Conflict Resolution and Crisis Management  
A Professional Doctoral Seminar - CEAM8302/PMLS8304  
New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary  
Fall Trimester 2019: July 31-August 2, 2019  
Wednesday, 1:00 – 9:00 pm.; Thursday - Friday, 8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.  
All times Central Standard Time

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Seminary Mission Statement  
The mission of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary is to equip leaders to fulfill the Great Commission and the Great Commandments through the local church and its ministries.

Course Description  
The purpose of this seminar is to address the issues and implications of conflict resolution and crisis management in congregations and ministry organizations. Utilizing biblical principles, textbook analyses, case studies, and role plays, students will examine conflict intensity levels, determine best practices, enhance leadership skills, and develop strategic actions related to conflict resolution and crisis management in churches and ministry contexts.

Purpose of the Course  
This seminar will expose students to various areas of conflict in the church. Emphasis will be placed on strategies of conflict management and how “win-win” outcomes can be achieved by strategically addressing problems in the church.

Core Value Emphasis  
The Core Value of emphasis for 2019-2020 is Spiritual Vitality.

Student Learning Outcomes  
At the conclusion of the seminar students should be able to:  
1. Appreciate the value of resolving church conflict.  
2. Identify levels of intensity in the church.  
4. Demonstrate basic skills in conflict resolution and crisis management.  
5. Evaluate appropriate strategies for conflict resolution and crisis management.  
6. Develop a personal philosophy of confronting conflict.  
7. Commit themselves to being ministers of reconciliation.
**Required Textbooks**


**Course Teaching Methodology**

The seminar will focus on the assignments and presentations by the students. The Professors will facilitate discussions and dialogue regarding the textbooks, case studies, and issues of congregational conflict. Small group interaction will also be employed.

**Seminar Requirements**

**Before the Seminar**

1. Develop a **Synthesis Paper**, utilizing the *Every Congregation Needs a Little Conflict* and *When Church Conflict Happens* textbooks. Synthesis is combining of the constituent elements of separate material. The Synthesis Paper should be divided into the following sections:
   - **Section 1**: Five (5) Areas of Agreement re: church conflict resolution – one paragraph discussion for each area of agreement.
   - **Section 2**: Five (5) Critical Issues of church conflict resolution – one paragraph discussion for each critical issue.
   - **Section 3**: Five (5) Best Practices of church conflict resolution – one paragraph discussion for each best practice.
   - **Section 4**: Coaching Insights from Chapters 10 and 11 in *Every Congregation Needs a Little Conflict*. Answer all of the questions in the “Coaching Insights” feature at the end of each chapter. [Note: Do not confuse the “Coaching Insights” sections with the “Coaching Breaks” sections. The Coaching Insights sections consist of “squares”. Provide your answers in complete sentences – one paragraph for each “square”, even if the “square” involves several questions].
   - **Section 5**: Conflict Management Style Survey, Appendix G, in *When Church Conflict Happens*. Complete the Survey and a summary and response/reaction to the survey results, not to exceed two pages.

   **NOTE:** This Synthesis Paper will be graded by the NOBTS Writing Center for Turabian 8th edition form and style. Instructions re: the Writing Center will be given during the seminar. The format must include: (1) A Cover Page, (2) A bibliographic entry at the top of the first page, (3) Use each section as a main heading, not chapter heading, (4) Footnotes for any referenced quotes and (5) Pagination according to Turabian. The Synthesis Paper is to be double-spaced. First person allowed only in Sections 4 and 5.

2. Compose an **Executive Summary** for both the *Antagonists in the Church* and *Leading Congregations Through Crisis* textbooks. An Executive Summary is a short document which summarizes a book in such a
way that readers can become rapidly acquainted with it without having to read it all. Both Executive Summaries should include the following components, in this order:

b. An Annotated Bibliographic entry of the book (3 paragraphs).
c. Strengths and Weaknesses of the book (3-4 paragraphs).
d. The Value of the book to the student’s ministry context (3-4 paragraphs).
e. For Antagonists in the Church, select any eight (8) of the chapters, and compose the following for EACH selected chapter: identify two (2) insights (takeaways) from the chapter and write a one-paragraph application of the significance of the insight/takeaway to conflict resolution in a church/ministry setting.
f. For Leading Congregations Through Crisis, compose the following for EACH chapter (10 chapters): identify two (2) insights (takeaways) from the chapter and write a one-paragraph application of the significance of the insight/takeaway to crisis management in a church/ministry setting.

3. Case Studies: Seminar participants will submit two (2) case studies, each one single-spaced on one page. Case Study #1 should involve a situation of congregational conflict. Case Study #2 should involve a situation of congregational crisis. Both case studies must be a Level Three or higher intensity, according to Bullard’s seven levels of congregational conflict intensity. Case studies can be a real situation in the life of the student, either current or in the past, a situation in another ministry context of which the student is knowledgeable; or a fictitious/imagined situation.

   Note #1: Case Studies are presented in the Bullard, Hare, and Hunt textbooks. It is acceptable for your case studies to be similar to one of the textbook case studies. However, indicate the differences of your case study from the textbook case study, especially if the outcome is dissimilar.

   Note #2: Please do not use the real names of the personalities in your case studies, for confidentiality reasons.

   Note #3: Two sample case studies are provided following the bibliography of the syllabus.

   Note #4: Case studies will be discussed during the seminar.

Assignments 1, 2, & 3 are to be submitted to BLACKBOARD no later than midnight, Tuesday, July 30, 2019.

During the Seminar

5. Seminar Presentations and Participation: Each student will be involved in seminar presentations and discussions involving Assignments 1 – 3. Students are expected to be active participants in all sessions of the seminar.

Following the Seminar

6. Conflict Resolution and Crisis Management Proposal: Seminar participants will develop a Conflict Management/Resolution Proposal for their ministry context. The Proposal should involve the following:

   A. A comprehensive definition of conflict resolution and crisis management, delineated from textbook readings, seminar discussions, and further research. The comprehensive definition should be approximately one-page and should cite/reference at least six sources.

   B. A discussion of three or four critical issues regarding conflict resolution and crisis management which need to be addressed in the student’s ministry context (this discussion not to exceed six pages).

   C. An evaluation of the student’s attitude toward conflict resolution and crisis management and how this seminar has influenced that attitude (this evaluation not to exceed two pages)

   D. Choose ONE (1) of the following components to include in the proposal:
a. A series of five sermons dealing with conflict resolution and crisis management, involving
a one-page sermon brief for each sermon, with the briefs to include sermon titles, sermon
texts, sermon propositions/objectives, sermon outlines, a one-paragraph Introduction and a
one-paragraph Conclusion.
b. A series of five Bible Studies, involving a one-page lesson plan for each Bible Study, with
the lesson plans to include topics, biblical texts, lesson objectives, and teaching outlines.

Upload the Conflict Resolution and Crisis Management Proposal into BLACKBOARD, no later than
midnight, Friday, September 13, 2019.

Directed Study Students:

Modification of Primary Assignments:
1. Complete Assignment 1 (Synthesis Paper) as stated in the syllabus, with one modification: For Section 4,
   complete the “Coaching Insights” for all 12 chapters. Due date the same as the post-seminar assignment.
2. Complete Assignment 2, (Executive Summaries) as stated in the syllabus. Due date as listed in the syllabus.
3. Complete four (4) Case Studies, two (2) conflict resolution case studies and two (2) crisis management case
   studies. Due date as listed in the syllabus.
4. Complete the post-seminar assignment (Conflict Resolution and Crisis Management Proposal) as stated in
   the syllabus. Due date as listed in the syllabus.

Additional Assignment for Directed Study Students:

Annotative Bibliography: Students will compile an annotative bibliography of at least thirty (30) sources
addressing the subject of conflict resolution and crisis management, to include books (excluding the seminar
textbooks), journal articles, and Ph.D. dissertations/D.Min. projects. (Due date: same as #3 above).

Seminar Grading and Evaluation

Synthesis Paper 30%
Executive Summaries 20%
Case Studies 10%
Resolution/Management Proposal 30%
Seminar Participation 10%

Directed Study:
Synthesis Paper 25%
Executive Summaries 15%
Case Studies 15%
Resolution/Management Proposal 30%
Annotated Bibliography 15%

Selected Bibliography


Barthel, Tara Klena and David V. Edling. Redeeming Church Conflicts: Turning Crisis into Compassion and Care.


### The Associate Pastor Who Desires to be Pastor Case Study

First Baptist Placeville (FBP) experienced consistent growth during the 40-year pastoral tenure of Rev. John Steady. Attendance averages 600 in Sunday School and 800 in Worship. Leadership consists of five full-time ministerial staff members, in addition to the pastor, a strong deacon body, and well-trained, functioning committees. Rev. Steady retires as pastor of FBP, but remains as Pastor Emeritus. During the pastoral transition period, the ministerial staff, led by the Associate Pastor (AP), convince church leaders that they can lead the church without the employ of an Interim Pastor. In less than 12 months, a former Youth Minister at the church, Rev. Youthful, is called to be the next pastor of FBP. Rev. Youthful has been serving as pastor of a church since leaving FBP.

Eighteen months later, Rev. Youthful is caught having an affair with the financial secretary. When confronted, he refuses to resign. The deacons and personnel committee terminate him, but he stays in the community, divorces his wife, and marries the financial secretary. Again, the ministerial staff, led by the AP, offer to lead the church without the employ of an Interim Pastor. After an eight-month period of turmoil and chaos in the church, the pastor search committee and the deacons decide to employ Dr. Veteran as Interim Pastor. Dr. Veteran is an experienced denominational leader, who brokers a contractual understanding, affirmed by the church, defining his leadership role and responsibility to involve preaching, staff direction, and consultant to the deacons and the pastor search committee.

Dr. Veteran encounters and uncovers several issues of conflict early in the interim tenure:

1. Unresolved and unsettled emotions from Rev. Youthful’s infidelity and termination.
2. Tension and resistance from the Associate Pastor.
3. Confusion and competition within the ministerial staff.
4. Hesitancy and tentativeness within the pastor search committee.

Less than three months into Dr. Veteran’s tenure as Interim Pastor, he begins to hear rumbles of the AP’s “behind the scenes” strategy to be the next pastor. Dr. Veteran immediately consults with several key leaders of the church, including the Chairpersons of the Deacons, Personnel Committee, and Pastor Search Committee. Their consensus of agreement informs Dr. Veteran that: a) the AP should not be a pastoral candidate, b) but the AP, and particularly his wife, have developed strong group constituency with divisive potential within the congregation, and c) the AP will continue to leverage intentionally his pastoral candidacy within the congregation.

What plan of action should Dr. Veteran utilize in resolving this conflict?

### The Case Study of Oldest Baptist Church

Oldest Baptist Church (OBC) is the oldest church in Central County Baptist Association, and one of the oldest in the State Convention. The community surrounding the church remains a rural area, but is situated in one of the fastest growing areas of Central County. The most recent demographic data validates 7,395 people living within an 8-mile ring of OBC. The Associational Church Profile reveals:

- Church membership increased from 250 in 1980 to 650 in 2014
Sunday School attendance increased from 50 in 1980 to 125 in 2010-2011. Since then, S.S. attendance has declined to 70 in 2016.

In 1990, worship attendance averaged 150. A steady decline produced an average worship attendance of 90 in 2002. Between 2002 and 2010, worship attendance increased to 250. Much of this was due to the solid pastoral leadership of two seasoned veteran pastors. However, beginning in 2010, worship attendance began a steady decline to an average of 90 in 2016.


Budget receipts increased from $50,000 in 1980 to $280,000 in 2014, with a high of $330,000 in 2011.

OBC profited from a long-tenured pastor in the 1980s and early 1990s. Except for a short-tenure pastor (1999 – 2001), from 1980 to 2014, OBC’s pastors were experienced leaders who led the church to its “glory days.” The sharp decline in Sunday School attendance, Worship attendance, and baptisms, can be attributed to two church decisions. In 2010, when worship attendance peaked at 250, the church voted down a plan to move to two Sunday morning worship services. Two years later, the pastor left for a church in another state, and in 2014, after a two-year interim period, the church called a pastor who had no prior pastoral experience (to say it another way, after serving as youth minister, this was his first pastorate).

After an 18-month pastoral tenure, measured by numerous conflicts and crises, the pastor resigned suddenly in March 2016, triggered when Pete, one of the former key deacon leaders (who had resigned as a deacon one year earlier) threatened to bring a motion to call for the pastor’s resignation. On the day before the Business Meeting, the pastor submitted a letter of immediate resignation to the Chairman of Deacons. At the Business Meeting the next night, Pete never got to make his motion because the Chairman of Deacons called the Business Meeting to order, and then proceeded to read the Pastor’s letter of immediate resignation. Chaos and division erupted as members began to ask questions and express emotions of confusion and hurt. When the intent of Pete and his “counterparts” was revealed, chaos and conflict immediately escalated. The Chairman of Deacons, not an experienced Moderator, did his best to maintain order. However, when the meeting dismissed, anger, hurt, and divisiveness permeated the congregation.

After consultation with the Associational Missions Director, OBC contracted with and called an experienced Interim Pastor, with the purpose stated in the call that the Interim Pastor would counsel and advise the deacons through an intentional conflict resolution process, followed by an intentional plan of pastoral transition.

What steps should the Interim Pastor take in resolving this congregational conflict so that a healthy pastoral transition can occur?