

**Conflict Management Training for Local Church Leaders
In the Illinois District of the Assemblies of God**

Reverend Gary R. Allen

ABSTRACT

This project is an effort to equip local church leaders to better manage conflict through an understanding of a biblical foundation of conflict management, the importance of the leader in conflict management, and a process of conflict management.

The first major phase of this project was to present a biblical understanding of the source and nature of conflict, the importance of the local church as a community of faith, and a process of conflict management within this community.

The second phase reviewed conflict management literature that may be familiar to church leaders from their workplace leadership and management training with an emphasis on the transferable principles that are applicable in both the workplace and the local church.

In the third phase of the project a training manual was produced for the ministers and local church leaders of the Illinois District of the Assemblies of God. The manual described the biblical foundation for conflict management, the source and nature of conflict, the leadership characteristics of the conflict manager, conflict management styles, the predictable cycle of conflict, and a process of conflict management.

The last phase included a report of a presentation of the training manual in a local church with the results of a pre- and post-session evaluation of conflict management styles to measure the growth of each participant's skills.

An important goal of this project is to help district leaders, pastors, and local church leaders to disarm their fear of conflict through a better understanding of conflict and its management so they can implement and sustain their own healing process.

The findings of this project reveal that church leaders can be trained to understand the dynamics of conflict. They can also learn to adjust their conflict management styles to deal with specific conflict. Experienced pastors and church leaders may need to change their thought patterns. What worked in the past may not work now. The challenge is for leadership to allow God to reveal himself in the freshness of the Holy Spirit, be willing to be transformed, and be determined to confront destructive conflict constructively.

A Strategy for Refocusing Christian Outreach Center of West Columbia, S.C. to Reach the Unchurched of Columbia, S.C., and Neighboring Communities

Reverend Steven C. Allen

ABSTRACT

The purpose and scope of this project was to evaluate and refocus the ministry of Christian Outreach Center (COC) for the purpose of reaching the unchurched. The project examined the effectiveness of the ministry to the core of believers, as well as reaching and assimilating the unchurched including postmoderns. The project refocused the ministry and designed a church model known as the “kingdom seeker” model. The “kingdom seeker” model will help spirit empowered churches to become more effective in reaching the postmoderns and other unchurched peoples.

The “kingdom seeker” model demonstrates: (1) the evaluation process that will determine the transitional steps needed; (2) how to gather data from within the organization in order to begin the transitional process; (3) the necessary steps toward change that must be taken to effect transition of the organization; (4) the change process that effects transition of leadership training, small group development, implementation of the staff coaching process, sensitizing staff and leadership to the unchurched; (5) the ongoing evaluation and realignment to the transition.

This project has been tremendously effective in educating our constituency relative to cultural changes, the rise of postmodernism, and the necessity of non-compromising spirit of empowerment. Every segment of our church operation has opened itself to reaching, loving, converting, and assimilating the unchurched into the church body. Because of this effort, COC is more multi-cultural and open to the lost than ever. Truly God will use COC to reach the unchurched and postmoderns of Columbia, South Carolina and neighboring communities.

**Understanding Conflict in One Local Church: A Single Case-Study
of St. John's United Church of Christ Springfield, Missouri,
Based on the Family Systems Theory**

Reverend Sol Codillo, Jr.

ABSTRACT

The goal of this study was threefold: (1) to show how one local church, such as St. John's United Church of Christ (UCC), can deal with inevitable changes that result in conflict within the church; (2) to demonstrate how the family systems theory as applied to a congregation can aid in understanding conflict; and (3) to share the lessons learned from this study concerning church conflict.

To understand conflict in one particular local church, the project began by tracing the history of the church and highlighting those significant changes that contributed to the conflict. In analyzing the conflict, several church members were interviewed in order to gain perspective on how each of them interpreted and experienced the perceived conflict. The project discusses how conflict is understood from a biblical and secular perspective.

In the chapter covering the review of literature, considerable material was found dealing with the family and the family systems theory, especially from the sociological, psychological, and anthropological point of view. It was discovered, however, that the family systems theory as applied to churches, synagogues, and congregations, is relatively new.

The author is convinced that a church such as St. John's UCC, which had been in denial for many years concerning their problem of conflict, is unable to resolve the conflict on its own. It takes someone, such as an understanding, responsive, and caring pastor, to bring about healing and wholeness to a conflicted congregation. Also, issues such as forgiveness, trust, love, openness, and integrity are important ingredients in resolving conflict.

The church, just as a family, must go through the process or cycle of growth and maturation. Sometimes during this process there are “building blocks” that can stifle growth and maturation. It is necessary that these “blocks” be minimized or altogether removed to avoid conflict. On the other hand, it is also important to remember that conflict is not necessarily bad or unhealthy. It is how a church or family deals with conflict that is indicative of health or ill health.

A strong and healthy church can be an effective instrument of God’s love, grace, and forgiveness in the world. The findings of this project clearly revealed that one way pastors and church leaders can bring understanding and resolution of conflict within the church is through the use of the family systems theory.

**Team Leadership: A 21st Century Guide
for Senior Pastors Overseeing a Multiple Staff**

Reverend James L. Davis

ABSTRACT

The project addresses the difficulties senior pastors of Assemblies of God megachurches in the United States face in leading their staffs effectively while meeting the demands of ministry. It did this by developing a manual designed to enhance their leadership and team-building skills.

Steps followed for the production of the manual included conducting a biblical-theological literature search to identify theological foundations for team leadership, as well as a review of current secular leadership trends. Senior pastors in nine selected Assemblies of God churches with Sunday morning worship attendance of 1,500 or more and with 10 or more full-time pastoral staff members were surveyed for the purpose of determining their leadership style(s). In addition, the pastoral staff members of these same churches were surveyed to evaluate staff team maturity.

Conclusions were drawn from the biblical-theological literature, leadership literature, and response data from the surveys for the writing of the manual. Data results from the surveys of the nine megachurches confirmed that leadership styles and principles can be learned to help develop effective teamwork between senior pastors and their pastoral staffs. The manual addresses topics designed to enhance the leadership abilities of senior pastors, helping them develop a total-involvement leadership style, which 89 percent of the pastors surveyed for the study demonstrated as the most effective style of leadership.

**Church Revitalization in the Northern Missouri District of the
Assemblies of God: A Training Seminar for Pastors**

Reverend Gary A. Denbow

ABSTRACT

Forty-eight of the ninety-five churches in the Northern Missouri District of the Assemblies of God functioning at the beginning of 2000 were plateaued or declining in attendance and active membership. Of these churches, 70 percent are below one hundred in average attendance, and 28 percent will have lost enough members to be closed or barely surviving by 2010. Understandably, some of those churches are in small towns and rural areas with a declining population. No amount of church revitalization work will bring the population back that has been lost from their communities.

The district leadership has recognized, however, that for churches that are in viable locations and good social circumstances to survive and be healthy, there must be able, trained, and motivated leaders. The goals of this project were to: (1) research and report district attendance statistics for the years 1990-1999, (2) survey the district's ministers to discern their felt needs in the various aspects of church leadership and personal development, (3) do research to discover the biblical characteristics of a healthy church, (4) discern the biblical responsibility of church leaders in keeping churches healthy, and (5) delineate methods and means to begin the process of teaching pastors of churches that need revitalization how to be empowering leaders.

As an initial step in the process of teaching those pastors to lead their churches to revitalization, a four-hour seminar was developed. "The Pastor as an Empowering Leader," was presented in each of the district's six sections. Sixty-one percent of the senior pastors in the district attended one of the presentations. Twenty-seven pastors of the forty-eight declining and plateaued churches participated in the presentations.

Participants in the seminar presentations were asked to evaluate the presenter and the content of the seminar. Professional educators also evaluated four of the six presentations of the seminar. The evaluations indicated that the seminar presentations were well-received and generally considered effective in helping many district churches and church leaders to start the important process of bringing new life to churches across Northern Missouri.

**Understanding the Unchurched in Your Community:
A Module of Study Taught at Southwestern Assemblies of God University**

Reverend Jim L. McCorkle

ABSTRACT

In the twenty-first century, pastoral ministry graduates will face serious challenges as they seek to minister in America's postmodern, post-Christian culture. Will these pastors be able to recognize postmodernism? What understanding will they have of generational theory (e.g., Builders, Boomers, and Busters)? What resources will they be prepared to access that could help them analyze and understand their community's context? Will such pastors know how to evaluate and even re-design local churches for ministry to the unchurched of the twenty-first century? Training is needed that will equip them for these challenges.

This project presents research regarding what is becoming the prevailing mind set in the twenty-first century Western world—postmodernism with its tenets of deconstruction, centerlessness, and the absence of absolute truth. It positions the matrix of postmodernism as an overlay to a study of current Western thought regarding generational theory. Particular emphasis is placed on the impact of postmodernism upon Busters (Generation X) who are presented as the first truly postmodern generation.

An understanding of the significant paradigm shift that is in progress in the Western world raises the following question: How is the twenty-first century church to respond to these challenges? The biblical-theological dimensions of this project suggest similarities between the paganism and religious pluralism which Paul the Apostle and his associates experienced as they proclaimed Christ in their Hellenistic culture, and what the church of today will likely encounter as it presents that same message in the postmodern world. Twenty-first century ministers must not give up in despair as they view the complex culture in which God has called them to

minister. There is not a post-Christian world. It is a pre-Christian one and it is reachable for Him.

This research was presented as an eight-lecture teaching block in a course that is required of pastoral ministries majors at Southwestern Assemblies of God University. Students were introduced to postmodernism and generational theory. They received instruction concerning community assessment methodologies (including a community survey field project) that could be used by pastors to develop a composite profile of the unchurched in the area their church will seek to target. In addition, students were exposed to seeker-type churches that are successfully reaching the unchurched for Christ and to other workable church models.

This study includes extensive back matter. The fourteen appendices include a syllabus, lesson plans, eight lectures on the topics of postmodernism and generational theory, handouts, several web sites relevant to understanding the unchurched, pre-test and post-test instruments, a survey instrument, and a variety of questionnaires.

This project proposes that successful pastoral ministry in this new millennium will require an understanding of the unchurched and a willingness to consider how the church can be re-designed in order to offer effective ministry in the twenty-first century.

A Reconciliation Colloquium for Church Leaders in Suriname

Reverend Douglass P. Norwood

ABSTRACT

A contributing factor to the ineffectiveness of Suriname's Christian churches in areas of evangelism, church planting and church growth appears to be factionalism and divisions of long standing in the Body of Christ. The purpose of this project was to address the issue of unity with church leaders in two of Suriname's cities, move toward reconciliation, and thereby enable increased missional effectiveness.

The initial phase of the project examined biblical principles related to the unity of the Body of Christ, personal and church reconciliation as foundational to that unity, and spiritual authority as a product of that unity. Researching parallel literature aided the development of an approach to teaching those principles that would contemporize them and challenge church leadership to consider their use. The project's deployment phase sought to organize gatherings of pastors and church leaders in Suriname to present those principles in colloquial settings during which participants were encouraged to dialogue in the context of appreciative inquiry. The assessment phase of the project sought an evaluation of that presentation, in regards both to the researcher's leadership and to the colloquium teaching materials, asking the central question "Does this colloquium present a useful approach to encouraging and developing unity in a regional gathering of church leaders?"

The major implication of the project is that church leaders in a colloquial setting can be excited by fresh vision and challenged to deepen relationships with each other and to activate innovative and appreciative ministries. Trained facilitators, equipped with the foundational, biblical concepts and empowered by a passion for unity, can be used by the Holy spirit to excite

church leaders to examine biblical possibilities for their own areas, to provide action steps toward applying biblical principles of reconciliation, and to challenge leaders to take such steps.

An Introductory Course in the Theology of Mission For Overseas Bible Schools

Reverend Robert C. Rose

ABSTRACT

Protestant missionary activity continues to expand around the world and includes evangelizing, discipling, church planting, and humanitarian concerns. Non-western missionaries now outnumber western missionaries. Although the number of non-western Bible schools continues to increase, many of the curricular programs do not include a course in the theology of mission. The purpose of this project was to develop an introductory course in the theology of mission that could be adapted by Bible schools in the non-western world. The course is designed to give an overview of three areas: (1) a biblical theology of mission; (2) historical expressions of missions; and (3) contextual communication of mission.

The initiation phase of the project involved looking at a theology of mission through the lens of both the Old and New Testaments and examining the expressions of missions in biblical-theological literature. Research into related literature yielded insights into contextual communication of mission. The second phase of the project involved the creation of an introductory course in the theology of mission.

The third phase of the project integrated teaching and assessing the developed course at the new missionary school in Constanza, Romania. Pre-course survey questions garnered information about students' knowledge of missions, interest in missions, rationale as to why some Christians have a better understanding of missions than others, and home church ministries. Assessment of the project included a pre- and posttest on the content of the course to provide quantitative data as to whether the student's knowledge of theology of mission had increased during the learning process. All participants showed improvement on the posttest.

Two major implications evolved from this project. First, non-western believers can be challenged to participate in world evangelism, but need training in the theology and practice of missions. Second, an introductory course in the theology of mission can be instrumental in the equipping of non-western missionaries and should be included in the curricular programs of Bible schools.

**A Spiritual Transformation program for Resident Students
at the Assemblies of God Theological Seminary**

Reverend Jay P. Taylor

ABSTRACT

Today's seminarians, tomorrow's church leaders, must receive more than a mere exercise in academic achievement they must understand how to care for their ongoing personal spiritual transformation and the growth of those they serve! To assist the Assemblies of God Theological Seminary (AGTS) to be proactive in this area, an intentional means needed to be developed to provide tangible assessment of personal spiritual growth and facilitate students in developing a proactive strategy for enhancing ongoing spiritual transformation throughout their ministerial training and beyond.

In light of the opportunity, this project was designed in an effort to assist AGTS in addressing the need of facilitating holistic spiritual transformation in the lives of its students. The purpose of this project was to develop and teach a program for the AGTS masters level course *Spiritual Formation of the Minister* that helps to assess and enhance the spiritual growth of seminarians. This included conducting the necessary research to acquire the instruments and to develop a model for tangibly assessing students' initial spiritual formation and developing a realistic strategy for ongoing spiritual transformation. The goal of the project was that the lesson plans, combined with students' personal spiritual growth plans carried out in a small group accountability experience, would result in measurable spiritual transformation over the course of the semester. In addition, the model could provide a means for ensuring ongoing spiritual growth throughout and beyond the students' seminary experience.

The purpose of this project was to evaluate and document the spiritual growth in the lives of students participating in the study at the Assemblies of God Theological Seminary (AGTS).

The project focused on the research and development of a spiritual transformation model by which students could experience quantifiable spiritual growth. The model consisted of the following components: (1) a theological, historical, and practical introduction of spirituality and the spiritual transformation process; (2) the use of the *Taylor-Johnson Temperament Analysis* to help students discover how their natural dispositions influence their spiritual pilgrimage; (3) the use of the *Christian Life Profile* to help students assess their current spiritual formation beliefs, virtues, and practices; (4) the use of appreciative inquiry to assist students in assessing their current spiritual formation; (5) the development of a personal spiritual growth strategy outlining specific goals and practical steps for spiritual transformation; (6) the establishment of small groups that met weekly to provide accountability in carrying out students' growth plans; (7) students' reflection upon their growth experience and strategy for ongoing spiritual growth.

The project design involved the use of the *Christian Life Profile* as a pre- and posttest for gaining quantitative data as to whether spiritual growth had occurred over the course of the semester. An additional postsession evaluation was administered to provide specific feedback on the helpfulness of the various components to spiritual transformation.

The major implication of the research is that seminarians can experience quantifiable spiritual growth through participation in a program that presents a realistic working model for assessing and developing an intentional spiritual transformation plan. AGTS should consider integrating these components in an intentional spiritual formation strategy.