

# Conflict Clarifying

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a resource for CBOQ churches to  
clarify the nature of a conflict



TRANSFORMING



RESOURCING



NETWORKING



PLANTING



CANADIAN BAPTISTS OF ONTARIO AND QUEBEC  
*A family of churches  
Transformed by Christ  
Revealing God's Kingdom*

**Jesus Christ** is the same yesterday, today and forever.  
For a church to be **faithful to God** and **responsible to serving others**,  
it cannot remain the same yesterday, today and forever.  
**God's Spirit** and the needs of people will always require churches  
to give **fresh expressions of resurrection gospel** to the unique  
and ever-changing needs of people.

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# INTRODUCTION: The Gift of Conflict

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Sometimes conflict can actually be a gift for a church. Scripture says, “And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose” (Romans 8:28).

Scriptures give us all kinds of examples of how the early church had to work through conflict.

[Acts 6:1-7](#)

[Acts 8](#)

[Acts 15:35-41](#)

[Acts 17](#)

How might each of these areas of conflict become a gift for us?

1. For our **people**?
2. For our **mission** and the **values** that we promote?
3. For our **theology**?
4. For our **relationships**?
5. For our **organizational** capacity?

Before we can build an approach to dealing with conflict, it is important that we understand the -nature of the conflict. There are three sets of questions on the following pages that can be answered by your leadership team.

[-Strengths and Challenges](#)

[-Purpose | People | Problem | Process](#)

[-Motivation | Knowledge | Discernment | Action](#)

There are a few useful resources

[-Six Rules for Navigating Church Conflict](#)

[-Biblical Peacemaking](#)

[-Biblical Forgiveness](#)

The last page is a list of questions that we would like answered before we discern together the kind of process we might create to deal with this situation.

# STRENGTHS & CHALLENGES

## Instructions

Often we can have a need that is an identified challenge (“presenting issue” | The issue that everyone talks about.) that is driving a conflict. However, there may also be deeper unspoken challenges (people exhibiting power struggles, inadequate organizational structures, etc.). There may be even deeper issues that exist on an unconscious level (past or present sin, lack of trust or respect, hurt feelings, etc.). In order to discern God’s next step for a church, sometimes we need to name what lies beneath or what has happened in the past. List 3 strengths of the church and 3 current challenges that the church is facing.

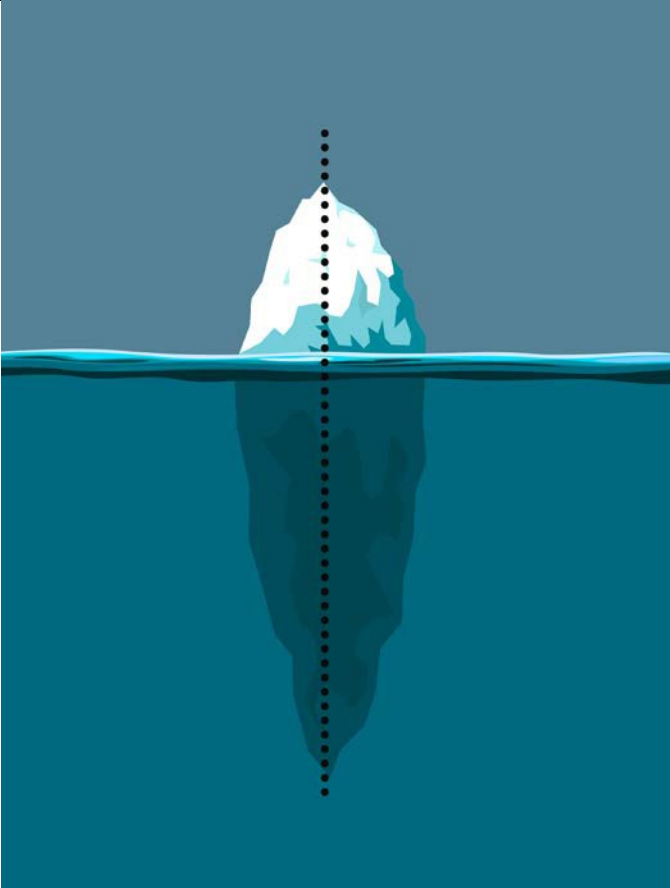
## Name 3 of the historical strengths of this church

- <>
- <>
- <>

## Name 3 of the current challenges of this church

- <>
- <>
- <>

Now have place each of these 3 strengths and 3 challenges under the appropriate category (identified, unspoken or unconscious).

Strengths		Challenges
identified strength 1-		identified challenge 1-
unspoken strength 2-		unspoken challenge 2-
unconscious strength 3-	unconscious challenge 3-	

# PURPOSE, PEOPLE, PROBLEM or PROCESS?

## Purpose

Is your crisis arising from a lack of purpose or mission?

Mission drift  
Lack of clarity around purpose  
Culture of apathy

What are the competing purposes of the church?  
Is there a lack of vision or a lack of follow-through?

## People

Is your crisis coming out of conflict with people working together?

Emotions  
Interests  
Needs  
Perceptions  
Personal styles  
Expectations

Who is directly involved?  
How does each person perceive the problem?

## Problem

Is your crisis from a problem that feels impossible?

Concerns  
Differences in needs  
Values  
Perceived incompatibilities

What is the primary concern?  
What needs to be addressed in order for the problem to be resolved?

## Process

Is your crisis the result of inadequate processes to deal with change and conflict?

History of conflict  
Leadership  
Communication  
Decision making patterns

What started the problem?  
What escalated the problem?

Is our current, primary challenge an issue of purpose, people, problem or process?  
Or is it a combination?

# What do we NEED in order to deal with the conflict before us?

## INSTRUCTIONS

- 1 Read the instructions and the statements aloud.
- 2 Have each person identify (by circling a number 1= low / 5=high) what they believe is the most pressing **NEED** for the church.
- 3 Have each person share what they put down and why (within 30 seconds) without interruptions or discussion.
- 4 Once each person has responded, go around the room and identify the top **NEED(S)**.
- 5 If there is a clear consensus in the answers then you can move forward. If there is an array of answers, take the time to work through which is the greatest need and what you need to do about it.

## MOTIVATION / DESIRE

Are we motivated to handle the conflict before us? Are we motivated to seek God's direction and leading for us, even when it requires uncomfortable steps of faith?

1	2	3	4	5
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## KNOWLEDGE / INFORMATION

Do we have the knowledge needed to seek a resolution to this conflict? Given that Scripture, prayer and the wisdom of others is available to us, do we currently have adequate knowledge to lead our congregation through this conflict?

1	2	3	4	5
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## DISCERNMENT / STRATEGY

Do we have an intentional conflict resolution process that will serve us in collectively discerning next steps?

1	2	3	4	5
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## ACTION / FOLLOW THROUGH

Does our history indicate that we will act, behave or follow through in what we say we want or will do?

1	2	3	4	5
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# 6 Rules for Navigating Church Conflict

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1. Conflict can be healthy and useful for our church.  
It is okay for people to differ with one another.
2. Resolutions for the sake of quick agreement are often worse than agreements that are carefully worked out over time.
3. Fair conflict management includes:
  - ⦿ dealing with one issue at a time;
  - ⦿ if more than one issue is presented, agreeing on the order in which the issues will be addressed;
  - ⦿ exploring all the dimensions of the problem(s);
  - ⦿ exploring alternative solutions to the problem(s).
4. If any party is uncomfortable with the forum in which the conflict is raised, it is legitimate to discuss what the most appropriate forum might be.
5. Inappropriate behavior in conflict includes, but is not limited to:
  - ⦿ name calling;
  - ⦿ mind reading (attributing evil motives to others);
  - ⦿ inducing guilt (e.g., “Look how you’ve made me feel”);
  - ⦿ rejecting, deprecating, or discrediting another person;
  - ⦿ using information from confidential sources or indicating that such information exists.
6. Fair conflict always allows people who are charged with poor performance or inappropriate behavior to:
  - ⦿ know who their accusers are;
  - ⦿ learn what their accusers’ concerns are;
  - ⦿ respond to those who accuse.

# Biblical Peacemaking

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## Four “G’s” of Conflict Resolution

- ⦿ Go to **God** – Glorify Him (1 Corinthians 10:31)
- ⦿ Go to **Self** – Get the Log Out (Matthew 7:3-5)
- ⦿ Go to **Others** – Gently Restore and be Restored (Galatians 6:1)
- ⦿ Go to **Together** – Go and Be Reconciled (Matthew 5:24)

# Biblical Forgiveness

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- ⦿ **Step A:** *Lord I forgive...*
- ⦿ **Step B:** *Lord, show me where I have offended another*
- ⦿ **Step C:** *Brother/ Sister, please forgive me*
- ⦿ **Step D:** *... I forgive you... may I show you where I have been offended?*



# Problem Solving Options

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There are really only a few options for solving any of life's problems.

Three of the responses below are invitations of God to grow in our capacity to trust God and may also require us to learn some new skills.

## FIX OR CHANGE

- **Change the situation**
- **Prayerfully discern what skills you may need to learn in order to respond to this situation with more grace and tact**

## ACCEPT

- **Learn to feel better about the situation**
- **Pray that God will help you accept the situation**
- **What skills might you need to learn in order to better accept this new reality**

## TOLERATE

- **Tolerate both the situation & your response**
- **Pray for God's grace for you to be able to tolerate this situation**

## COMPLAIN

- **Stay miserable**
- **Don't pray**

# Seeking Help

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## 1. Internal Resources

Is there someone in your church with the expertise who could be asked to serve as mediator?

## 2. Nearby Resources

Is there a pastor or someone part of a sister CBOQ church or Association that could be called upon to act as mediator?

## 3. CBOQ

Please complete the questions on page 9 before contacting CBOQ to help clarify your specific needs

## 4. Credence & Co. Congregations

There are times when time and resources necessitate the use of an outside agency. Credence & Co. has been contracted by CBOQ to assist in these cases. There may be some costs associated with using Credence.

[congregations.credenceandco.com](http://congregations.credenceandco.com) | 519-883-8906

## Seeking Help from CBOQ

1. On behalf of the \_\_\_\_\_ [name of board and/or committee] we are inviting the Canadian Baptists of Ontario and Quebec to help us create a conflict resolution process.

2. Our biggest identified challenges are \_\_\_\_\_

3. Our unspoken challenges are \_\_\_\_\_

4. Our unconscious challenges are \_\_\_\_\_

5. Our current, primary challenge, as best as we have discerned is an issue of...

purpose

people

problem

process

combination of \_\_\_\_\_

Briefly describe why you identified your concern being an issue of purpose | people | problem | process | combination....

6. Rank your greatest **NEED** (circle the appropriate numbers)

Motivation / Desire                      1 2 3 4 5

Knowledge / Information                1 2 3 4 5

Discernment / Strategy                1 2 3 4 5

Action / Follow-through                1 2 3 4 5

Other Comments:



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