

SUNSET GRADUATE SCHOOL
Course Reference Number: COU570
Conflict Resolution in the Church

Instructor: Robert (Bob) Turner, MBS, DIS

Meeting day/time/place: Online

Cell: 501-733-1237 (Call or text)

Email: bturner@sunset.bible

Textbooks and Materials:

Barthes, Tara Klein's and David V. Edling. *Redeeming Church Conflicts: Turning Crisis into Compassion and Care*. Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, 2016.

Edwards, Gene. *A Take of Three Kings: A Study of Brokenness*. Illinois: Tyndale House Publishing, 1992.

Rosenberg, Marshall B. *Nonviolent Communication: A Language of Life, Third Edition: Life Changing Tools for Healthy Relationships*. Encinitas: Puddle Dance Press, 2015.

Sande, Ken. *The Peace Maker: A Biblical Guide to Resolving Church Conflict, Third Edition*. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2004.

Van Yperen, Jim. *Making Peace: A Guide to Overcoming Church Conflict*. Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2002.

Suggested Reading:

Arbinger Institute. *Leadership and Self-Deception: Getting out of the Box*. Oakland: Barrett-Koehler Publishers, 2010.

_____. *Anatomy of Peace: Resolving the Heart of Conflict*. Oakland: Barrett-Koehler Publishers, 2008.

_____. *The Outward Mindset: Seeing Beyond Ourselves*. Oakland: Barrett-Koehler Publishers, 2016.

Leadership and Self-Deception does not address “church conflict” per se, but the material found within its pages provides a powerful foundation for resolving conflict in any relationship. I cannot recommend this book highly enough for your library. The message contained, along with the two additional books, provides some of the richest and most in-depth approaches I have read in conflict resolution.

Achievement Based Objectives: By the end of the course, students will have:

1. Identified the cause of conflict and how to address the conflict to assure hope for those involved.
2. Analyzed two conflict scenarios related to real situations within the church, providing insights in how to resolve each conflict.
3. Discussed a biblical approach to conflict resolution and how the Bible helps us address conflict as God directs.
4. Designed a plan for educating church leadership in preparation of conflict management/ resolution.

Course Description:

This course explores the challenges that arise from conflict within the contemporary church and how to provide resolution that benefits those on both sides of the conflict. With scripture as a guide, we will discuss why conflict exists, how we should respond to that conflict as leaders, and ways to prepare others to address conflict when it happens. During the weeks scheduled for this course, students will engage in online discussions, examine themselves (along with brothers and sisters they serve within the church) and formulate a plan that explains how to prepare for and manage conflict within the church.

Course Requirements:

1. Read the five required books listed above. While reading each book, identify the causes/ sources of conflict that challenge relationships within the contemporary church. Students will submit a one page document listing out these causes/sources.
2. You are required to write and turn in two analysis papers related to conflict scenarios assigned by the instructor. After reflecting on your own personal understanding and further insights gained from the reading, you will analyze two scenarios and write a paper describing how each scenario should be resolved. Each paper should be minimum of 1,000 and a maximum of 1,250 words in length, exclusive of any footnotes.
3. A final paper, 12-15 pages in length, must be written on a general topic of your choice relating to “Conflict Resolution in the Contemporary Church.” This paper is to be written for the intelligent, uninformed leader among contemporary churches today. The paper should include the following:
 - A. A description of the conflict (based on your understanding of the problem) in the Contemporary Church.

- B. An overview of a possible means to manage or resolve the conflict.
 - C. A plan for educating and preparing a contemporary church leadership for effective conflict management/resolution.
4. Discussion Board participation is required. Topics and discussions will be posted at the beginning of the even weeks (week 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, and 12) and students will have the two week period following to respond to the posts *and* respond with a minimum of two other students in this course by the end of the second week.

Note: All written submissions are to be in Microsoft Word or Pages (Mac), 12-point font, *Times New Roman*, double-spaced text. The citation style should follow Chicago/Turabian format. *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations* is a good resource. A summary guide to this style may be found at <https://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/turabian/citation-guide.html>. All written submissions are due by email on Saturday night at 11:59 p.m. CST of the week the assignment is due.

Grading:

The assignments in the class make up the following percentages, as shown below. The grade will be determined on the following scale:

- 1. Reading all required books - 10% of the course grade.
- 2. Causes of Conflict paper - 10% of the course grade.
- 3. Analysis papers - 30% of the course grade (15% each).
- 4. Participation in online posts and discussions - 10%
- 5. Final paper - 40% of the course grade.

Grading Scale:

90 and above	A
80-89	B
70-79	C
61-69	D
60 and below	F

Course Outline:

For Reading Assignments, the following abbreviations will be used:

RCC - *Redeeming Church Conflict*

PM - *Peace Maker*

TTK - *A Tale of Three Kings*

MP - *Making Peace*

NC - *Nonviolent Communication*

Note: Assignments and topics for discussion on Student Boards will be posted at or before the first of the weeks stated. Be careful to post before 11:59 pm CST on the day your assignments are due. Students should also plan on responding to a minimum of **two** other fellow-student posts, **and two** student comments *on your own board*. Be careful to read and respond to any of your instructor's comments on your own board threads as well.

- Week 1 Introduction to the course (post by instructor)
RCC (xv-33) Forward - Section 1 (Ch. 1-4)
MP (11-88) Intro - Part 1 (Ch. 1-4).
- Week 2 Understanding Conflict (online post: Why Does Conflict Exist?)
RCC (43-84) Section 2 (Ch. 5-8)
- Week 3 Scenarios given to students
Respond to posts from online discussion
- Week 4 Leadership and Conflict 1 (online: How Should Leaders Respond to Conflict?)
RCC (85-128) Section 3 (Ch. 9-12)
MP (89-134) Ch. 4-6
- Week 5 Leadership and Conflict 2
Paper 1 Due
RCC (129-182) Section 4 (Ch. 13-16 Conclusion)
MP (135-176) Ch. 7-9
Respond to posts from online discussion
- Week 6 Advance Preparation for Conflict (online: "Negotiating the Curve")
- Week 7 No Assignments or Readings due this week
However, students need to respond to online discussion posts
- Week 8 Community Life and Conflict (online: Exploring the 101 Percent Principle)
MP (177-260) Ch. 10 - Epilogue
PM (17-138) Pt. 1 - Pt. 2 (Intro and Ch. 1-6)

- Week 9 Church discipline and Conflict
PM (139-200) Part 3 (Ch. 7-9)
 Respond to posts from online discussion
- Week 10 The Need for Resolution (online: “The Secret to Conflict Resolution,” Stan Endicott’s article)
- Week 11 How the problem of “ME” impacts Conflict Resolution
 Paper 2 Due
NC (Ch. 1-6)
TTK (Whole book)
 Respond to posts from online discussion
- Week 12 Saul, David, Absalom (online: Learning from David’s Conflict)
NC (Ch. 7-10)
PM (201-262)
- Week 13 Healing after Resolution (Us versus Them to We)
NC (Ch. 11-14)
PM (270-278) Appendix B & C
 Respond to posts from online discussion
- Week 14 Summary Discussions and Thoughts
Final Paper

Instructor

Bob Turner (MBS, DIS) is the current Director of SALT (Sunset Academy for Leadership Training). He teaches courses in Leadership and Leadership Development around the world. He also conducts seminars in Teaching with Dialogue, Creating Vision, Finding Our Grit, Character Development, Strategic Planning, Communication, Conflict Resolution, and Managing Change. He also serves as an instructor in the Sunset International Bible Institute’s Master’s degree program. Bob is a graduate of the Bear Valley Bible Institute International and holds both a Bachelor’s and Master’s degree in Bible. After completing the cohort sequence of 36 units in the Masters of Arts in Global Leadership at the Fuller Theological Seminary (FTS) in Pasadena, CA, Bob went on to earn his Doctorate in Intercultural Studies with an emphasis in Adult Leadership Development at FTS. He and his wife, Sheryl, have been married 37+ years with more than 25 years of ministry experience. They have three grown children and ten grandchildren. He has preached for several congregations in the US, and his family served as missionaries in Prince Rupert, BC, Canada for five years. Bob also served as the Director of Extension Schools for the Bear Valley Bible Institute for eight years before focusing his attention on developing leaders for the churches of Christ internationally.