ELDERS – DEACONS/DEACONESSES TRAINING

WELCOME!
RESOLVING CONFLICT IN THE CHURCH

WHEN SHEEP ATTACK!
CHURCH CONFLICT CREATES AN EXIT DOOR, AND MANY LEAVE...

• 1,400 PASTORS EACH MONTH (ESTIMATE OF 500,000 PASTORS IN US)

• 1,400 X MEMBERS:
  • BECAUSE OF TREATMENT GIVEN TO PASTOR
  • THEY GET TIRED OF THE CONSTANT STRUGGLE
  • OR BECAUSE OF THE REFUSAL TO DEAL WITH CHURCH BULLIES
THE BIBLE IS CLEAR:

- Galatians 5:19-26
- James 4:1-3
- James 3:14-18
Galatians 5:19-26

19 Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, 20 idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, 21 envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.
GALATIANS 5:19-26

22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. 24 And those who are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. 25 If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.

26 Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another.
James 4:1-3

Where do wars and fights come from among you? Do they not come from your desires for pleasure that war in your members? 2 You lust and do not have. You murder and covet and cannot obtain. You fight and war. Yet you do not have because you do not ask. 3 You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasures.
WORKS OF THE FLESH . . . DESIRES FOR PLEASURE

No doubt that conflict has its origin in sin, the clearest statement is in...

JAMES 3:13-18
13 Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show by good conduct that his works are done in the meekness of wisdom.

14 But if you have bitter envy and self-seeking in your hearts, do not boast and lie against the truth. 15 This wisdom does not descend from above, but is earthly, sensual, demonic.

16 For where envy and self-seeking exist, confusion and every evil thing are there.

17 But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy. 18 Now the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.
“BY THIS ALL WILL KNOW THAT YOU ARE MY Disciples, IF YOU HAVE LOVE FOR ONE Another.”

JOHN 13:35
THE ROLE OF CHURCH LEADERS

• “Extreme Ownership, how US Navy SEALs Lead and Win,” Jocko Willink and Leif Babin make a powerful point:
  • When an organization is dealing with conflict,
  • Instead of finding fault or failures on others,
  • A leader will examine himself/herself first, and will own the failures of his company/group.

• Leadership, not for power and control:
  • Not to purify the church.
  • It’s not permanent positions. It’s healthy to take breaks from serving
    • The ultimate goal would be for leaders to be training leaders, hopefully much younger than them.
  • Not to keep the pastor in check.
CONFLICT PRESENTS US WITH AN OPPORTUNITY TO GLORIFY GOD!

1. CONFLICT is a distraction from ministry
2. CONFLICT is NOT about you
3. CONFLICT has a history
4. CONFLICT is disarmed by Matthew 18
5. CONFLICT has its tools
1. CONFLICT IS A DISTRACTION FROM MINISTRY

• **It’s Satan’s tool to delay or destroy the Church’s mission**

• **It usually comes when the Church is active and moving forward.**
  
  • **It’s a sign that something good is happening, or just about to start happening.**
  
  • **Fight anything that distracts from the Church’s mission.**
2. CONFLICT IS NOT ABOUT YOU

- **Conflict and Accusations are not about you** (or Church’s leadership).

- **You can’t take them personally. You must develop an armor that doesn’t allow accusations break you, which is what Satan wants. (Revelation 12:10)**

- **Examine the accusations and do a soul search to see if there’s any validity in the accusations.**
  - Be humble and recognize if there’s any merit in the charges. If so, don’t defend it. Recognize your faults, ask for forgiveness and move forward.
  - But if there’s no merit, don’t take it (don’t own it).

- **Remember to differentiate between facts and opinions. VERY IMPORTANT!**
3. CONFLICT HAS A HISTORY

- **How often have you heard someone say “Ann has done the same thing to every pastor.”**

- **You need to know the background.**
  - Most often the same individual/group that give a hard time to each pastor that has served that church.
  - Take notes and ask people permission to quote them if you need to use the information you have shared.
  - If you don’t get permission, keep the information in the back of your mind, but don’t use it in conversations.
4. **CONFLICT IS DISARMED WITH MATTHEW 18**

1. Follow **Matthew 18** faithfully
2. Deal with conflict in a **REDEMPTIVE** way
3. In all you do, imitate **Jesus**
4. Never lose your temper
4. CONFLICT IS DISARMED WITH MATTHEW 18

• **When dealing with an antagonist be very cautious about being alone with that person. Bring someone with you from the start.**

• **Take notes (follow up with emails – create paper trail) of every conversation, meeting and email. Usually these individuals like to twist what you said.**

• **Always appeal to the mission, help them see that they are distracting from it.**

• **Don’t be afraid to call them out (in love).**
  - Often the church knows the antagonists, they just don’t deal with these bullies.

• **Let’s define sin:**
  - 1 John 3:4 – “Sin is the transgression of the Law” (KJV)
  - Church manual – 13 reasons for church discipline – Chapter 7
7. Physical violence, including violence within the family.

9. Disorderly conduct which brings reproach upon the church.

10. Adherence to or taking part in a divisive or disloyal movement or organization.

11. Persistent refusal to recognize properly constituted church authority or to submit to the order and discipline of the church.
5. CONFLICT HAS 3 TOOLS

#1 ANONYMOUS RUMORS

• Any comment that includes “I’ll tell you but don’t use my name!” (or any deviation of that sentiment).

• Never accept it, and never use it.

• Do not validate such comments.

• Exceptions to this rule:
  • Circumstances that include elements of physical, mental or sexual abuse.
  • Ethical misconduct.
  • Cases of public knowledge. Everyone knows about it, but no one has done anything about it.
5. CONFLICT HAS 3 TOOLS

#2 TRIANGULATION

• **NEVER ACCEPT CONVERSATIONS/COMPLAINS ABOUT SOMEONE ELSE WITHOUT THAT PERSON BEING PRESENT.**

• **CREATE THIS CULTURE IN YOUR CHURCH, IT'S AN EXCELLENT TOOL TO DESTROY GOSSIP.**
5. CONFLICT HAS 3 TOOLS

#3 Gossip

Must be completely eliminated

“We think with horror of the cannibal who feasts on the still warm and trembling flesh of his victim; but are the results of even this practice more terrible than are the agony and ruin caused by misrepresenting motive, blackening reputation, dissecting character? . . . “Death and life are in the power of the tongue.” AH 440.5
5. CONFLICT HAS 3 TOOLS

#3 GOSSIP

“THE SPIRIT OF GOSSIP AND TALEBEARING IS ONE OF SATAN’S SPECIAL AGENCIES TO SOW DISCORD AND STRIFE, TO SEPARATE FRIENDS, AND TO UNDERMINE THE FAITH OF MANY IN THE TRUTHFULNESS OF OUR POSITIONS.” AH 441.1
“WHOEVER GOES ABOUT SLANDERING REVEALS SECRETS; THEREFORE DO NOT ASSOCIATE WITH A SIMPLE BABBLER.”
PROV. 20:19 ESV
“IF ANYONE THINKS HE IS RELIGIOUS AND DOES NOT BRIDLE HIS TONGUE BUT DECEIVES HIS HEART, THIS PERSON'S RELIGION IS WORTHLESS.”

JAMES 1:26 ESV
THE ROLE OF THE CHURCH & THE ROLE OF THE CONFERENCE

**The Church (Church Manual-chap. 7)**

- Deals with care, growth, and discipline of its members.
- Guards the Unity of the Church
- Ministry of reconciliation
- Uses 13 key points for disciplinary actions
  - Censure or removal from membership
- Only the church in business meeting can enforce disciplinary actions. *(NOT THE CHURCH BOARD)*

**The Conference**

- Doesn’t have authority over the church's internal matters.
  - Cannot discipline church members
  - Cannot interfere with nomination process – election of church officers
- Deals with disciplinary actions concerning the church as a whole
  - Only in extreme circumstances.
THE CHURCH THAT JESUS STARTED

LET'S STUDY BRIEFLY THE QUALITIES OF THE EARLY CHURCH, WE HAVE A LOT TO LEARN FROM THE FIRST "CHURCH MEMBERS"
THE PEOPLE OF GOD...

• **Jesus said:**
  • **John 13:35**
    • “BY THIS ALL WILL KNOW THAT YOU ARE MY DISCIPLES, IF YOU HAVE LOVE FOR ONE ANOTHER.”
  • **John 17: 20-21**

“I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me.”
ACTS 2:1 When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.

ACTS 4:32 Now the multitude of those who believed were of one heart and one soul; neither did anyone say that any of the things he possessed was his own, but they had all things in common.

ACTS 5:12 And through the hands of the apostles many signs and wonders were done among the people. And they were all with one accord in Solomon’s Porch.
1 Corinthians 1:10 Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.

1 John 3:23 Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.
IMPORTANT INFORMATION TO TAKE ALONG WITH YOU

- erojas@ccosda.org

- Adventist Leadership Summit – October 10-26-19 – Ellicott City SDA Church

- Elders-deacons/deaconesses training – November 2 – Baltimore White Marsh SDA Church

- We need your contact information to keep you informed

- 2020 events: Feb 1 and Aug 21, 2020