

Syllabus

Church Conflict Management and Leadership – Duane Ruth-Heffelbower, instructor
Asian Theological Seminary May 21-June 2, 2001

"Church Conflict Management and Leadership"

Conflict may be more common in churches than anywhere else, yet for some reason this surprises us. The church works with people on ultimate subjects that touch us deeply. It ministers where there is hurt. It is expected to solve problems when no other institution can. Church leaders are expected to be better people than those they lead, and the demands on them are high. People involve themselves in church activities for a wide variety of reasons, and their motivations are often unclear.

This course will look at different leadership roles within the church and will examine conflict management strategies and practices appropriate for them. Specific skills contextualized to Asia will be taught. Application to the student's current or expected leadership role will be stressed.

Required texts:

Ruth-Heffelbower, Duane. *Conflict and Peacemaking Across Cultures: Training for Trainers*. Fresno, CA: Fresno Pacific University, 1999. 120 pp.

Schrock-Shenk, Carolyn, ed. *Mediation and Facilitation Training Manual*, 4th Edition. Akron, PA: Mennonite Conciliation Service, 2000. 321 pp.

There will be twelve class days of four hours each. Besides the required texts, students will make a reading list of an additional 600 pages, to be approved by the instructor. For each item read, other than the required texts, a reading report is required. The report should describe the work, critique its usefulness to the student, and describe how it fits with the material covered in class. 3-page maximum.

The major writing assignment is an integration paper due, along with the reading reports, two weeks after the class ends. In this paper the student will describe a church conflict in which the student has been personally involved, preferably a current conflict, and apply the material covered in the course, including the reading, to an analysis of the conflict and suggestions for how it might have been handled better by the various participants. This paper must be 10-12 pages, A4 or letter size, one- inch margins, double spaced, 12 pt type.

Grading

60% integration paper

20% attendance and participation

20% reading reports

Likely schedule (subject to change). The needs of the group will drive the schedule. We will generally follow the flow of the MCS manual.

Each day begins with a short student-led devotional and prayer on a theme suggested by the course content.

Day 1 – Introductions, sharing of church leadership experiences, cross-cultural understanding.

Day 2 – Identifying various church leadership roles and their functions How leadership works. Biblical basis of leadership.

Day 3 – Biblical background of conflict theory and practice. Case writing.

Day 4 – Conflict theory and practice 2

Day 5 – Interpersonal Communication and problem solving

Day 6 – Mediation east and west

Day 7 – Group process

Day 8 – Conflict analysis

Day 9 – Planning for conflict prevention. Organizing a church for successful conflict.

Day 10 – Planning conflict intervention

Day 11 – Role play of church macro-conflict demonstrating method for resolution

Day 12 – Wrap-up.