

## **PREVENTING SELF-SABOTAGE: MANAGING CHURCH CONFLICT BY INCREASING PASTORAL EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE**

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This project addressed the issue of helping pastoral leaders prevent and manage conflict in the local church by providing specific training on integrating the principles of Emotional Intelligence (EQ) with conflict management strategies. Executive officers of the Northwest District Council of the Assemblies of God (NWMN) often receive calls to mitigate church conflicts, typically between pastors and church boards or pastors and congregants. Often the presenting issues in these situations point toward a lack of finesse on the part of pastoral leaders, in many cases indicating ignorance of Emotional Intelligence principles. Because of this deficiency in awareness and praxis, self-sabotaging behaviors frequently ignite and enhance fires of conflict. However, research in this field indicates the ability of individuals to learn Emotional Intelligence principles, and that the capacity for increasing EQ actually increases with age.

The NWMN includes nearly 350 Assemblies of God (AG) churches in Washington State and Northern Idaho, with more than 1,350 credentialed ministers. Throughout this project, coaching pastoral leaders in conflicted situations yielded opportunities for application of information gleaned from related research.

A one-day seminar with nearly seventy-five attendees culminated the field application of this project. The seminar offered participants fundamental instruction in the principles of Emotional Intelligence. They also learned specific strategies for implementing EQ and conflict management principles into their own ministry context, potentially resulting in healthier ministers and churches.