

Christadelphian Caring Network of Canada



Fall 2009

“What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don’t they come from your desires that battle within you? You want something but don’t get it. You kill and covet, but you cannot have what you want. You quarrel and fight...” James 4:1-2

NOTE: except when stated, all quotes from scripture are taken from the NIV

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Our Care Line is now open for calls. Caring brothers and sisters are ready for your call. Our toll-free support line is 866-823-1039

Understanding Conflict

There is conflict in an ecclesia. At the annual general meeting, an influential older Brother tabled a motion that the ecclesia institute a dress code for serving Brethren. In his preamble he stated he was concerned about the “casual” dress of some speakers and presiders because it showed that “those people don’t consider the memorial service important enough to dress appropriately”. To his way of thinking, such dress was not “decently and in order” (1 Cor 14:40). Several members of the ecclesia spoke on one side of the issue or the other side. Voices became raised and the chairperson had to interrupt several times to restore order and to remind members to not make judgmental statements about the motivations of other members. The motion passed by a margin of 24-18. Many of the voices supporting the motion were cast by members of the same extended family.

How do we feel about conflict? Does it make us nervous or cringe? Are we afraid of it? Or, do we thrive on conflict and perhaps feed it a bit. Conflict will invoke different feelings in different people. Even though some of us wish it would just all go away, conflict is implicit in the sentence God meted out in Genesis 3:15, and I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel." God dictated conflict as a part of our lives this side of the kingdom and God expects us to deal with it. The challenging part is - how.

This bulletin will look at what defines conflict and then in a 2nd follow up bulletin, God’s prescription for dealing with it. The material used comes from the May 2009 Caring Network AGM seminar on Conflict Resolution, given by Bro Shawn Moynihan, and from the Book, The Peacekeepers by Ken Sande and of course God’s Word

Definition of Conflict: *a perceived opposition of needs, and/or values, and/or interests. Shawn Moynihan*
A difference in opinion or purpose that frustrates someone’s goals or desires. Ken Sande

Scriptural Examples of Three Types of Conflict

Intrapersonal - conflict occurring within the individual

Rom 7:17-20
 For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. 19 For what I do is not the good I want to do; no, the evil I do not want to do-this I keep on doing. 20 Now if I do what I do not want to do, it is no longer I who do it, but it is sin living in me that does it.

Interpersonal - conflict occurring between individuals

1 John 3:11-13
 This is the message you heard from the beginning: We should love one another. 12 Do not be like Cain, who belonged to the evil one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his own actions were evil and his brother’s were righteous.

Interpersonal occurring between groups

1 Cor 3:3-4
 You are still worldly. For since there is jealousy and quarreling among you, are you not worldly? Are you not acting like mere men? 4 For when one says, "I follow Paul," and another, "I follow Apollos," are you not mere men?

The 2 Issues typically involved in Conflict:

- Material: involving substantive matters like property, money, rights, responsibilities.
- Personal: involves what goes on inside or between people

The 4 primary Causes of Conflict:

- Poor Communication
- Difference in Values
- Competition over Limited Resources
- Sinful Habits



Why should we want to resolve conflict?

• God requires this of us!

Matt 5:23-24 "Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, 24 leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to your brother; then come and offer your gift.

• Our forgiveness depends on it!

Matt 6:14-15 "For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. 15 But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins."

• The manner in which we're judged is determined by it!

Matt 7:1-2 "Do not judge, or you too will be judged. 2 For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.

• We have been called to live in this interdependent relationship with our larger ecclesial family!

Eph 2:19-22 Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household, 20 built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. 21 In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord.

22 And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.

• Resolving conflict provides us with an opportunity to glorify God and manifest His character!

Col 3:12-14 Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. 13 Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. 14 And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

Barriers to Resolving Conflict

The Biggest Barrier is Us!

Jer 17:9 The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it?

1 John 2:16 For everything in the world—the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does—comes not from the Father but from the world.

Rom 3:22-24 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, 24 and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.

Our nature tends to want to repay in kind rather than treating others the way we'd like to be treated.

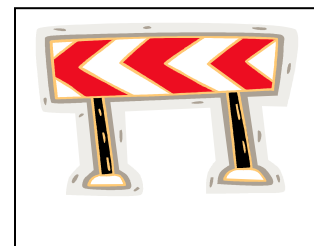
We may also be misguided into thinking we have rights and seek revenge.

Our community might unwittingly impede resolution by tolerating certain sins.

Titus 3:9-11 But avoid foolish controversies and genealogies and arguments and quarrels about the law, because these are unprofitable and useless. 10 Warn a divisive person once, and then warn him a second time. After that, have nothing to do with him. 11 You may be sure that such a man is warped and sinful; he is self-condemned.

2 Tim 2:23-26 Don't have anything to do with foolish and stupid arguments, because you know they produce quarrels. 24 And the Lord's servant must not quarrel; instead, he must be kind to everyone, able to teach, not resentful. 25 Those who oppose him he must gently instruct, in the hope that God will grant them repentance leading them to a

knowledge of the truth, 26 and that they will come to their senses and escape from the trap of the devil, who has taken them captive to do his will.



"Unity is more than a key to internal peace. It is also an essential element of your Christian witness. When peace and unity characterize your relationships with other people, you show that you are God's child and He is present and working in your life (Matt. 5:9). The converse is also true: When your life is filled with broken relationships, you will have little success in sharing the good news about Jesus' saving work on the cross." Ken Sande, *The Peace-makers*, pg 47

How our responses to Conflict fit on the Slippery Slope

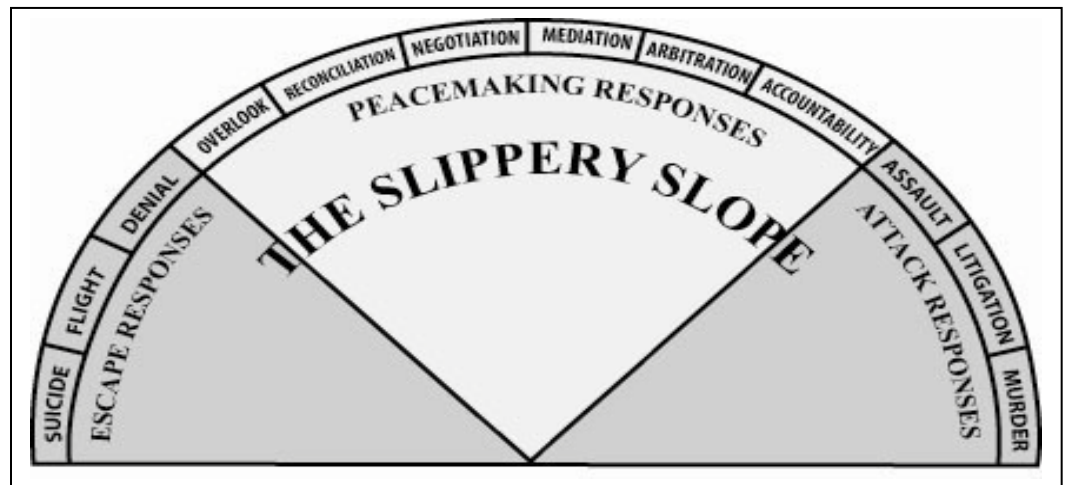
The three responses found on the left side of the slippery slope are commonly used by people who are more interested in avoiding or getting away from a conflict than resolving it.

The three responses found on the right side of the slippery slope are often used by people who are more interested in winning a conflict than in preserving a relationship.

The six responses found on the top portion of the slippery slope are directed at finding a just and mutually agreeable solution to a conflict.

The Slippery Slope by Ken Sande

Conflict can make life very awkward. It often catches us off guard and leads us to say and do things we later regret. When someone offends us, we often react without thinking. Soon it is as if we are sliding down a slippery slope and things are going from bad to worse. As the illustration shows, this slippery slope can drop off in two directions.



The escape responses only postpone a proper solution to a problem, and attack responses usually damage relationships and make conflicts worse.

The 5 Styles of Conflict

Psychologist Lee Raffel identified these 5 styles and Bro Shawn Moynihan related them to conflicts from scripture. Do you see yourself in any of these?

Conflict Avoider

These people are intimidated by conflict and don't like the feelings of awkwardness and discomfort that conflict brings. They typically, "Don't want to talk about it", and feel that if they don't discuss the conflict it will go away.

Scriptural Eg: Adam and Eve – Gen 3:5

Positive aspects of being a Conflict Avoider:

Conflicts don't get escalated immediately; they are Peacemakers at heart.

Negative aspects of being a Conflict Avoider:

Conflict doesn't get resolved; Individual left with feelings of resentment and disillusionment.

Conflict Fixer

Embrace disagreements as it provides them with an opportunity to save the day. They're eager to discuss problems and solve them.....in a hurry. They're advice givers assuming they know what is best.

Scriptural Eg: Job's Friends – Job 42:7

Positives: Conflicts are acknowledged; They help and support.

Negatives: They can be overbearing and insensitive; take a simplistic approach.

Conflict Goof Up

Are similar to Conflict Avoiders, however they're so insecure they may even lie or cover up inadequacies; they tend to get defensive & look for scapegoats but they have big hearts.

Scriptural Eg: Rehoboam's Friends – 1Kings 12:10,11

Positives: Loyal and well meaning

Negative: Passive/aggressive because conflict creates a feeling of being threatened.

Conflict Antagonist

Doesn't mind conflict and will go to great lengths to win the fight even if it means losing the war. They perceive comments in conflict to be attacks.

For them, arguments are a negative way of staying connected. Tend to be authoritarian, rigid and controlling

Scriptural Eg: Cain – Gen 4:8,9

Positives: They have the courage of their convictions

Negatives: They tend to be self-absorbed, win/lose and revenge oriented.

Conflict Innovator

Is humble, honest, compassionate and trusting. They are organized, with the big picture in mind. They are connected to their emotions but not ruled by them.

Scriptural Eg: Jesus – Mk12:14; John 8:1

In the following biblical conflicts, can you identify where people's responses fall on the Slippery Slope, and/or from the 5 Styles of Conflict. How did their responses affect the conflict?

- Abraham's response to the friction between Sarai's and Hagar (Gen 15:6)
- Hagar's response to Sarai's persecution (Gen 16:6-8)
- Joseph's response when Potiphar's wife tried to seduce him (Gen 39:11-12)
- Potiphar's wife's response when Joseph spurned her advances (Gen 39:13-18)
- Pharaoh's response to the plagues God brought upon him (Ex 7-12:36)
- Saul's response to David when he won the hearts of the people (1Sam:181-16)
- David's response to Saul's attempt to kill him (1Sam 19:9-12)
- Abigail's response to David after her husband insulted David and his men (1Sam 25)
- Rheaboaam's response to the people (2Chron 10)
- The response to the demand for circumcision (Acts 15)

If you're involved in a conflict try considering the following questions from Ken Sande's book, The Peacemakers pg 41.

Briefly summarize your dispute as you perceive it, placing events in chronological order as much as possible. In particular, describe what you have done to resolve the dispute.

Which response to conflict (from the Slippery Slope) have you been using to resolve this dispute? How has your response made the situation better or worse?

What have been your primary goals as you've tried to resolve the dispute?

From this point on, how could you glorify God through this conflict?

How could you serve others through this conflict?

How could you grow to be more like Christ through this conflict?

What have you been relying on for guidance in this situation: your feelings and personal opinions about what is right, or scripture?

What are you struggling with the most at this time (eg. Your opponents attacks, controlling your tongues, fear of what is going to happen, lack of support from others?)



Caring Network Resources

- **toll free support line is 866-823-1039**

Christadelphian Resources

- <http://www.wcfoundation.org/serv/s/em.htm#topics> Seminar from Williamsburg Christadelphian Foundation called "Resolving Conflict"
- http://wcfoundation.org/tftw_blog/ series by Bro. Kyle Tucker on "Matthew 18, By the Book".

Other Resources

- *The Peacemakers*, by Ken Sande

- *Peacefakers, Peacebreakers, Peacemakers, Leader's Guide*, by Ken Sande

Website: <http://www.peacemaker.net>

- *Nonviolent Communication: A Language of Life*, by Marshall Rosenberg
- Website: <http://www.cnvc.org/en>

- *I Hate Conflict*, by Lee Raffel



What's Coming Up?

2010 Caring Network Annual General Meeting and Seminar

When: Sat. Mar. 27, 2010, God Willing @10:00am

Speaker: Bro Dan Richard

Topic: *The Lost Sheep*

Where: Toronto East Ecclesia Hall, Cosburn Ave.

Register with Bro Bill or Sis Jennifer Lawrence by phone, **519-822-8500**, or by email at:

lostsheep@caringenetwork.ca



Please direct comments, suggestions, or useful resources to Sis Jennifer Daniel, 250 656.2396; 8583 Sansum Pk.Dr., North Saanich, BC

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