

## Tools for Effective Conflict in the Church



**Conflict** has a bad name in the church, well deserved

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## Usually it's about,...

- Desire for Control
- Struggling Finances
- Cloudy Vision
- Clashing Values
- Poor Communication Skills\*



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## Desire for Control



People will deny its about control, but its about control!

- Ask what is at stake, what is being protected?
- Pro's & Con's of the situation
  - ▼ What will happen if we do this?
  - ▼ What will happen if we don't do this?

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# Struggling Finances



Money is often a symptom, not the cause

- The budget shows the heart of the church
- Churches HAVE to become more comfortable talking about money
  - § The 2<sup>nd</sup> most talked about topic in the bible (first is love)

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# Struggling Finances



Money is often a symptom, not the cause

So often, finances are not being monitored closely enough

- § Following the UMC guidelines
- § Should have checks and balances
- § Be aware of dashboards early
- § Have contingent plans. If this happens, then we do this. Paranoid but not restricting.
- § Line – item donating is dangerous

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# Cloudy Vision



Vision is not talked about consistently and therefore not known or significant

- Outdated vision
  - Doesn't match the current membership
- Leadership not versed in cultivating vision
- Vision has not been the filter for all missions, projects, programs of service, etc.
- (change of pastors)

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## Clashing Values

And thinking everyone should think the way you do

- Leadership is not representative of the membership/attenders
- The church vision is based on the values of those who are the decision makers and leaders
- Realize the church culture changes and has to adapt to reflect the current membership/attenders

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## Culture in the Church

...He handed out gifts of apostle, prophet, evangelist, and pastor-teacher to train Christ's followers in skilled servant work, working within Christ's body, the church, until we're all moving rhythmically and easily with each other, efficient and graceful in response to God's Son, fully mature adults, fully developed within and without, fully alive like Christ. Ephesians 4:11-13

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**WHO** you are (as the church)  
is not the same as  
**WHAT** you do (as the church)



But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." Acts 1:8

"A church cannot grow beyond its ability to care for its people."  
- David Womak

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## Church Culture Reality Check

All progress begins with the truth  
Please complete this Reality Check individually.  
Rate the church True or False (or Sometimes)  
Be honest in your answers!

Reality Check	T or F (or S)
1. Our congregation is well informed about our church mission and vision.	
2. I am clear on what is most important to our congregation.	
3. I am comfortable speaking up, even if I disagree.	
4. There is a high level of mutual respect among all groups, committees and individuals.	
5. I feel that my role and the expectations of me are very clear.	
6. I am held accountable for the results I produce.	
7. We hold each other accountable.	
8. There are clear consequences for non-performance.	
9. We regularly evaluate our programs and make changes.	

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## Culture Reality Check

Reality Check	T or F (or S)
10. We celebrate successes.	
11. We consistently ask if new people are ready for <i>Professions of Faith</i> .	
12. We have the right people in the right jobs (paid and unpaid).	
13. Our volunteer program consists of recruiting, training, and evaluating.	
14. We are a purpose driven church, looking mostly outward.	
15. Our church staff would say they are valued.	
16. We have a good system for the flow of a new visitor.	
17. We have a care ministry system in place.	

This begins the Transformation Process!

Total Score # True \_\_\_\_\_  
# False \_\_\_\_\_  
# Sometimes \_\_\_\_\_

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## Results



- ☆ Star the ONE that your church does the best!
- ○ Circle the ONE where there is a lot of opportunity!
- Share with those around you:
  - Each person simply states the starred one first (without explanation)
  - Then, each person states the circled one (without explanation)
- Are there consistencies around the table?

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## Results

### Done well

Is it due to

- ❑ No control issues!
- ❑ Financial stability!
- ❑ Clear vision!
- ❑ Consistent values!
- ❑ Great communication throughout!



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## Results

### Opportunities

Is it due to?

- ❑ Desire for Control?
- ❑ Struggling Finances?
- ❑ Cloudy Vision?
- ❑ Clashing Values?
- ❑ Poor Communication Skills?



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## What Next?

The band-aid is ripped off, we are exposed!

What tools will help us move **forward**?



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## Tips, tools & suggestions:



### There are clear leadership expectations

- The roles are clear including expectations of the positions
- There are clear consequences set from the beginning - if leaders are not able to measure up
- There is a balance of leadership positions, rotation of new continuously on/off the teams for fresh ideas and to be...
- Representative of the congregation
  - Age, gender, race, other considerations

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## Tips, tools & suggestions:



### Transparency of finances

- Audit (independent and/or conference)
- Readable, understandable brief report
  - Available monthly in a variety of ways
    - Click on spot on website, members only
    - Printed and available in the narthex
    - Mailed to those by request only (shut ins, or seasonal members)

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## Tips, tools & suggestions:



### Transparency of finances

- The budget is reflective of the values of the church
- A "What If" plan (appropriately paranoid)
- Plan for growth
  - Financial plan to care for the buildings
  - Technology updates
  - Staff plan
- Plan if decline

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## Tips, tools & suggestions:



### Vision Planning

- Annual Vision Planning Retreat
  - Quarterly check-ins
  - Only plan 3 years out
  - Event well planned
    - (Network with those who have done well)
  - Incorporate Team-building
- Sometimes run by a 3<sup>rd</sup> party allows for better control and permits the pastor and lay leader to be engaged participants

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## Tips, tools & suggestions:



### Consistent Values:

- Values assessment
- The values are reflective of the congregation
- Fits the UMC principles
- It is one of the filters for decision making
- Prepared to make the tough decisions based on the values

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## Tips, tools & suggestions:



### Communication Skills Training

- Easy format to train those in leadership how to improve communication skills
- Identify and adapt to the different styles
- Practice and keep this skill as culture
- Keep in mind when planning - how to communicate to the different styles



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## Keys to Embrace Conflict

- Know that there will be conflict
- Preventive measures like good communication skills
- Have an action plan of how you deal with it
- Incorporate a **Leadership Covenant**
  - Behavior agreement
  - Stated consequences
  - Follow through and make the tough decisions



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## What questions would you like to ask?



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## Congregational Vitality



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### Four Rules of Business Protocol by Dan Sullivan

- Arrive on time
- Do what you say you will do
- Finish what you start
- Say please and thank you

### Rules of Engagement By Janet Earls

- Be Coachable
- No Turfs! It all belongs to God.
- Team Covenants
- Forgiveness
- Think of an idea as a gift, give it away

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