

## SYLLABUS

# Managing Church Conflict

Doctor of Ministry Seminar - CEAM8302

Dr. Joe Sherrer and Dr. Reggie Ogea

New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary  
Fall Trimester, 2008-2009  
September 15-17, 2008

(The seminar will be taught in New Orleans only, Monday, 1:00 - 9:00 pm. & Tuesday and Wednesday, 8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. CST)

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Dr. Joe Sherrer	Sanders Center	(504) 816-8100 Ext. 3728	<a href="mailto:jsherrer@nobts.edu">jsherrer@nobts.edu</a>
Dr. Reggie Ogea	Sanders Center	(504) 816-8100 Ext 3728	<a href="mailto:rogea@nobts.edu">rogea@nobts.edu</a>

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### Seminary Mission Statement

The mission of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary is to equip leaders to fulfill the Great Commission and the Great Commandments through the local church and its ministries.

### Course Description

This professional doctoral seminar is designed to address the topic of conflict in the local church. Emphasis will be placed in discussing a biblical approach to understanding conflict, identifying areas of conflict, and developing strategies in resolving issues of conflict. Students will be exposed to various perspectives of conflict management through readings, interactions, essays, and role plays.

### Purpose of the Course

This seminar will expose students to various areas of conflict in the church. Emphasis will be placed on strategies of conflict management and how “win-win” outcomes can be achieved by strategically addressing problems in the church.

### Course Objectives

At the conclusion of the seminar students should be able to:

1. Appreciate the value of resolving church conflict.
2. Identify conflicts in the church.
3. Explore what scripture says concerning conflict management.
4. Demonstrate basic skills in conflict negotiation and resolution.
5. Evaluate appropriate strategies in resolving conflict.
6. Develop a personal philosophy of confronting conflict.
7. Commit themselves to being ministers of reconciliation.

### Required Texts

Augsburger, David. *Caring Enough to Confront*. Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 1986. (ISBN 0-8307-0733-6)

Haugk, Kenneth C. *Antagonists in the Church – How to Identify and Deal with Destructive Conflict*. Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Publishing House, 1988. (ISBN 0-8066-2310-1)

Steinke, Peter L. *Congregational Leadership in Anxious Times: Being Calm and Courageous No Matter What*. Herndon, VA: The Alban Institute, 2006. (ISBN 1-56699-328-8)

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Poirier, Alfred. *The Peacemaking Pastor: A Biblical Guide to Resolving Church Conflict*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2006. (ISBN 0801065895)

----- Or – Your choice ----- (Pick either Poirer or Sande) -----

Sande, Ken. *The Peacemaker: A Biblical Guide to Resolving Personal Conflict*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1997. (ISBN 6-8010-5741-8)

### Course Requirements

1. **Textbook Readings and Book Critiques:** Seminar participants are expected to read all required textbooks. In addition each participant will submit a three-page critique (single-spaced) for these two books: Augsburg and (Poirier or Sande). (This is a total of two critiques, but you will read Haugk and Steinke for other assignments.) These critiques are to begin with a complete bibliographic entry and include a brief summary, significant contributions, strengths and weaknesses of the author's presentation, points of agreement or disagreement, and potential application to the student's ministry situation.

Seminar participants may need to refer to their book critiques during discussion times in the seminar. Since critiques are to be submitted on the first day of the seminar, students may want to bring an additional copy of their critiques with them to the seminar.

**Date Due: Both critiques are due September 15 at the beginning of the seminar.**

2. **Case Studies:** Seminar participants will submit three case studies, single-spaced, identifying examples of church conflict. A sample case study is attached with the syllabus. Case studies will be discussed during the seminar.

**Date Due: September 15 during the first session of the seminar.**

3. **Reaction & Principle Identification from Steinke:** Prior to the seminar, participants are to read the Steinke text and provide a one-page, single-spaced reaction to each of the three parts of the book for a total of three pages. In addition, identify at least five key implications and/or applications from each of the three parts of the book for a total of 15 implications/applications. [Example: Anxiety is defined as an automatic reaction "to a threat, real or imagined." (Chapter 1, p. 3) Implication: In church life, when anxiety levels rise over an issue, the leader must be able to identify the threat and determine if it is real or imagined. Application: Conflict in the church produces anxiety, even if the threat is only imagined.] These implications/applications may be listed single-spaced on a fourth page of the report.

**Date Due: September 15 during the first session of the seminar.**

4. **Summary & Principle Identification from Haugk:** Prior to the seminar participants are to read the Haugk text and provide a one-page, single-spaced summary of each of the four parts of the book for a total of four pages. In addition, identify at least five principles of dealing with antagonists in the church from each of the four parts of the book for a total 20 principles. [Example: Antagonists cannot function and reproduce under the bright light of truth. (Chapter 5, p. 47)] These principles may be listed single-spaced on a fifth page of the report.

**Date Due: September 15 during the first session of the seminar.**

5. **Preaching/Teaching Assignment:** Seminar participants will complete one of the following assignments based on a specific aspect of conflict in the church. The assignment should be developed on a topic which the student has an interest and will enhance their ministry now and in the future. Choose one of the following options:

**This assignment should be mailed to the Professional Doctoral Office with a postmark no later than October 20.**

- a. Sermon Series: Students choosing this option will submit two full-text sermons dealing with the biblical foundations for dealing with conflict in the church or personal relationships. Students should include a full manuscript of the entire sermon including illustrations.
- b. Bible Studies: Students choosing this option will submit two complete lesson plans for leading an adult Sunday school class or small group in sessions dealing with the foundations for dealing with conflict in the church or personal relationships. Lesson plans, (designed for at least two one-hour sessions) must include preparation and procedure steps, a listing of learning objectives, the content to be used in each step, and illustrations of any visual or activity materials.
- c. Training Plan: Students choosing this option will submit a complete training plan for leading a group of deacons (or other key leaders in the church) on how they should handle conflict as church leaders. The training plan, (designed for at least two one-hour sessions) should include session objectives, complete preparation and procedural steps, with the content to be prepared, presented, or otherwise utilized in each step, and illustrations of all visual or learning activity materials.

### **Directed Study Students:**

#### Modification of Primary Assignments

A student taking this seminar by directed study will complete the **ALL** of the assignments listed above with the following adjustments:

- A. The Book Critiques (#1) and the Case Studies (#2) should be mailed to the professors no later than September 8, 2008.
- B. The Haugk assignment (#3) is to be submitted as required above. The assignment should be postmarked no later than September 8, 2008.

#### Additional Assignments for Directed Study Students

In addition, a student taking this seminar by directed study should complete **THREE** of the following directed study assignments. It is anticipated that these additional assignments should

approximate minimally an additional 24-30 hours of work. All three of these assignments are to be submitted no later than **October 20, 2008**.

1. **Research Project:** Students will type an 8-12 page paper on a specific issue related to managing church conflict.
2. **Annotative Bibliography:** Students will compile an annotative bibliography of at least twenty books addressing the subject of church conflict.
3. **Seminar:** Students will develop a seminar on resolving church conflict.
4. **Interview:** Students will interview a Director of Missions in order to identify specific concerns of church conflict.
5. **Philosophy Paper:** Students will write a personal philosophy of handling church conflict.
6. **Conflict Action Plan:** Students will identify a church conflict situation from the past and develop a plan of action to resolve this conflict.

### **Evaluation**

Textbook Readings/Critiques (2)/Haugk	35%
Case Studies	25%
Reaction/Principles from Steinke	15%
Preaching/Teaching Assignment	25%

(Directed Study Assignments – As appropriate)

### **Post-Seminar and Directed Study Assignments are to be mailed to...**

Drs. Sherrer & Ogea  
Office of Professional Doctoral Programs  
New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary  
3939 Gentilly Blvd.  
New Orleans, LA 70126

## Selected Bibliography

- Augsburger, David. *Caring Enough to Confront*. Ventura, CA: Regals Books, 1986.
- Bowling, Daniel and David Hoffman (eds.) *Bring Peace in the Room: How the Personal Qualities of the Mediator impact the Process of Conflict Resolution*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2003.
- Cosgrove, Charles H. and Dennis D. Hatfield. *Church Conflict: the Hidden Systems Behind the Fights*. Abingdon Press, 1994.
- Fisher, Roger and William Ury. *Getting to Yes: Negotiating Agreement Without Giving In*. New York: Penguin Books, 1991.
- Friedman, Edwin. *Generation to Generation: Family Process in Church and Synagogue*. The Guilford Press, 1985.
- Furlong, Gary T. *The Conflict Resolution Toolbox*. Ontario, Canada: John Wiley and Sons, 2005.
- Gangel, Kenneth O. and Samuel L. Canine. *Communication and Conflict Management*. Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1992.
- Gramson, Robert M. *Coping With Difficult People*. New York: Ballantine Books, 1981.
- Haverstadt, Hugh F. *Managing Church Conflict*. Louisville, KY: Westminster, John Knox Press, 1991.
- Haugk, Kenneth C. *Antagonists in the Church – How to Identify and Deal with Destructive Conflict*. Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Publishing House, 1988.
- Kale, David W. *Managing Conflict in the Church*. Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press, 2003.
- Kliwer, Stephen. *How to Live With Diversity in the Local Church*. Washington, DC: Alban Institute, 1987.
- Leas, Speed B. *Church Fights*. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1973.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Discover Your Conflict Management Style*. New York: Alban Institute Publishing, 1984.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Leadership and Conflict*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1982.
- Lester, Andrew D. *Coping With Your Anger*. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1983.

- Mayer, Bernard S. *Beyond Neutrality: Confronting the Crisis in Conflict Resolution*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2004.
- McSwain, Larry L. and William C. Treadwell, Jr. *Conflict Ministry in the Church*. Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1981.
- Moore, Christopher W. *The Mediation Process: Practical Strategies for Resolving Conflict*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1996.
- PCUS. *Using Planning to Improve Decision Making*. John Knox Press, 1978.
- Saarinen, Martin F. *Life Cycle of a Congregation*. Washington, DC: Alban Institute, 1986.
- Sande, Ken. *The Peacemaker: A Biblical Guide to Resolving Personal Conflict*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1997.
- Schaller, Lyle E. *Survival Tactics in the Parish*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1977.
- Steinke, Peter L. *Healthy Congregations*. Washington, DC: The Alban Institute, 1993.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *How Your Church Family Works*. Washington, DC: The Alban Institute, 1993.
- Susek, Ron. *Firestorm: Preventing and Overcoming Church Conflicts*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1999.
- Ury, William L. *Getting Past No*. New York: Penguin Books, 1993.
- Ury, William L., Jeanne M. Brett, and Stephen B. Goldberg. *Getting Disputes Resolved*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1988.
- Wagner, C. Peter. *Your Church Can be Healthy*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1979.
- White, James E. and Robert L. Sheffield. *Equipping Deacons to Confront Conflict*. Nashville, TN: Convention Press, 1987.
- Woods, C. Jeff. *We've Never Done it Like This Before*. Washington, DC: Alban Institute, 1994.

## Managing Church Conflict Case Study

Rev. Stan Perkins has been the minister of education at Calvary Baptist Church for 32 years, having just reached the age of 62. Stan has been one of the best educators in the state and has been named “Minister of Education of the Year” by the state convention on two different occasions over the years. But in recent years there have been an ever increasing number of church member complaints about Stan. Members have complained about his “boring Bible studies,” “lack of preparation during the teacher training times,” failure to return calls at a reasonable time,” and “a general attitude problem.” In fact, some Sunday School workers have refused to commit themselves to work next year.

Some of the deacons have been grumbling about Stan for the past year or so. Every time Stan’s name comes up, the grumbles seem to get louder and come from more deacons. The following questions were asked of you, chairman of the personnel committee, at the last deacon’s meeting, “Can we fire a minister? What do we have to do? Can we have a report from you on what we can do, what we must do, and what procedures we need to follow?” No specific name or names came up in the discussion on this matter, but you feel that almost all the deacons involved in this discussion were thinking of Stan.

You are in a big quandary. Stan had been one of your son’s favorite ministers growing up in the church. You are convinced that your son probably would not have gone to seminary had it not been for the influence your son received from Stan. Your son always asks about Stan whenever he is home, and on most trips home stops in to visit Stan, either at the church or at his home. The chairman of the deacons also was influenced by Stan as a young adult. He always defends Stan when the grumbling comes up. You know that Stan has been an excellent minister, but because of some reason, age, failing health, or maybe even burn out, Stan has not been serving up to standards. You have tried to be tactful about dropping hints to Stan, hoping that he would get the message. But this has all been to no avail, and things appear to be getting worse. This could turn out to be a bad situation for all concerned. To top everything off, Stan has been serving as the staff coordinator for as long as you can remember; any attempt to fire Stan would most likely get the entire staff into an uproar.

You are to attempt to set down the possible interests and issue for yourself, your son, Stan, deacons, church members, Sunday School workers, chairman of the deacons, chairman of the personnel committee, and staff.

How can this situation be resolved?