group was selected approximating the composition of the group likely to participate in the seminar. The test was given to this group on two occasions separated by six weeks.

The purpose of this administration of the test was to determine the consistency of results for each question. Since it was assumed that those participating in the first test group would remain constant in their perception of conflict from the time of the first testing to the second testing, those questions which showed wide variance in response were either deleted or amended.

Stage three. After careful analysis and refinement based on the data from the test group and in counsel with Dr. Roger Dudley, the instrument was considered ready for application.

Stage four. The instrument was applied to a control group and to the participants of the seminar.
Test classification

Question considered:

Will a seminar on conflict change the participants' behavior in conflict situations?

Correlational question:

Will a seminar on conflict change the participants' attitude and feelings about conflict?

Type of test:

Quasi-experimental test

Testing design:

Nonequivalent control group design with pretest and posttest

Analysis of the Testing Instrument

Table 11 analyzes the questions used in the testing instrument in several ways as noted by the key following the table. Table 12 further analyzes the positive/negative column [(+,−)] in table 11.

A casual look at table 11 demonstrates that the questions seem to be arranged in somewhat of a random fashion. An effort was made to arrange questions in such a way so a respondent's answers to certain questions would not be influenced by his answers to other questions.

Also, an attempt was made to include questions phrased positively and negatively requiring a mixed response. It was hoped that this procedure would reduce the error caused by the single response factor.
TABLE 11

ANALYSIS OF THE QUESTIONS
USED IN THE TESTING INSTRUMENT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Cat.</th>
<th>Ses. (+,-)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Conflict occurs because of sin in the human heart.</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>I feel ill at ease when someone disagrees with me in public.</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>I avoid people who have made me angry.</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Conflict arises because people view situations differently.</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>It is best not to bring sensitive to the surface because it only seems to increase conflict.</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>When in a conflict, I feel compelled to win.</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>It is best to avoid a situation that may result in conflict.</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>It is possible for conflict to have a positive effect on church life.</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>The church should allow people to express their differing opinions.</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Conflict is out of place in the church.</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>I worry that if I get angry in a conflict I may say things that I'll regret.</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>I get irritated with people who express ideas that conflict with mine.</td>
<td>E</td>
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15. If a person is agitated on some issue in the church, he should be allowed to express his opinion.

16. Conflict is the opposite of for people.

17. If church members were converted, there would be no conflict.

18. The less said when people are in disagreement the better.

19. Conflict occurs most often in congregations in which there is a deep commitment to the church.

20. An open expression of differences of opinion is good for the church.

21. If there is conflict in the church, the pastor should preach on the subject of unity.

22. I feel frustrated and upset when someone gets angry with me.

23. The church functions best when conflict is not present.

24. I feel confident in dealing with people who are angry with me.

25. If there is conflict over an issue in a business meeting, it is best to cut off discussion as soon as possible and vote before people lose control of their temper.

26. In the heat of an argument, it may be to my advantage to point out my opponent's spiritual weaknesses.
27. Conflict is normal and unavoidable wherever people come together in organizations (including the church.)

28. In a conflict, it is best to disregard people's personal feelings about the issue and stick to the facts of the issue.

29. Conflict in the church should be suppressed.

30. Majority vote is a fair and appropriate way of settling conflict.

31. One reason there is so much conflict is because people hold such unusual ideas.

32. It is not possible for an organization to go through change without also experiencing conflict.

33. A Christian leader may find it necessary to escalate conflict.

34. In a conflict, I might have to reveal some unrelated but embarrassing information about the other person if it would help truth prevail.

35. Conflict leads to positive results.

Key:
# = The question number as it appears on the test.
Cat. = The subject category: A) Sources of conflict, B) Resolving conflict, C) Morality of conflict, D) Results of conflict, E) Self-appraisal in conflict.
Ses. = The session in which the question applies.
(+,-) = Indicates a positive or negative phrased question.

Since the testing instrument was designed to evaluate attitudes and since there are several key
attitudes that affect how one responds in conflict, there are a number of questions that appear to be similar that seek to evaluate a single attitude from various approaches. It seems that this is in keeping with testing procedures and aids in validating the test.

### TABLE 12

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<tr>
<th>Session</th>
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One further note may prove helpful. The test questions are conveniently divided into five categories (see table 11). The categories and the number of test questions covering each is as follows: (A) sources of conflict, six instances; (B) resolving conflict, eleven instances; (C) morality of conflict, five instances; (D) results of conflict, three instances; and (E) self-appraisal in conflict, ten instances. These categories represent the major subject areas covered in the seminar. The student is tested to see if his attitudes have
shifted on points in these categories toward the kind of non-threatened, problem-solving, redemptive attitude that performs best in conflict.
February 2, 1986

Dear Friend,

May I please take three minutes of your time.

You have received this letter and testing instrument from your pastor because I ask for and received his help. I am asking for your help as well. Should you decide to help, it will take an additional fifteen minutes to complete the enclosed test.

As you can see from the letterhead, I am a pastor in the Oklahoma conference. I am also working on a Doctor of Ministry degree through Andrews University. Part of my project/dissertation deals with an aspect of conflict management. The development of this testing instrument relates to what I am trying to accomplish in this project.

What I need you to do is complete this test today and return it in the enclosed stamped envelope. In approximately eight weeks, I will send you a second copy of the test to retake. You will also need to fill it out and return it just as you did in the case of the first test.

Should you choose to take the test, please do so without conferring with anyone else; the answers must be your own.

Thank you for you help.

Sincerely,

Jan G. Johnson, Pastor

P.S. Your test will be held in the strictest confidence. Following tabulation of the data, all tests will be destroyed.
CONFLICT ATTITUDE TEST

READ BEFORE YOU BEGIN

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

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

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

- If you always or completely agree, circle 1.
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- If you occasionally or partially agree or disagree, circle 3.
- If you usually or mostly disagree, circle 4.
- If you always or completely disagree, circle 5.

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

**QUESTION:**

1. Conflict occurs because of sin in the human heart.  
   AGREE  DISAGREE
   1  2  3  4  5

2. I feel ill at ease when someone disagrees with me in public.  
   1  2  3  4  5

3. I avoid people who have made me angry.  
   1  2  3  4  5

4. Conflict arises because people view situations differently.  
   1  2  3  4  5

5. It is best not to bring sensitive issues to the surface because it only seems to increase conflict.  
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6. When in a conflict, I feel compelled to win.  
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8. It is possible for conflict to have a positive effect on church life.  
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35. Conflict leads to positive results. | AGREE | DISAGREE  
| 1    | 2    | 3    | 4    | 5    |

36. Occupation? _______________________

37. Print your name and address in the space below:

Name ______________________________________________________
Address _____________________________________________
City __________________________ State ____ Zip ____
March 6, 1986

Mr. John Smith
Rt. 1, Box 35
Oklahoma City, Ok 73123

Dear Mr. Smith,

Thank you for participating in the first testing of the "Conflict Attitude Test." Your time and effort is greatly appreciated.

I now need you to take the test a final time in order to compare the results with the first test. Enclosed you will find a fresh copy of the test. Please answer the questions as described in the instructions. Remember, do not confer with anyone else; the answers must be your own. Return the test as soon as possible in the enclosed envelope.

I assure you that your test will be held in the strictest confidence. Following tabulation of the data, all tests will be destroyed.

Thank you for your help.

Sincerely,

Jan G. Johnson, Pastor

P.S. Notice the additional information requested in question #35. Your answer here will help make the statistical study more meaningful.
CONFLICT ATTITUDE TEST

READ BEFORE YOU BEGIN

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QUESTION:  
35. Conflict leads to positive results.  

AGREE  DISAGREE  
1  2  3  4  5

36. Number of years of education.  

37. Print your name and address in the space below:
   
   Name  
   
   Address  
   
   City  State  Zip
APPENDIX 4

FEEDBACK EXHIBITS

1. Sample of the Feedback Sheet
2. Responses on Feedback Sheets—Handouts
3. Responses on Feedback Sheets—Lectures
4. Responses on Feedback Sheets—Group Activities
5. Responses on Feedback Sheets—Homework
6. Responses on Feedback Sheets—Time Allocation
7. Responses on Feedback Sheets—Personal Reflection
8. Responses on Feedback Sheets—Suggestions
EXHIBIT 1

Conflict Skills Seminar
Session VIII
Handout I

FEEDBACK SHEET

Directions: Please take a few minutes to give your opinion on the various elements of the seminar listed below. Be specific. What was helpful, not helpful, exciting, stimulating, etc?

1) Handouts

2) Lectures

3) Group activities

4) Homework

5) Time (seminar length, session length)

6) How have the concepts covered in this seminar affected your conflicts? Be specific.

7) What suggestions do you have for future conflict seminars?
EXHIBIT 2
RESPONSES ON FEEDBACK SHEET
HANDOUTS

I. Positive Comments

Helpful.
Very helpful. Content was well prepared.
Were well organized.
Very excellent material.
Somewhat helpful.
Fine.
With rare exception handouts were good and several excellent.
OK--the information was very interesting and all helped.
The articles provided were stimulating and informative.
The handouts were good and provided different perspectives.
Good information and further reading material.
Very helpful. I'm glad they were numbered. I could keep them organized and restudy them at home.
Well written and helpful for future reference. I have not been able to spend as much time in study as I would have liked.
Course would be ineffective without such. They gave access to helpful ideas from various sources.
Very helpful--helped gel some ideas that couldn't be covered in class.

II. Negative Comments

Bit much.
I'm always confused about what is information only, homework, activities, etc.
Quite extensive. They might have had more meaning if there had been more time to discuss the information presented.
Structured well although a lot of material for the amount of time.
Very informative but too much to handle in the time we spent.
It would be nicer to have a small three ring notebook to keep the papers in. We could punch holes at each class if need be.
Complete, but not in the order used in class.
EXHIBIT 3
RESPONSES ON FEEDBACK SHEETS
LECTURE

I. Positive Comments

Very helpful.
Lively, well orchestrated, interactive.
Direct—they did not bog down on one subject. All material received attention.
Very good.
Organized and informative.
Most stimulating and helpful part of seminar.
Enlightening and enjoyable.
Superior—the teacher's ability to answer questions and give examples "made the course."
Good—helpful.
Were well done.
Felt well prepared.
Stimulating.
Excellent.
Very good—lots of examples.
Helpful.
The lectures were splendid—but couldn't remember as much of them as the handout—they helped a lot though.
The interaction between participants have been helpful. The seminar has been conducted in a very fair and helpful manner.
Helpful in bringing together materials such as handouts, etc.
Thought stimulating. Well prepared. Good explanation.

II. Negative Comments

Good—could have used a few more examples or demonstrations.
Helpful—especially the last session. I'm not sure if because I became more involved but seemed like we were not rushing through too much material too fast.
Informative but very in depth. Need more time for questions and discussion. This leads to in depth learning and clarifies ideas.
I. Positive Comments

Helpful.
I liked the group activities--having more people's opinion on the ideas.
It is good to get ideas from others. The experiences used are real to life and are familiar happenings.
Reenforced your points. Made for clarity.
Enjoyed these. Points learned seemed to stay with me longer.
Ten sessions would allow more of these.
Excellent and fun.
OK.
Good--enjoyed.
Very helpful and stimulating. When in the smaller groups you have to participate and then you seem to get more from the material.
Coordinated well; gave time to personally think, not just absorb material.
Very good.
The group activity or body language was the most exciting fun, and was retained longer.
Enlightening--good teaching tool even if some are uncomfortable with them.

II. Negative Comments

Always helpful but sometimes a bit awkward or uncomfortable.
Good for putting theory into practice. Not enough time to cover well enough to get a real handle on the techniques. We rely mostly on old skills.
Not particularly helpful to me.
These were mediocre. Seemed like the results of the group were often vague.
Too limited because of the lack of time.
Interesting to hear reports--sometimes it was hard to get into it.
Not enough lab work. The key to change is practice. I will find it difficult to use methods for lack of familiarity in the heat of the moment.
There should be more "in house" labs to help practice what we are learning.
I. Positive Comments

I liked the homework. I could take my time and go over and over it until it was firmly in mind. Gives time to contemplate alone.
Information load would be inadequate without it.
It was like schoolwork--gave time to rethink the material and relate it to our own situation.
They aligned with the subjects well and were well used tools.
Essential--well chosen articles to read.
This was good--especially important to keep it minimal.
Fine.
Good.
Adequate.
OK.

II. Negative Comments

The "fighting fair" assignment was never clear to me.
Not as helpful.
I didn't find time to do the homework each time.
Do we really complete it?
Good when I was faithful in doing it.
Not taxing. Were helpful if done in frame other than just getting it done.
Well, I didn't do too good on that one--no reflection on you.
Good but students need some incentive to do it.
Research and evaluation the most useful to me.
Most of the homework material seemed to be the group activities that we didn't have time to get into.
Not difficult or time consuming, although I personally did not get mine done.
Too much.
I never seemed to really take/have the time. Maybe if time was allotted prior/during/after class.
EXHIBIT 6
RESPONSES ON FEEDBACK SHEETS
TIME ALLOCATION

I. Positive Comments

Adequate for each session.
The length of time was fine.
Just right.
Probably optimal for being meaningful.
OK.
OK.
OK.
Good timing.
Good length.
Just about perfect.

II. Negative Comments

Shouldn't be more sessions but we could have used
two hour time blocks.
Short for the amount of material we covered, a full
two hours per session would not be excessive.
Wonderful! I would have enjoyed two hour sessions
and think an extra half hour would have been
useful.
Would recommend two hours with a ten minute break
in the middle.
Need more time with a break in the middle.
Session length too short to do the group activi-
ties. Maybe 2 hours. Seminar length seems
about right.
Time passes quickly at each session. Not at all
boring. Length of seminar was just about
right, but was hard to comprehend all the
material.
Needed more time and less paper.
Perhaps longer session length and or seminar
length. You need just about eight weeks to
have time for all of this information to result
in behavior change.
Maybe ten sessions next time.
All OK, but about fifteen minutes too early each
week.
EXHIBIT 7
RESPONSES ON FEEDBACK SHEETS
PERSONAL REFLECTION

I. Comments regarding attitude changes toward conflict

I feel that having a conflict can and should be constructive. And I feel more confident that I can engage in conflict with someone who has not had this seminar.

I look at conflict in a total different way. I feel I can deal with it better and it's helped in my relationship with my wife.

They have helped me to learn to deal with the conflicts rather than avoiding them--and getting results.

I believe I can be more effective (at least if I go back and review the material). We've had some laughing situations at home as we reflected on how we used the concepts.

If and when conflict happens, I feel my mind would come back to the issues of this class and I could better cope with it.

I feel more comfortable in dealing with hostility and anger with better understanding of mechanics of dealing with these problems.

I do not fear a conflict quite as much and hopefully can handle it without anger or hurting the other person.

I was forced to look at my methods of conflict and see how unproductive they have been.

Helped me better see (understand) how conflicts can and should always end with improvement in the issues.

The concepts have made me aware of my need in this area.

Yes, I don't view conflict as something to always be avoided now.

I understand a little better how conflicts can be healthy. I guess I--as many others--think of conflict as negative. Now, I understand better how it can be positive.

II. Comments regarding attitude changes toward others

Given me ways to be less aggressive and more affirming in my conflicts. More understanding of the sources and nature of conflict. More understanding of different temperaments.
EXHIBIT 7--Continued

RESPONSES ON HANDOUT SHEETS

PERSONAL REFLECTION

I believe for the first time in my life I now begin to understand many differences that exist between all of us. Thank you for sharing this with us.

It has helped me to understand myself better and how to relate to others and their feelings.

Helped me understand my spouse and fellow workers better--including my mom.

III. Miscellaneous comments

They have abated.

Probably reinforced some previously learned. Still grappling with basic situations as related to church actions.

I have decided to pursue the discussion of family disagreements (with my spouse, children, and parents) to see if it makes things even better.

I don't feel quite as personally attacked when conflict does occur.

I've learned not to be so defensive.

I hope I've learned to fight fair.
EXHIBIT 8
RESPONSES ON FEEDBACK SHEETS

SUGGESTIONS

I. Suggestions regarding the seminar time/material ratio

Less material at each session so (you) could more thoroughly cover each point.
A two hour block of time.
Time for further discussion and role-playing.
More classroom practice of methods presented.
(This) would reinforce and ultimately (we would) learn more.
Needed more time less paper.
Cover less material during each class. It was too much to digest at one time. Maybe have two meetings a night if time allowed. Do more of the group activities. This would be possible if less material was covered during each class--but then again you may have done this in this way to meet your school deadline.
Perhaps either lengthen the seminar or increase the session time.
Stay with present material. Individual testing and analysis is most helpful.
Go slower--old hat to you!

II. Comments regarding class domination

Try to discourage private "group sessions" during lectures.
I would suggest that you not let someone who thinks he has a good point take up too much of the class time.
I would have liked to hear from everyone more. Some students dominate and some good thinkers never speak up?

III. Comments regarding new seminars

Should be a regular thing.
Have a follow-up short course.
Make it possible to have it down to fewer sessions and try to get more church members to get the exposure.

IV. Miscellaneous comments

Many pertinent Spirit of Prophecy counsels on every level of church conflict (could be used) and lessons (drawn from them).
EXHIBIT 8--Continued

RESPONSES ON FEEDBACK SHEETS

SUGGESTIONS

If it hadn't been for this seminar, I may have been a good suicide candidate. The conflict I have (had) through the last five months have been so huge in my life (that) I don't think I could have made it. The help you have given and the guiding of the Holy Spirit is really making a change in my outlook. Thank you from the bottom of my heart. Just pray for me. I really don't have any constructive suggestion.
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DICTIONARIES, ENCYCLOPAEDIAS, AND YEARBOOKS


**TAPES**


V I T A
VITA

Personal

I was born and reared in the Northwest; the last child in a family of five children born to Joseph and Leath Johnson. I married Meldra Rodier in 1968 and together we have two children—Cheryl born in 1972 and Wendy born in 1977.

Educational

In 1970 I received a B.A. from Walla Walla College (College Place, Washington) in Theology with minors in Sociology and Speech. I received a Master of Divinity from the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, Andrews University, in 1973. This project completes the requirements for a Doctor of Ministry degree.

Professional

I have served as a Seventh-day Adventist pastor in three conferences: Oregon conference from 1973 to 1979; Mountain View conference from 1980 to 1985; and Oklahoma conference since 1985. My goals for the future include publishing articles and books for teens and adults with the theme of developing and preserving interpersonal relationships.