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**CONCORDIA SEMINARY
SAINT LOUIS, MISSOURI**

**TEACHING CONFLICT RECONCILIATION TO THOSE WHO USE TECHNOLOGICAL
COMMUNICATION - A MINISTRY FOR POSTMODERN PEOPLE**

**A MAJOR APPLIED PROJECT SUBMITTED TO
THE DEPARTMENT OF DOCTOR OF MINISTRY STUDIES
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF MINISTRY**

BY THE REV. JEFFREY E. SKOPAK

**SAINT LOUIS, MISSOURI
30 NOVEMBER 2009**

**TEACHING CONFLICT RECONCILIATION TO THOSE WHO USE TECHNOLOGICAL
COMMUNICATION - A MINISTRY FOR POSTMODERN PEOPLE**

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30 NOVEMBER 2009

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“They are *not* the church of tomorrow...They *are* the church of today”

Without the love and support of my wife Amy, the patience of my children Madelyn and Jarod, and the dedication and belief of my mother Louise and my sainted father Edward, this journey would not have been possible. Without the mentorship of the Rev. Dr. Robert Scudieri and the Rev. Walter Reuning a grand vision of postmodern ministry may never have been dreamed. And finally, without the leaders that I have been blessed to meet, learn from, and call friends from the Pastoral Leadership Institute, I would have never dared to take the step.

In the name of the Father, and of the + Son, and of the Holy Spirit

CHAPTER ONE

THE PROJECT INTRODUCED

Introduction

The world of interpersonal communication has changed. This simple statement can be said by every passing generation. However, as the world relentlessly moves forward into the Twenty-first Century, there are critical areas of life that have entered into new challenges that have not been experienced in the previous generations. One of the primary change agents to society and culture has been technology. Technology has become king and has infiltrated almost every aspect of people's lives. Electronic media – and especially media that relates to communication – has become one of the fastest developing technologies of this century. What is current today is passé tomorrow. As a result, the world at the dawn of the twenty-first century has become increasingly more dependent upon technology for basic communication between people – the likes of which the world has never seen before.

According to George Barna:

All Americans are increasingly dependent on new digital technologies to acquire entertainment, products, content, information and stimulation. However, older adults tend to use technology for information and convenience. Younger adults rely on technology to facilitate their search for meaning and connection. These technologies have begun to rewire the ways in which people - especially the young - meet, express themselves, use content and stay connected.¹

¹ George Barna, "New Research Explores How Technology Drives the Generation Gap," Barna Group, posted February 23, 2009, <http://www.barna.org/barna-update/article/14-media/212-new-research-explores-how-technology-drives-generation-gap> (accessed April 28, 2009). This helpful article looks at various technologies, generational use, and dependence. The article can be read in Appendix A.

While communication patterns have changed among the collective generations, the communication patterns among the younger generations (specifically those with a postmodern world view, hereafter referred to as postmoderns) has been most affected by the advances of technology. The use of computers, email, instant messaging, cell phones, and text messaging is now perceived to be the primary way in which many, if not most postmoderns communicate with each other. As a result, interpersonal communication skills seem to be eroding. There is a new “emerging” language of symbol and shorthand that has replaced proper grammar and spelling. There is decreasing “face to face” communication and increasing “machine to machine” communication. This is an especially noteworthy phenomenon when considering how the emerging generation of postmoderns will deal with their conflicts.

One such conflict that is prevalent among postmoderns is the end of relationships, such as the dating relationship. In a recent archived Blog on *College Prowler Hook Up* the topic of text-messaging breakups was addressed as follows:

The “text message break-up” is commonplace in today’s society, especially with college students and people in their 20’s. I know two people who’ve been broken up with in this manner. The one person’s engagement was broken off this way. It’s depressing to think that this is what the world has come to: relationships broken with the sound of a Sara Bareilles “Love Song” ringtone...With technology making people less and less dependent on interpersonal skills and communication, is human interaction just going to get worse? Maybe this just means the process of elimination with the dating scene has just gotten a little harder. Or maybe it’s easier (depending upon the way you look at it). Before entering into a relationship, maybe people should consider how dependent the other person is on technology and their cell phone. If they are texting someone else while on a date, the person in question is probably not going to blink an eye when texting someone to say, “Peace out” (Carrie Underwood’s words, not mine). If the person in question would rather email you to set up something rather than use the phone, maybe he or she would do the same with a break-up.²

² The College Prowler Hookup – a Blog by 8 College Students, “The Text Message Break-Up,” <http://collegeprowlerhookup.com/?p=96> (Accessed July 15, 2008).

Where there are people there will be relationships. And where there are relationships there will be conflicts. A good example of this was demonstrated recently by postmodern celebrity Carrie Underwood (of *American Idol* fame). Her recent relationship with Chace Crawford ended. However, what drew media attention was not that the relationship came to a close, but how it ended. From the web page *Gear Live! Celebrity Breakdown* Veronica Santiago writes:

It isn't the first time something like this has happened, it may be the first time we've heard a celebrity publicly admit that they've ended a relationship this way. After an Idol Gives Back taping yesterday, former American Idol star Carrie Underwood opened up to Extra about her recently publicized breakup. The country singer told Simon Cowell's girlfriend that she and her Gossip Girl beau (Chace Crawford) ended on a very anti-climactic note. It was all done via text message... "It was completely mutual. We broke up like over text...it was like 'peace out'. Like, I don't know. It just didn't work. We both know it didn't work. And, no hard feelings at all whatsoever. No big deal." I must say, although she kept repeating it was 'no big deal', she did seem awfully bitter to me.³

Broadly speaking, conflicts are a result of our sinful human nature. These sinful behaviors will fester and grow as a result of our lack of understanding and practicing biblical principles of conflict/reconciliation. The postmodern generation is slipping away from the church in alarming numbers. In a recent article by George Barna he claims: "millions of twenty-something Americans - many of whom were active in churches during their teens - pass through their most formative adult decade while putting Christianity on the backburner."⁴ And as a result, they are not being exposed to and being taught biblical principles of communication, conflict, and reconciliation.

³ Veronica Santiago, "Carrie Underwood's Text Message Breakup," *Gear Live! Celebrity Breakdown*, entry posted Monday, April 7, 2008 at 10:32 AM, <http://celebrities.gearlive.com/vip/article/q108-carrie-underwoods-text-message-breakup/> (Accessed April 28, 2009).

⁴ George Barna, "Twenty Somethings Struggle to Find their Place in Christian Churches," posted September 24, 2003, <http://www.barna.org/barna-update/article/5-barna-update/127-twentysomethings-struggle-to-find-their-place-in-christian-churches> (accessed November 4, 2009).

Over the years I have had the opportunity to serve the emerging postmodern generation in ministry – from youth ministry to campus ministry to young couples getting married. Although the church has an array of resources for teaching biblical communication, conflict, and reconciliation skills, I know that this has not been a central focus of the ministries I have served, nor does it appear to be a significant emphasis among ministries serving postmoderns. Recently I have found an increase of the use of electronic media in order to end relationships, deepen conflicts, and express anger or hurt among the postmoderns in the congregation and community I serve. The use of electronic media has served as an artificial shield of anonymity and gives the user a false sense of detachment from the conflict that emerges, grows, and deepens.

Despite this generation's seeming detachment, can they learn to use biblical principles of communication, conflict, and reconciliation? The reason for this question is because little or no research has been conducted with regard to the effect teaching biblical communication, conflict, and reconciliation skills might have on the postmodern generations. Serving in a community (Tucson, Arizona) that is a host to a major state university (The University of Arizona) enables me to have access to the generations I seek to study. The congregation which I serve, Fountain of Life Lutheran Church, includes in its membership a significant number of postmoderns. Also, the church is a participant with the Lutheran Campus ministry at the University of Arizona. Because of this relationship with the Campus ministry I am able to draw into the study students from outside the scope of the local congregation (as well as students who are outside of the scope of the church).

Purpose

With a large group of postmoderns at Fountain of Life Lutheran Church I have access to the community I wish to study and assist with biblical communication, conflict, and

reconciliation tools. With that in mind, the purpose of this project is to equip postmodern people with biblical communication, conflict, and reconciliation tools so that they may maintain and nurture healthier relationships with other people by better understanding and using biblical communication, conflict, and reconciliation tools. In order to accomplish this task I have developed four critical events that focus on the topics of communication, relationships, conflict, and reconciliation. These critical events are designed to be more than a Bible Study or care group.

Each critical event will involve a time of gathering and fellowship, a shared meal, group sharing, applied learning, and challenge work to be done in preparation for the following week. In order to connect with the postmodern participants a variety of media and technology will be used in contrast to the biblical tools of communication, conflict, and reconciliation; that is: Scriptural principles and teachings combined with face to face conversation (this will include the study of body language, facial expressions, voice intonation, just to name a few).

The goal of this project seeks to assist college-aged postmodern people in developing their verbal and non-verbal communication skills, enhance relationships, implement biblical principles of conflict-reconciliation, and grow deeper in their understanding and living of the gospel of grace. A secondary goal is to encourage postmoderns to be more aware of their use (and possible overuse) of electronic means of communication, especially during times of conflict. The research will assess the quality, value, and usefulness of the four critical events in equipping postmodern millennials with biblical communication, conflict, and reconciliation skills.

The anticipated outcomes of this research are as follows:

1. To determine through quantitative and qualitative research how critical event teaching among college-aged postmoderns affects their overall communication, as well as their biblical conflict-reconciliation communication, with each other.
2. To discover which types of teaching methodologies are most effective in imparting communication skills and biblical principles of conflict-reconciliation to postmodern college-aged students.
3. To learn how college-aged postmodern people retain and apply newly learned communication skills and biblical principles of conflict-reconciliation in their lives on campus, home, and church.
4. To determine if any emerging technological means of communication can be integrated into the biblical model of communication, conflict, and reconciliation.
5. To provide guidelines and insights that will assist Fountain of Life Lutheran Church, as well as other congregations on or near college campus communities, in teaching communication skills and biblical principles of conflict-reconciliation to college-aged postmodern students in the community.

Process

The primary component of the project is the four critical events that will be held on consecutive Wednesday evenings. The participants will be divided into two groups of eight to ten postmodern college-age students from the University of Arizona (as well as students from other universities who are home on break). Three initial surveys will be given to the participants prior to the four critical events. The participants will also take part in a pre-event and post-event

interview. I will be assisted in the administration of these tools by Dr. Jeffrey A. Jahn and Mrs. Eileen McDougall. Dr. Jahn and Mrs. McDougall will be responsible for the pre-event testing and the post-event testing that will take place, thus maintaining objectivity in the measurement of the project.

Dr. Jeffrey Jahn is currently in his twelfth year as Director of Worship Arts at Fountain of Life Lutheran Church, where he is responsible for all aspects of worship in the life of the Church including music, drama, and visual/electronic media. He serves as conductor for the Chancel Choir, Fountain Ringers and the Contemporary Praise Ensemble, Joyful Noise. In addition to his duties at Fountain of Life, Dr. Jahn is in his twentieth season as Music Director of the Arizona Repertory Singers where his creative, innovative, unique musical style, presents programming that is delightfully eclectic, fresh, vibrant, and exciting for both singers and audiences alike. Dr. Jahn has guided the Arizona Repertory Singers to become the premier vocal ensemble of its type in the Southwest. Dr. Jahn holds a Doctor of Musical Arts (DMA) degree from the University of Arizona (Conducting and Musicology), a Master of Music (MM) degree from Wichita State University (Vocal Performance – Tenor) and a Bachelor of Arts (BA) degree from Bethany College.

Mrs. Eileen McDougall is a graduate of Virginia Wesleyan College where she earned a Bachelor of Arts in Interdivisional Studies with concentrations in Natural Science, Social Science and Humanities along with a Certification in Early/Elementary Education. She is also a graduate of Regent University where she earned a Master of Education Administration K-12. Eileen has spent most of her 20 years teaching “at-risk” populations but has also worked with gifted students, teachers and adults as well as consulting and presenting in the Early Childhood field. Her additional certifications as a math and science specialist has led her to evaluate and

reform mathematics and science programs, be a National Mathematics presenter and curriculum writer with NSA, University of Maryland Eastern Shore, Fairfax County Public Schools Science Department and NASA.

The first tool to be used in the project is the Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument. Developed by Kenneth W. Thomas and Ralph H. Kilmann, this tool is easy-to-use and self-scoring. Participants select responses from 30 conflict handling styles to discover which one is their preferred mode of handling conflict. Interpretation and feedback materials help them learn about the most appropriate uses for each mode and how to increase their comfort level with their less-used modes. This tool has been reviewed by the Buros Institute of Mental Measurements and that review can be accessed from their webpage.

The second evaluation tool will be a series of statements concerning attitudes towards communication, the use of technology to communicate, conflict, attitudes towards conflict, and the means by which reconciliation was achieved or not achieved in previous relationships. This testing tool is my own creation. I have titled this survey “Postmodern Attitudes and Actions Survey: Technology, Relationships, Conflict, and Reconciliation.” A secondary component of the evaluation tool will be to measure the ability of the person to participant to apply the biblical understanding of reconciliation in their relationships. This evaluation tool will be administered by Dr. Jahn and Mrs. McDougall. This will serve as a means to discover attitudes and experiences related to the four topics (prior to the influence and education from the critical events). The Postmodern Attitudes and Action Survey can be found in Appendices F and G at the end of this paper.

The third tool is the Conflict Resolution Questionnaire that uses a scale of 1 to 5 for scoring and interpretation. The survey was developed at Quinebaug Community College, located in Danielson, Connecticut, by members of Professor Jock McClellan's class on conflict reconciliation in 1993. The survey is based on attitudes and methods of conflict reconciliation recommended by Dudley Weeks in The Eight Essential Steps to Conflict Reconciliation as well as on principles in Roger Fischer's and William Ury's Getting to Yes. The questionnaire, the scoring explanation, and the guidelines for learning from the questionnaire are found in Appendices B through E. The reliability and validity of this survey tool has been vetted by Marcus Henning, a professor at the Auckland University of Technology, Auckland, New Zealand.⁵

The pre-event and post-event interview questions are my own creation. The questions are arranged around the topics of technology, relationships, communication, conflict, and reconciliation. The questions also seek to determine if they are aware of the biblical teaching on reconciliation and if they are able to apply it in their lives. There are three questions for each area to be covered in the critical events. The pre-event and post-event interview questions are the same so as to help determine the effect of the project upon the participants. The interview questions can be found in Appendix H of this paper. Each participant will be interviewed on the day they participate in the written interview process. However, if they cannot stay for the interview, another time will be scheduled with the interviewer. The person will be interviewed by the same person for the pre-event and post-event interview. These results of these interviews

⁵For the complete presentation of Marcus Henning's analysis of this tool see Marcus Henning, "Reliability of the Conflict Resolution Questionnaire: Considerations for the using and developing Internet-based Questionnaires," *Internet and Higher Education* 7 (2004) pp.247-258. The article is attached to this paper as Appendix E.

will be discussed by Dr. Jahn, Mrs. McDougell and myself and the results shared in this project (Chapter 5).

The critical events will take place on Wednesday evenings – this time was determined after numerous conversations with members of the congregation who fit a postmodern description. This descriptive list to identify postmoderns included such factors as: age, education, worldview, use of technology, and relationships outside of the church. The Wednesday evening time was determined to be an available time slot on most college student calendars. The evening will be structured as follows:

- The evening will begin with a common meal and personal sharing about the week that has passed. Each student will be given the opportunity to share “highs” and “lows” they experienced during the week. Each student will also be asked to share a positive relationship experience and a challenging relationship experience that occurred during the week.
- Following the meal and personal sharing, there will be a teaching event centered on one of the four themes (relationships, communication, conflict, and reconciliation). The teaching event will include Bible Study, a video/technology presentation, discussion, role-playing, and intercessory prayer.
- Each participant will be given a brief reading and Bible Study to be completed prior to the next critical event. The participant will also receive a personal challenge/task to be accomplished during the same period of time. The participant will also be joined with an accountability partner. This partnership will serve the purpose of holding each other

accountable to complete the work prior the next event and practice skills learned from the last event. Whenever possible, they will be asked to communicate face to face during the week prior to the next critical event (using telephone, cell phone, or text messaging as a last resort). The evening will conclude with dessert.

Following the four critical events a period of no less than two weeks will be observed before follow up. Each participant will take both surveys again to measure changes in attitudes and perceptions related around the four themes. After the surveys have been completed each participant will be interviewed to discern changes in attitudes, beliefs, actions, and behaviors.

Presuppositions

The critical events are designed to enhance basic communication skills as well as introduce and implement elements of biblical communication, conflict, and reconciliation tools in interpersonal relationships among postmodern college-aged students. There are some basic presuppositions that underlie this study. They are as follows:

1. Due to the increase of dependence upon technological means of communication many postmodern college-aged students are becoming increasingly deficient in properly using verbal communication. This may be caused by the inability to read body language, understand voice inflection, and a lack of command of vocabulary. These are all contributing factors to weakened interpersonal communication.
2. There is recognition of diminished interpersonal communication skills among postmodern college-aged students as well as a desire to increase communication skills in order to better facilitate relationships with peers, professors, and family.

3. Biblical principles of conflict-reconciliation are sorely neglected in and out of churches among the general membership; but they are especially neglected among postmodern college-aged students.
4. Due to the increase of dependence upon technological means of communication the teaching of biblical principles of communication, conflict, and reconciliation is needed more now than ever in the life of the church and community (especially among postmodern college-aged students).

The preferred outcome of this project is that by teaching biblical principles of communication, conflict, and reconciliation the participants will grow in faith, develop a foundation for healthier communication, and will be less fearful of dealing with conflicts that arise in their lives. The participants will become more comfortable with interpersonal communication and, in turn, be able to apply biblical principles of conflict reconciliation to their relationships.

Concluding Thoughts...

In the following Chapter I will begin to explore the biblical evidence regarding conflict. Because the nature of this project is to create a ministry it is necessary to turn to the Bible and first understand the earliest expressions of conflict, the reaction of those embroiled in the conflict, and the outcomes they produced. Special attention will be paid to the original conflict between God and man and how the original conflict lead to all subsequent conflicts that resulted within human relationships. The biblical conflicts between people will be explored as a means to discover trends or patterns in human sinful response to conflict. I will also look at key biblical doctrines and practices as they relate to conflict and reconciliation ministry. Special attention

will be paid to the proper distinction between the law and the gospel as well as personal peacemaking.

CHAPTER 2

THE PROJECT IN THEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

Introduction

Conflict is a biblical issue and reconciliation is biblical response. In order to develop a ministry for postmodern people concerning conflict reconciliation it is necessary to first look at the biblical evidence of these two cornerstones. Secondly, it is necessary to study and examine the doctrine of the church as it reflects, directs, and assists the Christian in their conflict and their initiation of a process of reconciliation. In this chapter I will explore the biblical and doctrinal evidence as it relates to conflict and reconciliation. Special attention will be paid to the Book of Genesis (the biblical template for all conflicts that follow in Scripture as well as the various responses to the conflict). Also, there will be a thorough exploration of proper distinction between law and gospel (as it relates to conflict and reconciliation) and personal peacemaking. This chapter serves a significant role in the project by establishing a biblical foundation for the project as well as creating material for the critical events and the “work to be done at home” by the participants.

The primary theological issue in this project is the doctrine of reconciliation – in our relationship to God and in our relationship to other people. Reconciliation differs greatly from resolution. For example, a divorce can bring resolution to a conflict. But it fails to bring about reconciliation. Because of our sinful nature we are enemies of God. This conflict has resolution in the delivery of justice – eternal separation from God. The broken relationship between God and humankind was perfectly healed in Jesus Christ. In Him alone there is forgiveness. This forgiveness is received when a person repents and believes this Good News of the gospel of

grace. Reconciliation with other people comes also through similar confession and absolution. Ted Kober states: “Reconciliation is essential in our relationship to God and in our relationship to other people. The lack of restored relationships can lead to eternal consequences.”⁶

Reconciliation Between God and Man

The need for reconciliation is always the result of a conflict. The original conflict, as Biblically stated, is found in the Book of Genesis, chapter 3. This original conflict was a result of disobedience to the Word and Will of God. The text states:

Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, “Did God actually say, ‘You shall not eat of any tree in the garden’?”² And the woman said to the serpent, “We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden,³ but God said, ‘You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.’ ”⁴ But the serpent said to the woman, “You will not surely die.⁵ For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”⁶ So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate.⁷ Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths.⁷

The harmony of Eden was ruined by the entry of sin. The temptation that leads to the conflict was precipitated by a serpent. The serpent begins by overemphasizing the strictness of the law (that is, that God had put one tree off limits) and questioning God’s goodwill towards human beings.

Eve rebuts his suggestion, though inexactly (‘you must not touch it’ was not part of the original prohibition (2:17)). The serpent then challenged God’s judgment by claiming ‘you will not surely die’ and promised instead sophistication (that their eyes will be opened) and spiritual advancement (that they will be like God). Lured by the prospect of

⁶ Ted Kober, *Confession and Forgiveness: Professing Faith as Ambassadors of Reconciliation* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2002), 20.

⁷ Genesis 3:1-7 (English Standard Version).

*instant pleasure (she saw that the fruit was good for food) and supposed maturity, Eve suddenly succumbed and persuaded her husband also to eat. In so doing he preferred the serpent's suggestions to God's command. (Throughout Scripture, the essence of sin is to put human judgment above divine command.) Immediately guilt and shame gripped them. Their opened eyes saw only their naked bodies, and they attempted to hide from each other and from God.*⁸

Martin Luther states: "These experiences are alike in all temptations and sins, whether of lust or of anger or of greed. While sin is active, it is not felt. It does not frighten, and it does not bite; but it flatters and delights."⁹ But this delight and embrace of sin is a hallmark of distrust and disregard for the parameters of the God – man relationship. Benchmarks of doubt, unbelief, pride, and ego led to the first conflict of which all subsequent conflicts can trace their origin.

The consequences of the original conflict found its crescendo in the entrance of the Lord God who is "walking in the Garden in the cool of the day."¹⁰ The Lord God is aware of the disobedience that has been completed by Adam and Eve even as He calls out to them in the Garden. What follows can be categorized as such: confrontation, oracles of punishment, and loving provision. In considering God's confrontation and oracles of punishment of Adam and Eve you can discern six indications of their complicity. First, the eyes of their mind were opened but instead of seeing themselves as gods they saw themselves as frail mortal humans. Second, Adam and Eve demonstrated a type of cleverness, but not the God-like wisdom which they had sought. They sewed fig leaves together and made aprons (תַּגְרִית) (*hagirit*) for themselves (3:7).

Third, Adam and Eve now could discern good and evil, but not in the way in which God understands it. The primary difference is that God who is omniscient knows all about evil. Man,

⁸G.J. Wenham, *New Bible Commentary: 21st Century Edition*. 4th ed. Leicester, England; Downers Grove, Ill., USA : Inter-Varsity Press, 1994, S. Ge 3:1

⁹ Martin Luther, *Luther's Works Volume 1: Lectures on Genesis Chapters 1 to 15*, ed. Jaroslav Pelikan (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1958), 163.

¹⁰ Genesis 3:8b (English Standard Version).

however, knows evil by experience. Fourth, “They lost their fellowship with God. When they heard the sound of God walking in the garden they hid themselves. Mistrust, fear, and guilt replaced trust and free communion with God. One of the effects of Adam’s sin was that he forgot that God is omnipresent and omniscient.”¹¹ Fifth, Adam and Eve now experience an embarrassing confrontation with God (3:9-13).

The questions God asked were pedagogic, i.e., they were designed (1) to make man assess his sinful condition; and (2) lead him from shame to guilt and then to repentance. “Adam, where are you?” (v. 9). “Who told you that you were naked?” (v. 11). “Have you eaten of the tree?” (v. 11). “What have you done?” (v. 13). God interrogated Adam and Eve, not Serpent. For that Evil One there was no hope. In fact Serpent said absolutely nothing in the presence of God.¹²

Finally, Adam and Eve indulged in self-justification. Adam blamed the woman, as well as indirectly blaming God (3:12). Sin divided the human race from the oneness it once enjoyed with God; a secondary consequence of this original conflict is disunity in temporal relationships.

The fracture in the relationship between God and man was complete – sin entered the world and this relationship was in need of reconciliation. As Adam and Eve brought sin and judgment upon themselves, it was God who would bring about loving provision for their needs – both temporal and eternal. The temporal need that faced Adam and Eve was immediate. The “now fallen parents of humanity” need clothing for protection. Allen Ross writes:

It is also to be remarked that the clothing which God provided was in itself different from what man had thought of. Adam took leaves from an inanimate, unfeeling tree; God deprived an animal of life, that the shame of His creature might be relieved. This was the last thing Adam would have thought of doing. To us life is cheap and death familiar, but Adam recognized death as the punishment of sin. Death was to early man a sign of God’s anger. And he had to learn that sin could be covered not by a bunch of leaves snatched from a bush as he passed by and that would grow again next year, but only by pain and blood. Sin cannot be atoned for by any mechanical action nor without

¹¹ James E. Smith, *The Pentateuch*. 2nd ed. Joplin, Mo.: College Press Publishing Company. Co., 1993.

¹² Ibid.

*expenditure of feeling. Suffering must ever follow wrongdoing. From the first sin to the last, the track of the sinner is marked with blood.*¹³

God is also aware of the consequences if Adam and Eve are to remain in the garden – they would have unfettered access to the tree of life. By partaking of the fruit of life humanity would extend life into eternity in a painful state of separation from God. Therefore, God makes the loving provision to cast Adam and Eve out of the garden and stations an angelic guard to prevent their return. The lesson learned from God’s loving provision is timeless: “Sinful rebellion against God brings pain, conflict, and death; but confession to God ensures God’s gracious provisions.”¹⁴

In the pages of the Old Testament there is clear evidence that God’s people understood the nature of reconciliation between God and man; that is, that blood needed to be spilled for the redemption of their sin. For example, in the book of Leviticus it states: “And he slew *it*; and Moses took the blood, and put *it* upon the horns of the altar roundabout with his finger, and purified the altar, and poured the blood at the bottom of the altar, and sanctified it, to make reconciliation upon it.”¹⁵ Or, in the book of Ezekiel: “And one lamb out of the flock, out of two hundred, out of the fat pastures of Israel; for a meat offering, and for a burnt offering, and for peace offerings, to make reconciliation for them, saith the Lord GOD.”¹⁶ It is interesting to note that the English Standard Version of the Bible translates the word כִּפֹּר (*kopher*) “atonement.”

The subtle nuance between “atone” and “reconcile” is expressed by the Hebraic understanding of forgiveness.

¹³ Allen P. Ross, *Creation and Blessing: A Guide to the Study and Exposition of Genesis* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1988) 149.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 150.

¹⁵ Leviticus 8:15 (King James Version).

¹⁶ Ezekiel 45:15 (King James Version).

The Hebrew root word כָּפַר (*kopher*) is used some 150 times in the Old Testament.

According to *The Theological Word Book of the Old Testament* כָּפַר (*kopher*) can mean: “to cover over sin and thus pacify the deity, making an atonement...It has been suggested that the OT ritual symbolized a covering over of sin until it was dealt with in fact by the atonement of Christ.”¹⁷ According to the *New American Standard Hebrew-Aramaic Greek Dictionaries:*

Updated Edition:

כָּפַר to cover over, pacify, make propitiation:— appease(1), appease(1) atone(3), atoned(2), atonement is made(1), atonement shall be made(1), atonement was made(1), atoning(1), canceled(1), expiation can be made(1), forgave(1), forgive(4), forgiven(5), made atonement(3), make atonement(71), makes atonement(2), making atonement(1), pardon(1).¹⁸

The Lord God who provided for the temporal needs of Adam and Eve would also provide for the eternal needs of His creation. He would do this by reconciling us to Himself. This would be accomplished by the spilling of blood. The blood that would be spilled would be that of His one and only Son, Jesus Christ. Paul writes in the letter to the Romans: “More than that, we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.”¹⁹

The teaching of St. Paul is clear: the once and for all reconciliation between God and man was accomplished by the death of Jesus Christ on the cross. It was His blood that covered the sins of His people. Paul writes in Colossians:

He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent. ¹⁹ For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, ²⁰ and through him

¹⁷R. Laird Harris, Gleason L. Archer, Jr. and Bruce K. Waltke, eds. *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament: Volume I* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1980) 452.

¹⁸Robert L. Thomas, *New American Standard Hebrew-Aramaic and Greek Dictionaries : Updated Edition*. Anaheim : Foundation Publications, Inc., 1998, 1981, S. H3722.

¹⁹Romans 5:11 (English Standard Version).

to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.²¹ And you, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds,²² he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death, in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him,²³ if indeed you continue in the faith, stable and steadfast, not shifting from the hope of the gospel that you heard, which has been proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and of which I, Paul, became a minister.²⁰

Reconciliation between God and man is accomplished by the spilling of Jesus' blood on the cross. Through this action taken on the part of God, man is fully reconciled to God; all the benefits originally found in the Garden of Eden are now restored in a new and wonderful way. This was not initiated by man, nor could it be accomplished by him. Rather, this reconciliation is the sole action of God. He does the work. It is His Son – His Life – His Blood – His Death - that atones for the sins of man.

Martin Luther writes in the *Smalcald Articles*:

Here we must confess (as St. Paul says in Rom. 5[:12] that sin comes from that one human being, Adam, through whose disobedience all people became sinners and subject to death and the devil. This is called the original sin, or the chief sin. The fruits of this sin are the subsequent evil works, which are forbidden in the Ten Commandments, such as unbelief, false belief, idolatry, being without the fear of God, presumption, despair, blindness, and in short, not knowing or honoring God.²¹

The Lutheran Reformation affirmed the answer to the question: “How is man reconciled to God?” This is demonstrative of the “Vertical Relationship” of reconciliation. Article IV of the Augsburg Confession addresses this relational conflict between the two parties: God and humankind. Philip Melancthon states:

Furthermore, it is taught that we cannot obtain forgiveness of sin and righteousness before God through our merit, work, or satisfaction, but that we receive forgiveness of sin and become righteous before God out of grace for Christ's sake through faith when we believe that Christ has suffered for us and that for his sake our sin is forgiven and

²⁰ Colossians 1:18-23 (The English Standard Version)

²¹ Robert Kolb and Timothy J. Wengert, eds. *The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church* [Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000] 310.

righteousness and eternal life are given to us. For God will regard and reckon this faith as righteousness in his sight, as St. Paul says in Romans 3 [:21-26] and 4 [:5]) (German edition)²²

This was (and remains) the crux of the Reformation: reconciliation between God and humankind. This reconciliation by God is akin to the communication of forgiveness and the restoration of the relationship between God and humankind. Edmund Schlink writes:

Justification by God and human courts have in common that they are both a judgment and the pronouncement of a judgment. The difference between the two is that a human court may in justice acquit only the innocently accused. God, however, declares the guilty guiltless, the sinner righteous. In the place of the guilty sinner God, having made his Son to be sin for us in our stead, looks upon his guiltless Son...Since justification is effected only for Christ's sake it is never a partial justification.²³

The reconciliation between God and humankind is not partial or conditional. This is a clear demonstration of God's unconditional love for humankind, his creation. His desire to have his creation restored to himself leads God to the ultimate selfless act – the sacrifice of his Son in order for total and complete reconciliation. The act and action are all the undertaking of God. God initiates the plan. God sends his Son. God, through Jesus' death and resurrection, offers reconciliation to his people. To this end Martin Luther writes:

We have the deed and work itself before us, namely that Jesus Christ, God's Son, has had to redeem us with his own blood from the devil, death, and sins. If there were a free will within us, set against or over the devil, death, and sins, then He would not have had to die for us...For this is the very article which the children pray, "I believe in Jesus Christ, crucified, dead," etc. No one has died for our sins except only Jesus Christ, God's Son – only Jesus, God's Son.²⁴

²² Ibid., 38,40.

²³ Edmund Schlink, *Theology of the Lutheran Confessions* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1978), 92, 93.

²⁴ Martin Luther, *Luther's Works Volume 34: Commentary on the Alleged Imperial Edict*, ed. Lewis W. Spitz (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1960), 89, 91.

Reconciliation In Human Relationships

As a result of sin entering the world conflict and friction in human relationships was introduced into the creation. Only moments after sinning Adam and Eve are found pointing the finger at others for the sins they have committed: “Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?” The man said, “The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate.” Then the LORD God said to the woman, “What is this that you have done?” The woman said, “The serpent deceived me, and I ate.”²⁵ A consequence of the original sin is conflict in human relationships. No longer would there be unity and harmony between people.

Conflicts between people can lead down a path of two extremes – both of these extremes lead to the termination of the relationship. The first means by which a relationship is terminated due to a conflict is found in Genesis 4. This conflict following the Fall occurs between the brothers Cain and Abel. The conflict is a result of one brother finding favor with the Lord while the other brother does not. The text states:

*In the course of time Cain brought to the LORD an offering of the fruit of the ground, and Abel also brought of the firstborn of his flock and of their fat portions. And the LORD had regard for Abel and his offering, but for Cain and his offering he had no regard. So Cain was very angry, and his face fell. The LORD said to Cain, “Why are you angry, and why has your face fallen? If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door. Its desire is for you, but you must rule over it.”*²⁶

There are several components that lead to this conflict. First and foremost the conflict is a result of jealousy. In the text Abel went out of his way to please God whereas his brother Cain was simply discharging a prescribed duty. Abel’s actions were righteous, whereas Cain’s were not. In 1 John 3:12 the writer goes as far as to say: “We should not be like Cain, who was of

²⁵ Genesis 3:11-13 (English Standard Version).

²⁶ Genesis 4:3-7 (English Standard Version).

the evil one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his own deeds were evil and his brother's righteous."²⁷ Because God accepted Abel's offering and rejected Cain's, Cain's heart became consumed by jealousy. This, in turn, leads him to conspire to kill his brother.

A second component of this conflict was a lack of submission to the will of God.

According to Lawrence Richards:

*Cain's anger shows how intent he was on having his own way rather than submitting to God. Anger is a destructive emotion. We can never excuse attacks on others by saying, "I have a bad temper." We need to acknowledge anger as a sin, and consciously submit to God's will.*²⁸

Rather than being concerned about remedying the situation and pleasing God, Cain was consumed by anger. Cain's anger is twofold: anger against God and anger against his brother.

According to *The Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains* "חָרָה (*hā-rāh*)

means to be angry, aroused, burn with anger, have a temper, i.e., have a strong feeling of displeasure, with a focus of an action to follow."²⁹ Cain's anger did not allow him to submit to the will of God. This is a failure to do what is right in God's sight.

Because of Cain's inappropriate anger towards Abel and God, he responds to his conflict inappropriately by killing his brother Abel. According to Victor Hamilton:

Upon finding him, Cain kills (harag) Abel. This is the common verb meaning "to murder intentionally" and is to be distinguished from the one mentioned in the sixth commandment (rasah, Exod. 20:13), which also encompasses manslaughter. Cain's reaction to the rejection of his offering is much more severe than either of his parents' reactions when confronted by God after their trespass. They resort to making excuses and

²⁷ 1 John 3:12 (English Standard Version).

²⁸ Lawrence Richards, *The Bible Readers Companion*. electronic ed., (Wheaton : Victor Books, 1991), Published in electronic form by Logos Research Systems, 1996, S. 28.

²⁹ James Swanson, *Dictionary of Biblical Languages With Semantic Domains : Hebrew (Old Testament)*, electronic ed., (Oak Harbor : Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997), S. DBLH 3013, #1.

*self-exoneration, but at least they do not indulge in violence. Unable to restrain his resentment and bitterness, Cain vents his wrath on the only possible scapegoat, Abel.*³⁰

How Cain does the dirty deed is not clear from the text. However, “It seems most likely that Cain struck or hit Abel, either with a weapon or with his bare fists, and it is clear that his action was intentional, not accidental. In cases where the term for “kill” is a more general word for “strike” or “hit,” it will be necessary to make clear that the victim actually died as a result.”³¹

When considering the reaction of Cain to this conflict it is not a far jump to the Fifth Commandment and its explanation by Martin Luther. As it states in the *Small Catechism*: “You shall not murder. *What does this mean?* We should fear and love God so that we do not hurt or harm our neighbor in his body, but help and support him in every physical need.”³² Luther would go on to write in the *Large Catechism*:

*...The occasion and need for this commandment is that, as God well knows, the world is evil and this life is full of misery. Therefore he has erected this and the other commandments to separate good and evil. Just as there are many attacks against all the commandments, so here, too, we must live among many people who do us harm, and thus we have reason to be their enemy. For example, when your neighbors see that you have received from God a better house and property, or more possessions and good fortune than they, it irritates them and makes them envious of you so that they slander you. Thus, by the devil’s prompting you acquire many enemies who begrudge you every blessing, whether physical or spiritual. When we see such people, our hearts in turn rage, and we are ready to shed blood and take revenge. Then follow cursing and blows, and eventually calamity and murder...The meaning of this commandment, then, is that no one should harm another person for any evil deed, no matter how much that person deserves it. For wherever murder is forbidden, there also is forbidden everything that may lead to murder.*³³

³⁰ Victor P. Hamilton, *The New International Commentary on the Old Testament: The Book of Genesis Chapters 1-17*, (Grand Rapids: Wm B. Eerdmans, 1990), page 230.

³¹ William David Reyburn and Euan McG. Fry, *A Handbook on Genesis* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1997), (UBS Handbook Series), S. 112.

³² Martin Luther, *The Small Catechism*, (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1991), page 12.

³³ Robert Kolb and Timothy J. Wengert, ed. *The Book of Concord: The Large Catechism*, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 2000), page 411.

However, what is most helpful in Luther's explanation to the Fifth Commandment is his understanding of the word "murder." For Luther, murder is rightly understood as more than termination of life. Luther writes:

*First, we should not harm anyone, either by hand or deed. Next, we should not use our tongue to advocate or advise harming anyone. Furthermore, we should neither use nor sanction any means or methods whereby anyone may be mistreated. Finally, our heart should harbor no hostility or malice against anyone in a spirit of anger and hatred. Thus you should be blameless in body and soul toward all people, but especially toward anyone who wishes or does you evil. For to do evil to someone who desires good for you and does you good is not human but devilish.*³⁴

The words "kill" and "murder" are often associated with the physical destruction of the living. But as we can see from Luther's explanation there is an inner component to this commandment. It is also a question of the heart and mind. Martin Chemnitz writes: "But Christ in His interpretation shows that to kill under the Fifth Commandment refers not only to the act itself but also to the inner attitudes of the heart, to our deeds and to our word."³⁵ Martin Chemnitz goes on to cite four kinds of homicide that are identified by Jesus Christ: 1) The external deed of shedding blood; 2) The inner thoughts against one's neighbor; 3) The external action or gesture by which is demonstrated the evil intention of the heart against one's neighbor; and 4) The action of the tongue when used out of anger or evil intent with the purpose of doing harm.³⁶

A second inappropriate response to conflict in human relationships is highlighted in the biblical narrative of Jacob and Esau. Following a lifelong tension between the brothers the conflict comes to a head when Jacob (with the help of his mother Rebekah) steals the birth rite that belongs to Esau. The text states:

⁴¹ *Now Esau hated Jacob because of the blessing with which his father had blessed him, and Esau said to himself, "The days of mourning for my father are approaching; then I*

³⁴ Ibid. page 412.

³⁵ Martin Chemnitz, *The Loci Theologici*, tr. J.A.O. Preus, (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1989) page. 406.

³⁶ Ibid. pages 406, 407.

will kill my brother Jacob.”⁴² But the words of Esau her older son were told to Rebekah. So she sent and called Jacob her younger son and said to him, “Behold, your brother Esau comforts himself about you by planning to kill you.”⁴³ Now therefore, my son, obey my voice. Arise, flee to Laban my brother in Haran⁴⁴ and stay with him a while, until your brother’s fury turns away—⁴⁵ until your brother’s anger turns away from you, and he forgets what you have done to him. Then I will send and bring you from there.³⁷

Because of Rebekah’s participation in the deception with her son Jacob there is a shared burden of guilt between the mother and son. Their collaborative response to Esau’s anger and fury is self preservation by flight.

According to the *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* the word בָּרַח (bārah) means to flee, run away, chase, drive away, put to flight, reach, shoot (extend), or hurry away.³⁸ The use of this word is found mostly in narratives and is used primarily to express flight from an enemy. A notable use of this verb is in Jonah 1:3: “But Jonah rose to flee to Tarshish from the presence of the Lord. He went down³⁹ in to Joppa and found a ship going to Tarshish. So he paid the fare and went on board, to go with them to Tarshish, away from the presence of the Lord.” The implication of the use of this word is plain to see: “to run away often from danger or evil : FLY ; to hurry toward a place of security.”⁴⁰ Instead of dealing with the conflict in a healthy manner, the use of the word בָּרַח (barah) connotes flight and the absence of communication. This is a willful ending of communication (and potentially, the relationship with the one that a person is in conflict with).

In the case of Jonah (as well as in the case of Jacob) flight is a sinful response to the law of God. Martin Luther writes:

³⁷ Genesis 27:41-45a (English Standard Version).

³⁸ R. Laird Harris, Gleason L. Archer Jr., and Bruce K. Waltke, *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament. Electronic ed.*, (Chicago : Moody Press, 1999, c1980,) S. 131.

³⁹ Jonah 1:3 (English Standard Version).

⁴⁰ Merriam-Webster, Inc. *Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary, 11th Edition*, Springfield, Mass: Merriam-Webster, Inc. 2003 elec. Ed.

Thus we shall stick rigidly and inflexibly to the Word of God and agree that Jonah here committed a grave and serious sin, which would have damned him eternally, had his name not been recorded in the book of life amid the number of the elect. It is obvious, and no one can deny it, that God here issues an order to Jonah, bidding him to go to Nineveh and preach there. Moreover, it is certain that God did not view this matter lightly but that he was in earnest about this, even as He was in the Garden of Eden at the time when He gave orders to Adam...In short, God is very angry. Thus it is also evident that Jonah is disobedient to this earnest command of God by fleeing and refusing to execute God's command. Thereby he sinned as gravely as Adam did in Paradise. Jonah should not merely have accepted the divine will, but he should also have been most happy to carry it out."⁴¹

The "flight response" to conflict, as demonstrated by Jacob and Jonah, is a bi-product of Original Sin. Adam and Eve, when perpetrating the Original Disobedience, engaged in the "flight response" to their conflict with God. Francis Pieper writes:

*Their flight from God proves their foolishness. We can entertain no doubt the understanding had become corrupt, seeing the device by which Adam and Eve hoped to accomplish their safety. Was it not the very extreme of folly (extrema stultitia): first, to attempt the impossible in trying to flee from Him whom no one can escape or avoid; and, in the next place, to attempt the flight in such a foolish way (stulto modo), thinking the trees would afford them safety, when they must have known that no iron wall, no great mountain could save them?*⁴²

Although the likes of Adam and Eve, Jacob, and Jonah would go on to be blessings in the greater scheme of Scripture, the flight response to their conflicts with God (and their human counter-parts) always flows from the Original Sin perpetrated in the Garden and inherited by all humans thereafter. As Francis Pieper states:

*Original Sin, which is the sin which is not committed but which is inborn in man since Adam's Fall, embraces two things: a) hereditary guilt (culpa hereditaria), the guilt of the one sin of Adam which God imputes to all men; and b) hereditary corruption (corruption humanae naturae hereditaria), which by imputation of Adam's guilt is transmitted to all his descendents through the natural descent from the first fallen pair.*⁴³

⁴¹ Martin Luther, *Luther's Works Volume 19: Lectures on Jonah*, ed. Hilton C. Oswald (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1974), 45,46.

⁴² Francis Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics: Volume 1*, St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1950, page 545.

⁴³Ibid. page 538.

This Original Sin causes humankind to respond inappropriately to conflict with each other and with God. The flight response to conflict, as demonstrated in Scripture, is a result of Original Sin. As it states in the Augsburg Confession: "...Since the fall of Adam all human beings who are propagated according to nature are born with sin, that is, without fear of God, without trust in God, and with concupiscence. And they teach that this disease or original fault is truly sin..."⁴⁴ Fleeing from the conflict does not resolve the issue; rather, due to the underlying sin it festers and grows. In a word, the sin is compounded by further sin.

The Role of the Church in the Context of Conflict

There will be conflicts in the horizontal relationships that exist in this world (the faithful of the church are not excluded or exempt from conflicts and these can be particularly difficult for those parties involved). These conflicts, taken to the extreme, can lead to the inappropriate responses that have been previously discussed. Therefore, the church is to serve as a vessel of the reconciled life. The Bible clearly prescribes the functions that the church is to perform in the midst of conflict.

The first role the church is to play is to serve as a teacher and admonisher. In Paul's letter to the Colossians he states:

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God. ¹⁷ And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him. ⁴⁵

The apostle Paul is giving the church a direct order. According to *A Handbook on Paul's Letters to the Colossians and Philemon*: "The meaning of the command is that the Christian message

⁴⁴ Robert Kolb and Timothy J. Wengert, ed. *The Book of Concord: The Augsburg Confession*, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 2000), 37,39.

⁴⁵ Colossians 3:16,17 (New International Version).

must be an integral and permanent living force in them, not just an outward performance or routine activities.”⁴⁶ The church has the task to teach the Word of God so that the people have an intimate working knowledge of the faith and the demands it makes upon the individual so that they can apply it in the community. This is most necessary when considering the proper response to conflict. Paul chooses the word *νουθετέω* (*noutheteo*) to express the church’s action and activity in the process of conflict. *Νουθετέω* (*noutheteo*) literally means: “To advise someone concerning the dangerous consequences of some happening or action—‘to warn, warning.’⁴⁷ It is the church’s duty to teach the right and proper means of dealing with conflict.

A second role that the church is called upon to do is to exercise the practice of church discipline. Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 5:1-13:

It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and of a kind that is not tolerated even among pagans, for a man has his father’s wife.² And you are arrogant! Ought you not rather to mourn? Let him who has done this be removed from among you.³ For though absent in body, I am present in spirit; and as if present, I have already pronounced judgment on the one who did such a thing.⁴ When you are assembled in the name of the Lord Jesus and my spirit is present, with the power of our Lord Jesus,⁵ you are to deliver this man to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord.⁶ Your boasting is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump?⁷ Cleanse out the old leaven that you may be a new lump, as you really are unleavened. For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed.⁸ Let us therefore celebrate the festival, not with the old leaven, the leaven of malice and evil, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. I wrote to you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral people—¹⁰ not at all meaning the sexually immoral of this world, or the greedy and swindlers, or idolaters, since then you would need to go out of the world.¹¹ But now I am writing to you not to associate with anyone who bears the name of brother if he is guilty of sexual immorality or greed, or is an idolater, reviler, drunkard, or swindler—not even to eat with such a one.¹² For what have I to do with

⁴⁶Robert G. Bratcher and Eugene Albert Nida, *A Handbook on Paul's Letters to the Colossians and to Philemon*, (New York : United Bible Societies, 1993], c1977 (Helps for Translators; UBS Handbook Series), S. 89, electronic edition.

⁴⁷Johannes P. Louw and Eugene Albert Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament : Based on Semantic Domains*. electronic ed. of the 2nd edition, (New York : United Bible societies, 1996, c1989), S. 1:436, electronic edition.

judging outsiders? Is it not those inside the church whom you are to judge? ¹³ God judges those outside. “Purge the evil person from among you.”⁴⁸

Herein Paul teaches the church that there are three responses that the church is to utilize in dealing with sinful behavior within the community (that is, a personal/moral conflict with the law of God). They are to mourn over the sin (vv.1-2), judge the sin (vv.3-5), and purge the sin (6-13).

While focusing on the role of discipline in the life of the church it may become necessary to purge or remove the sinner from the midst of the community for the health and well-being of the community (as well as the repentance and redemption of the individual). Warren Wiersbe writes:

The image here is that of the Passover supper (Ex. 12). Jesus is the Lamb of God who shed His blood to deliver us from sin (John 1:29; 1 Peter 1:18–25). The Jews in Egypt were delivered from death by the application of the blood of the lamb. Following the application of the blood, the Jewish families ate the Passover supper. One of the requirements was that no yeast (leaven) be found anywhere in their dwellings. Even the bread at the feast was to be unleavened. Leaven is a picture of sin. It is small but powerful; it works secretly; it “puffs up” the dough; it spreads. The sinning church member in Corinth was like a piece of yeast: he was defiling the entire loaf of bread (the congregation). It was like a cancer in the body that needed to be removed by drastic surgery.⁴⁹

The church must also be aware that its role, although difficult, is essential in the health and well-being of the believing community. Wiersbe writes:

However, the church must not judge and condemn those who are outside the faith. That judgment is future, and God will take care of it. In 1 Corinthians 5:9–13, Paul emphasized once again the importance of separation from the world. Christians are not to be isolated, but separated. We cannot avoid contact with sinners, but we can avoid contamination by sinners. If a professed Christian is guilty of the sins named here, the church must deal with him. Individual members are not to “company” with him (1 Cor. 5:9—“get mixed up with, associate intimately”). They are not to eat with him, which could refer to private hospitality or more likely the public observance of the Lord’s

⁴⁸ 1 Corinthians 5:9-13 (English Standard Version).

⁴⁹ Warren Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary*, (Wheaton, Ill. : Victor Books, 1996, c1989) electronic edition.

*Supper (see 1 Cor. 11:23–34). Church discipline is not easy or popular, but it is important. If it is done properly, God can use it to convict and restore an erring believer.*⁵⁰

The process of church discipline is clearly described by Jesus Christ in the gospel of Matthew. According to Matthew 18 the process is as follows:

¹⁵ “If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over. ¹⁶ But if he will not listen, take one or two others along, so that ‘every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.’ ¹⁷ If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, treat him as you would a pagan or a tax collector. ¹⁸ “I tell you the truth, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. ¹⁹ “Again, I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything you ask for, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven. ²⁰ For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them.” ⁵¹

Jesus Christ is outlining a process for the church in dealing with conflict in their relationships with each other. D.A. Carson writes:

*The aim must be to win your brother over, restoration, not punishment. To that end, the minimum of publicity must be used. The erring brother must be approached alone or at most with one or two others. Only if that fails is it necessary to involve the church (the local congregation); it is to be expected that the offender will listen to the united conviction of his fellow-disciples. If he does not, the only course open remains a severing of fellowship, though presumably still with the hope that this will jolt him into repentance and restoration.*⁵²

What is important to remember is that the church has a clear and definitive role in assisting people who are in a conflict (or who have sinned and are unrepentant). Simple avoidance or “looking the other way” is not biblical or helpful for the church and the individual. Francis Pieper wrote: “...All the functions with which the congregations are charged in every case presuppose faith in Christ, e.g., teaching and admonishing one another (Col. 3:16-17); the

⁵⁰Ibid.

⁵¹Matthew 18:15-20 (New International Version).

⁵²D.A. Carson, *New Bible Commentary : 21st Century Edition*. 4th ed. (Leicester, England; Downers Grove, Ill., USA : Inter-Varsity Press, 1994), electronic edition.

practice of church discipline (1 Corinthians 5; Matt. 18:17).”⁵³ The ministry of the church is to bring the Word of God to people so that they can partake of the faith and, in turn, live a life of faith in a community that strengthens, edifies, corrects, assists and blesses the individual believer.

The goal is always repentance of the sinner and reconciliation in the fractured relationship. Forgiveness (within the confines of the Christian community) is a result of the exercise of the Office of the Keys. Jesus states in Matthew 16: “¹⁸“I tell you the truth, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.”⁵⁴ The Office of the Keys is the rightful exercise of binding and loosing, of forgiving or holding one to the sin(s) committed. C.F.W. Walther wrote in Thesis IV: Concerning the Church:

*There is no doubt that no one can bind or forgive sins unless he has the Holy Spirit so surely that you and I know it, as the words of Christ here persuasively declare. But that is none other than the Christian church, that is, the communion of all believers in Christ. The church alone has these keys; about that you must not be in doubt...The keys belong to the whole communion of Christians and to everyone who is a member of that communion, and this pertains not only to their possession but also to their use and whatever else there may be.*⁵⁵

The exercise of the Office of the Keys is done in concert with the steps that are prescribed in passages previously discussed. However, the goal remains the same: reconciliation of the sinner to God or the brother/sister in Christ.

The Proper Distinction of Law and Gospel

In order for the church to carry out its mission and ministry in the area of reconciliation there has to be a right and proper distinction and application of the law and gospel. The right and

⁵³ Francis Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics, Volume III*, (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1953), 420.

⁵⁴ Matthew 16:18 (New International Version).

⁵⁵ C.F.W. Walther, *Church and Ministry (Kirche und Amt)*, (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1987) 55,57.

proper distinction and application of the law and gospel is fundamental to the Office of the Keys.

In the gospel of John Jesus commissions his disciples for this ministry:

¹⁹ On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" ²⁰ After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord. ²¹ Again Jesus said, "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you." ²² And with that he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit. ²³ If you forgive anyone his sins, they are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven."⁵⁶

The binding and loosing of sins is the application of the law and gospel in conflicted situations.

When living in a Christian community conflicts will arise (as they will arise in any community where two or three are gathered). In the Christian community Jesus Christ gives the command and authority to apply His Word that it may work on the heart and conscience of the individual.

The law and gospel each serve a critical function in the process of reconciliation. The law, as given by God, is to bring about an awareness of the individual's participation in the conflict. C.F.W. Walther declares:

The doctrine of the Law, then, was given for this purpose, that a person be given a sweat-bath of anguish and sorrow under the teaching of the Law. Otherwise men become sated and surfeited and lose all relish of the Gospel. If you meet with such people, pass them by; we are not preaching to them. This preaching is for the thirsty; to them the message is brought: 'Let them come to Me; I will give them to drink and refresh them.'⁵⁷

Selfishness arises out of conflict and sinful behavior exhibited by one party to another. And when done in the context of earthly relationships, often there is a sinful response (that can be equal to or greater than the initial behavior). The law of God speaks to such sinful escalation of conflict as a sinful behavior that flows from original sin and breaks the law which God has set out before His creation.

⁵⁶ John 20:19-23 (New International Version).

⁵⁷ C.F.W. Walther, *The Proper Distinction Between the Law and Gospel*, (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1897), 24,25.

Martin Luther rightly understood the law as a means by which God drives the sinner (the conflicted) towards repentance:

This is what is meant by Romans [4:15]: “The law brings wrath,” and Romans 5[:20], “Sin becomes greater through the law.”...Now this is the thunderbolt of God, by means of which he destroys both the open sinner and the false saint and allows no one to be right but drives the whole lot of them into terror and despair. This is the hammer of which Jeremiah speaks: “My word is a hammer that breaks a rock in pieces” [Jer.23:29]. This is not “active contrition,” a contrived remorse, but “passive contrition,” true affliction of the heart, suffering, and the pain of death.⁵⁸

The law of God brings about an awareness of the sinful participation of a person in a conflict.

Luther refers to this as *passiva contritio* (passive contrition) whereby true affliction of the heart occurs.⁵⁹ The law of God serves as the judge and jury – the Word of God has the ultimate authority and not the party who has been wronged, hurt, or compromised by the conflict.

However, in a conflict, when there is recognition of wrong-doing and repentance on the part of the person, the law of God has done its work. Thus, the suffering conscience needs the word of comfort – that is, the gospel. Luther declares: “To this office of the law, however, the New Testament immediately adds the consoling promise of grace through the gospel. This we should believe. As Christ says in Mark 1 [:15]: “Repent, and believe the good news.”⁶⁰ Jesus would state in the gospel of Luke: “So watch yourselves. If your brother sins, rebuke him, and if he repents, forgive him. ⁴ If he sins against you seven times in a day, and seven times comes back to you and says, ‘I repent,’ forgive him.”⁶¹ When the law has done its work the gospel must be proclaimed to bring peace and comfort to the troubled soul. The gospel – the forgiveness and

⁵⁸ Robert Kolb and Timothy J. Wengert, ed. *The Book of Concord: The Smalcald Articles*, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 2000), 312.

⁵⁹Ibid 312.

⁶⁰ Ibid. 313.

⁶¹ Luke 17:3 (New International Version).

mercy of God granted through Jesus precious life, death, and resurrection - needs to be spoken to the conflicted soul.

Reconciliation in earthly relationships is an extension of the reconciliation between God and man through Jesus Christ. Jesus gave to his disciples (and the church) the ministry of reconciliation. C.F.W. Walther states:

*However, it is verily true, my friends, that Jesus Christ, after redeeming the entire world, has given His followers power to forgive every one's sins. Some claim that the meaning of Christ is this: "When a minister notices that a person is in the proper condition, he may persuade him to believe that he has forgiveness of sins." But these are human imaginings; what the Lord says is simply this: "Thy sins are remitted." Moreover, this statement is readily comprehended by anyone who believes in the completeness of the redemption and reconciliation with God which Christ accomplished."*⁶²

C.F.W. Walther would further state: "Christ did not only issue a general command to His apostles and their successors in office to preach the gospel, hence the forgiveness of sin, but to minister to each individual who desires it this comfort: 'You are reconciled to God.'"⁶³

The individual who receives the liberating grace of God through Jesus Christ has been comforted by the word of the gospel. He now has opportunity to proclaim that same comforting word to a person who stands in conflict with God (or with another person). However, in order for that word to be rightly proclaimed it is necessary to precede the proclamation of the gospel with the word of the law. The law convicts while the gospel comforts. In the process of conflict and reconciliation the Word of God serves as the double-edged sword – a word that confronts and terrorizes the conscience on one side and a word that comforts and consoles on the other. There is no greater tool in the process of conflict and reconciliation than the Word of God that is rightly applied to the individual.

⁶² C.F.W. Walther, *The Proper Distinction Between the Law and Gospel*, (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1897), 375.

⁶³ *Ibid.* 169.

Personal Peacemaking

“Every Christian is called by God to serve as an ambassador of reconciliation.”⁶⁴ Who is better equipped to demonstrate the love and forgiveness found in Jesus Christ to another person than a Christian? This is the responsibility and work of every individual Christian in their life with God as well as in the context of the community where they daily live. The source and power of personal peacemaking does not flow from within the individual. Martin Luther challenges the individual in the *Small Catechism* with these words:

*Consider your place in life according to the Ten Commandments: Are you a father, mother, son, daughter, husband, wife, or worker? Have you been disobedient, unfaithful, or lazy? Have you been hot-tempered, rude, or quarrelsome? Have you hurt someone by your words or deeds? Have you stolen, been negligent, wasted anything, or done any harm?*⁶⁵

These words cut to the heart and indict the individual, shaking them from a false sense of personal holiness. Who hasn't engaged in such sinful behavior before the Lord? But the individual believer in Jesus is comforted by the knowledge and assurance that they are forgiven.

Luther states:

*He (Jesus) is righteous and unstained. He is without sin. Whatever righteousness I have, this my Comforter has, He who cried out for me to the Father: “Spare him, and he has been spared! Forgive him! Help him!” The righteousness of Jesus Christ is standing on our side. For the righteousness of God in Him is ours.*⁶⁶

But this forgiveness that is received through Jesus Christ is not to be hoarded by the individual believer. Rather, this forgiveness is to be demonstrated and expressed by proclamation and personal practice in and through Christian reconciliation. This is personal peacemaking. Luther states: “...These things must be proclaimed to those who have been

⁶⁴ Ted Kober, *Confession and Forgiveness: Professing Faith as Ambassadors of Reconciliation*, (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2002), 13.

⁶⁵ Martin Luther, *The Small Catechism*, (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2005) 27.

⁶⁶ Martin Luther, *Luther's Works Volume 30: The Catholic Epistles*, ed. Jaroslav Pelikan, (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1967) 236.

terrified, not to those who are presumptuous. Christ, who does not spurn a contrite and humble heart, wants to be the Lord and Author of life, not of sin.”⁶⁷ Personal peacemaking is forgiving as one has been forgiven. As this is applied in relationships with each other it is a reflection of the heart of Christ to another person who may have wronged or hurt us. This kind of personal peacemaking moves beyond event into the realm of a lifestyle. Ted Kober states:

*Reconciliation is not a planned program but a lifestyle. Reconciliation through confession and forgiveness can be experienced in specific events, but our Lord never intended that His ministry be only reserved for special occasions...In confession and forgiveness, we profess our faith and need for a Savior, and we share the Gospel with one another in practical, everyday experiences. We celebrate the death of the old Adam and our new life in Christ. We remember our Baptism and adoption as children of God. We glorify God as we say the words He taught us: I confess. I forgive.*⁶⁸

Personal peacemaking is as much a lifestyle as it is a personal practice. Daily I sin and daily I am forgiven. Daily I may be wronged and daily I am called to be a peacemaker who reflects the love of Christ to my brother or sister.

If personal peacemaking is to be a central reality to a Christian’s life, then it is necessary for proper teaching, preaching, modeling, and practicing of reconciliation in the life of the Christian community. This is best exemplified and practiced in the local congregation. Pastors bear a great responsibility in the task of presenting biblical reconciliation principles to the Body of Christ. There is no greater biblical example of modeling such reconciliation than Jesus Christ. Prior to his reconciliation of the whole world through his atoning death upon the cross, he took care and time to model, practice, and teach reconciliation to his disciples. Consider the example that existed within the band of his disciples:

On one side of the room is Matthew, the tax collector, a Jew who collected Roman taxes from his own people. Tax collectors were despised as turncoats and Roman

⁶⁷ Ibid. 237.

⁶⁸ Ted Kober, *Confession and Forgiveness: Professing Faith as Ambassadors of Reconciliation*, (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2002) 170-172.

sympathizers. Across the room sat Simon the Zealot. The Zealots were the conservative extremists of their day, much like the radical militia and terrorist of our world. The Zealots were convinced that the Roman government would only be overthrown by violence, and they were ready to provide it. There was no one a Zealot hated more than a tax collector. Christ's purpose for Matthew and Simon was that their relationship display such an amazing unity and love that the surrounding world would take notice – and in so doing, see Christ..God's agenda is glory received and glory given so that glory would continue to be incarnated on earth. Maybe the best way to think of the incarnation is as an ongoing event: God made known, no longer in the physical presence of Christ, but in the glory of his work through his people as we live incarnationally.⁶⁹

Here, two key leaders (missionaries, pastors, Reconcilers) of the future Christian Church are brought together, seemingly place their differences at the feet of the other for the sake of unity and peace in the emerging Christian community, and live in that peace, love, and forgiveness with one another. Later on in their ministries when they speak of reconciliation and unity, they could point to their relationship as disciples of Christ.

Pastors have the responsibility to teach and preach reconciliation to the church for the sake of equipping and assisting members in their response to conflicts that will arise in their lives. This is a primary function of the Pastoral Office and is rightly understood as belonging to the Office of the Keys. Martin Luther, in *The Small Catechism* writes:

The Office of the Keys is that special authority which Christ has given to His Church on earth to forgive the sins of repentant sinners, but to withhold forgiveness from the unrepentant as long as they do not repent.⁷⁰

Martin Luther speaks of the command Jesus Christ gave to his disciples in the post-resurrection appearance in the gospel of John 20:21-23. The binding and loosing of sins is part and parcel of living in authentic Christian Community. Ted Kober states: “Because Scripture teaches that the cause of conflict is rooted in our sinful desires (James 4:1-3), reconciliation among believers is

⁶⁹ Paul David Tripp, *Instruments in the Redeemer's Hands: People in Need of Change Helping People in Need of Change*,(Philipsburg: P&R Publishing 2002) 102.

⁷⁰ *Lutheran Service Book* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2006), 326.

the business of the church. In the simplest terms, the ministry of reconciliation is declaring what God has done to reconcile us to himself in Jesus Christ.”⁷¹

Philip Melanchthon, in *The Apology to the Augsburg Confession* writes:

*In our churches, on the other hand, all sermons deal with topics like these: penitence, the fear of God, faith in Christ, the righteousness of faith, comfort for the conscience through faith, the exercise of faith, prayer, and our assurance that it is efficacious and is heard, the cross, respect for rulers and for all civil ordinances, the distinction between the kingdom of Christ (or the spiritual kingdom) and political affairs, marriage, the education and instruction of children, chastity, and all the works of love. From this description of the state of our churches it is evident that we diligently maintain church discipline, pious ceremonies, and the good customs of the church*⁷²

As you move through Melanchthon’s list you see that it all flows from recognizing your own guilt in light of God’s law and flows freely to the cross of Christ for forgiveness and salvation.

The penitent is encouraged by pastors to apply these same biblical principles in their own life for the witnessing, building up, and the blessing of the Church; in other words, for the sake of practicing reconciliation with other people.

Therefore, the peculiar work of equipping the Christian community with the tools necessary for biblical reconciliation is a necessary requirement for witnessing within the church and to the surrounding world. Reconciliation becomes more than a simple exercise of peace and harmony among brothers and sisters, it is deeply rooted and is an overt expression of the Theology of the cross. When living a reconciled life in Christ, the penitent lives with the cross being done for them. When extending that life of reconciliation to others of which he or she may be in conflict, it is an extension of that same cross to them. Reconciliation, ultimately then, is Cross-talk – the Word of forgiveness and salvation accomplished by Jesus for the sinner.

⁷¹ Ted Kober, *Confession & Forgiveness: Professing Faith as Ambassadors of Reconciliation*, (St. Louis: Concordia, 2002) 54.

⁷² Theodore G. Tappert, *The Book of Concord*, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1959), 221.

Concluding thoughts...

Conflict, as presented in the Bible, is expressed in vertical and horizontal relationships (between God and man and by human relationships). These conflicts generate responses that range from flight to attack. Reconciliation in the vertical relationship (between God and Man) was initiated and accomplished by God through Jesus Christ. It is the theology of the Cross pressed upon God's people, received by grace and understood by Faith that leads the child of God towards a life of reconciliation in the horizontal relationships. This is demonstrated through a life of personal peacemaking. Our reconciliation is an outward expression of the reconciliation Jesus Christ afforded to His creation through the cross.

Armed with the biblical and doctrinal understanding of conflict and reconciliation, in the next chapter I will focus on how this relates to the current cultural climate. This climate is dominated by the buzz word "postmodernism." I will explore what postmodernism means (both philosophically and practically) and how it is expressed in the culture today. I will also show how postmodernism effects technological communication and interpersonal relationships. I will also focus on how these factors have lead to a generation that struggles with conflict and reconciliation.

CHAPTER THREE

THE PROJECT IN THE CONTEXT OF RECENT RESEARCH

Introduction

“What is the current cultural climate?” Most, if not all, observers of society agree that the world has moved into a new milieu. The previous operating principles have changed and there is no turning back. In order to give this new or emerging culture an identity it has been coined “postmodern.” The generations of today are being born, raised, and educated in a society that bears little resemblance to the society of only fifty years ago. Due to the fact that the participants in this project are between the ages of 18 and 34 it is necessary to spend time considering postmodern challenge.

In this chapter I will explore the cultural climate and define postmodernism (both philosophically and practically). I will apply this definition of postmodernism as a means to discover what the unique challenges are to the Christian church today. I will also spend some time considering the rapidly developing field of technology with a special emphasis on technological communication. I will explore how technological communication may be antithetical to biblical conflict reconciliation communication. Finally, I will conclude the chapter with a look at how, quite possibly, the current generation may be a generation in conflict.

Originality

Current cultural shifts mean that ministry contexts are changing. In his ground breaking work, *Morph! The Texture of Leadership for Tomorrow's Church*, Ron Martoia writes:

For the vast majority of baby boomers, church attendance was rather typical. An unannounced inversion seems to have taken place, however. In talking with twenty-somethings, a very small percentage of them have grown up with a church experience. Many of them have absolutely no religious mooring of any sort. There seems to have

been a shift somewhere in the transition from boomer (those between 39-55) to bustler (those between 24-39)⁷³

Dan Kimball echoes the same sentiment when he writes: “But like people in the early church era, today’s emerging generations don’t know Christianity. They don’t know the difference between Baptists, Methodists, or Episcopalians.”⁷⁴ The reality is that the postmodern college-aged student tends to lack the foundation in biblical knowledge, Christian doctrine, and Church practice that previous generations possessed. There is a lack of familiarity with language such as “confession,” “absolution,” and “reconciliation,” from a Christian standpoint. As the Church attempts to reach out and minister to the emerging generations it needs to be aware of the “baggage” that comes along with the postmodern culture. Elements of the postmodern culture may be disconnected from the culture of the Church.

Postmodernism

So what exactly is postmodernism? According to the *Public Broadcasting System* website, postmodernism is:

A general and wide-ranging term which is applied to literature, art, philosophy, architecture, fiction, and cultural and literary criticism, among others. Postmodernism is largely a reaction to the assumed certainty of scientific, or objective, efforts to explain reality. In essence, it stems from a recognition that reality is not simply mirrored in human understanding of it, but rather, is constructed as the mind tries to understand its own particular and personal reality. For this reason, postmodernism is highly skeptical of explanations which claim to be valid for all groups, cultures, traditions, or races, and instead focuses on the relative truths of each person. In the postmodern understanding, interpretation is everything; reality only comes into being through our interpretations of what the world means to us individually. Postmodernism relies on concrete experience

⁷³ Ron Martoia, *Morph! The Texture of Leadership for Tomorrow’s Church*, (Loveland, CO: Group Publishing, 2003), 15.

⁷⁴ Dan Kimball, *They Like Jesus But Not the Church: Insights from Emerging Generations*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2007), 32.

over abstract principles, knowing always that the outcome of one's own experience will necessarily be fallible and relative, rather than certain and universal.

Postmodernism is "post" because it denies the existence of any ultimate principles, and it lacks the optimism of there being a scientific, philosophical, or religious truth which will explain everything for everybody - a characteristic of the so-called "modern" mind. The paradox of the postmodern position is that, in placing all principles under the scrutiny of its skepticism, it must realize that even its own principles are not beyond questioning. As the philosopher Richard Tarnas states, postmodernism "cannot on its own principles ultimately justify itself any more than can the various metaphysical overviews against which the postmodern mind has defined itself."⁷⁵

The term “postmodern” can be traced to the French philosopher Jean Francois Lyotard.

In 1979 he published a landmark article entitled, “The Post-Modern Condition: A Report on Knowledge.”⁷⁶ This article pointed out that there was a growing crisis of trust in Western civilization. “In the Modern world there was a belief in an overarching truth – whether informed by a Christian world-view or even a secular belief in progress and in the perfectability of humanity. Lyotard argued that Modern societies maintained (or even produced) order and stability by generating what he called ‘grand narratives’ or ‘master narratives.’”⁷⁷

However, in the emerging culture these “meta-narratives” no longer provide a clear sense of destiny. “In the emerging postmodern context, it is thought that we are only on a virtual voyage where we explore self-created worlds. In short, the very nature of truth has begun to collapse.”⁷⁸ Thus, postmodernism challenges the current culture with the loss of meta-narratives, the collapse of absolute truth, skepticism about history, and the overall loss of the meaning of

⁷⁵ Public Broadcasting System, “Postmodernism,” <http://www.pbs.org/faithandreason/gen gloss/postm-body.html> (Accessed July 17, 2009).

⁷⁶ Jean Francois Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1979, accessed from <http://www.marxists.org/reference/subject/philosophy/works/fr/lyotard.htm>

⁷⁷ Rolf Hille, “The Uniqueness of Christ in a Postmodern World and the Challenge of World Religions,” Lausanne Occasional Paper No.31 (2004) 10.

⁷⁸Ibid. page 10.

life. With such an influence, biblical doctrine and principles will be viewed with great cynicism by the emerging culture.

Postmodernism is understood to be many things to people in today's culture. "Most often postmodernism is simply a code word for something new, a supposed break with the past (modernity) and the dawn of a radical new era."⁷⁹ Postmodernism is observed in the culture by two means: academic and popular expressions. There is a great variety of postmodern expression within academia:

Heidegger; French post-structuralism; Gadamer, Ricoeur, and Levinas; not to mention the convergence of continental and Anglo-American schools in the later Wittgenstein, Austinian speech-act theory, and on we could go... Without denying the existence of intellectual, social, and cultural transitions, one discovers a rather clear if sometimes winding path from Kant to Schleiermacher to Hegel and Fichte to Schopenhauer, Feuerbach, and Nietzsche that leads finally on to Freud and eventually to French deconstruction. Schopenhauer, for example, was talking about "reality" being nothing more than objectified drives and irrational urges and Nietzsche was reducing truth to metaphor long before Derrida or Rorty appeared on the scene, and the latter sees himself as simply building on the pragmatism of William James and John Dewey – hardly to be classed as postmodern.⁸⁰

Postmodern theory seeks to dismantle or destroy the attributes of God in society. Nietzsche believed: "With the downfall of the highest values also comes the elimination of the 'above' and the 'high' and the 'beyond,' the former place in which values could be posited...Nietzsche calls this place the 'shadow' of God which lingers after his death...postmodern theory has been intent on completing Nietzsche's project of vanquishing God's shadow."⁸¹

⁷⁹ Leonard Sweet, ed. *The Church in Emerging Culture: Five Perspectives*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003), 105.

⁸⁰ Ibid. 106.

⁸¹ Brian D. Ingraffia, *Postmodern Theory and Biblical Theology: Vanquishing God's Shadow*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995) 1-2.

Just as there is great variety among the academic circles of postmodernism there is great diversity among the popular expressions as well. Postmodernism in its popular expression “is little more than the triumph of popular culture, with its obsessions with technology, mass communication, mass marketing, the therapeutic orientation, and consumption.”⁸² Cultural postmodernism seems to go hand-in-glove with consumerism, capitalism, and the “pursuit of personal happiness.”

Although playfully flippant in his description, Michael Horton offers an assessment of cultural postmodernism:

Postmodernism – or whatever one wishes to designate our brief moment in history – is the culture in which Sesame Street is considered educational; sexy is the term of approbation for everything from jeans to doctoral theses; watching sitcoms together at dinner is called family time; abortion is considered choice; films sell products; and a barrage of images and sound bites selected for their entertainment and commercial value is called news. This general trend in culture translates into hipper-than-thou clubs passing for youth ministry, informal chats passing for sermons, and brazen marketing passing for evangelism, where busyness equals holiness, and expository preaching is considered too intellectual. This trend can account in part for homes in which disciplined habits both of domestic culture and instruction in Christian faith and practice give way to niche marketing and churches becomes theaters of the absurd.⁸³

This understanding of cultural postmodernism resembles a child who refuses to grow up and embrace such lofty ideals as wisdom, truth, righteousness, and absolutes – in other words, cultural postmodernism is about what makes me feel good and what I believe is true.

The convergence of the philosophical and the cultural understandings of postmodernism is the crossroads of which the church finds itself. Author Bob Robert Jr. refers to this crossroads as “Glocalization.” “Glocal” is another term for the “flat earth that describes the seamless

⁸² Leonard Sweet, ed. *The Church in Emerging Culture: Five Perspectives*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003) 108.

⁸³ *Ibid.* 109.

integration between the local and global.”⁸⁴ Roberts goes on to say: “Business, art, communication, travel, goods, and services are all expanding tremendously. Babel is no longer a biblical tower; it is an internet server that has connected us and continues to connect us in ways that are just plain unimaginable.”⁸⁵ The implication of a “glocal” world is that change is rapid and swift. Personal opinions are expressed at lightning speed; goods and merchandise are a simple computer “click” away; and new ideas are old in the blink of an eye of a technologically driven world.

The Postmodern Challenge for the Church

Because the waves of postmodernism are buffeting against the shores of culture, it is also presenting itself as a challenge to the Church. How does the Church minister to the needs of this emerging generation? What will ministry look like moving forward into the Twenty-first century? These questions serve as a platform by which this project was initially considered and formulated. The Church faces a time of “graying” in the congregation. How it understands postmodernism speaks volumes as to how it will respond.

The Church of today is operating in a new epoch of historical definition – a time between the division of modernism and postmodernism. As churches struggle with their own identity, mission field, and future outreach, they struggle to find their niche in this “present evil age” living with the hope of the “age to come.” Cultural observer and Church scholar Leonard Sweet views the Church of today in this light:

⁸⁴ Bob Roberts Jr. *Glocalization: How Followers of Jesus Engage a Flat World*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2007) 14.

⁸⁵Ibid. 16.

Christendom is divided today between Old World Churches and New World Churches. They move at different speeds. They prize different values. They measure success differently. They think differently: one primarily in terms of big and small; the other in terms of fast and slow. One is book-centric, the other Web-centric. In one, the book is the foundation of everything they do. In the other, the Web is their defining metaphor and mechanism. You can't avoid the stench of ecclesiastical disintegration or the sweet aroma of new growth...."We live in a world that is half dead and half born" – Billy O. Wireman, President, Queens College⁸⁶

Sweet believes that “Old World Churches” are trapped in “monocular outlooks where the divine is ‘out there’ to be hauled ‘in here’ by objective methods.”⁸⁷ In contrast to this, the “New World Church” – that is, the church of the postmodern pilgrim – sees with both eyes a world that extends beyond ourselves, while at the same time is a creative place of ourselves. Thus, in order to encounter the Spiritual fully, the postmodern pilgrim needs to have an EPIC encounter with the Divine. Sweet defines this EPIC encounter as: Experiential, Participatory, Image Driven, and Connected.

Experiential spirituality through the lenses of postmodernism is akin to shopping on Ebay. There is a challenge and rush from the experience. “Will my bid win the privilege of the purchase?” “Postmoderns don’t want their information straight. They want it laced with experience (hence edutainment). And the more extreme the better.”⁸⁸ Postmoderns desire the ability to interact with the experience. It is no longer enough for a person to possess or enjoy something. Now they have to be involved in the event that brings the thing into their home. People want to participate in the production of content, whatever it is. Steve Jobs of Apple computer said: “You go to your TV when you want to turn your brain off. You go to your

⁸⁶ Leonard Sweet, *Post-Modern Pilgrims*, (Nashville: B&H Publishing, 2000), 140.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.* 142.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.* page 33.

computer when you want to turn your brain on.”⁸⁹ With a wired postmodern world each person has the opportunity to participate and not simply observe.

The postmodern person is image driven. Images serve as a “language” of power in the postmodern culture. Take, for example, the Nike Swoosh. It was not the first symbol of athletic footwear but it created a lasting and enduring image. That image has helped drive Nike to the multi-billion dollar company of today. The image orders and ordains a metaphor for the company in the minds of the postmodern person. Leonard Sweet observes that these images/metaphors are more than decorations. They serve as fundamental tools of thought and reasoning. This is why liturgy and church art are so important in the postmodern Christian community. They serve as a means by which we are realigned to Jesus Christ, which transforms our lives. “Joseph Stalin was an ex-seminarian. From the Orthodox Church he learned the power of icons. That’s why he littered the Soviet landscape with pictures of himself.”⁹⁰

The postmodern person, above all, desires connectivity to something greater than himself. Leonard Sweet puts it this way: “A postmodern ‘me’ needs ‘we’ to ‘be.’ In the modern world, it was ‘I think, therefore I am.’ The postmodern sensibility loops back to the premodern before it becomes postmodern. Among the Xhosa people of Southern Africa, it has always been: ‘I am because we are.’”⁹¹ This could be simply stated as the “power of we.” The ultimate connection that the church brings to the postmodern is the connection to God through Word and Sacrament ministry. But the postmodern seeks and desires more: connection to people, principles, and promises. They seek the diversity and complexity of connections with causes and commitments.

⁸⁹ Ibid. 62.

⁹⁰ Ibid. 92.

⁹¹ Ibid. 117.

God is the ultimate connection: "...I will never leave you nor forsake you."⁹² The Church, as it serves a postmodern culture, needs to live its connectivity with God by growing greater connections with each of its members.

Simply put, the church needs to be relevant to the postmodern culture of which it now finds itself. Erwin Raphael McManus states:

Relevance is... about embracing the principle that we are to value the one lost sheep even more than the 99 that are found. It is waking up to the realization that the church isn't here for we who believe, but rather that we in fact are the church, and we are here for a world drowning in disbelief...Relevance is not about having everyone agree with you. It is about speaking the truth of Christ honestly and credibly into a person's life. When we speak relevantly to the world we live in, there is a resonance of reality and authenticity.⁹³

McManus sees this as a reflection of the transcendent nature of God himself. Not that the church reacts to culture, rather, the church serves in a transforming role to the culture around it.

It is the tension that God calls us to – an intersection of culture and communication. Incarnational ministry of this magnitude can be done, done well and in a way that both honors and glorifies God. Jesus pulled it off – the Word of God made flesh walked among us. The God of creation became a Jewish carpenter. He was in culture, a part of culture, transforming culture, creating culture. Through the church he continues this journey today.⁹⁴

The purpose of the Church in the postmodern culture is to be a reflection of Christ to the people. This is an evangelistic reflection of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. It is relevant to the point that it conveys the comforting message of sins forgiven and a life that has deeper purpose and meaning than the culture can provide. The answers are not found within oneself. The answers that the culture seeks are found in Christ alone.

⁹² Hebrews 13:5 (English Standard Version)

⁹³ Leonard Sweet, ed. *The Church in Emerging Culture: Five Perspectives*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003) 241, 240.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.* 258.

Technology and Communication

The postmodern person has grown up in a culture dominated by rapid technological advances and the emerging field of electronic communication. Technology and electronic mediums serve as the primary sources of communication within the framework of the postmodern culture. This has created new and more efficient means by which postmodern people can remain connected. But it has also created new challenges for the postmodern person. Because the subjects of this project are by definition “postmodern” it is important to take into account how technology and its effects upon communication are a part of the postmodern world.

Allen Breed of the Associated Press recently wrote:

After talking, texting is the most important function people are looking for in their cell phones, says Miro Kazakoff, head of the handset research practice at Boston-based Compete, Inc. "More important than the camera. More important than Bluetooth." A recent survey found that 80 percent of Americans aged 18 to 29 own cell phones, and 65 percent of those text message on a regular basis. The practice has become so ubiquitous that the NCAA, which has restricted phone communications with sports recruits in the past, recently announced it is considering imposing text-message limits, too.⁹⁵

With the increased use of cell phone text messaging, instant messaging, blogs, Facebook, Twitter, and the use of email (a now archaic method of communication among postmodern college-aged students) the interpersonal communication skills of this community is significantly challenged.

In a recent posting on *The Signal*, writer Justin Jez points out the perils that contemporary people are facing with communication. He makes the following observations:

⁹⁵ Allen G. Breed, “Text, Instant Messages Changing Communication,” The Daily Texan Online, 10/17/06, <http://media.www.dailytexanonline.com/media/storage/paper410/news/2006/10/17/WorldNation/Text-Instant.Messages.Changing.Communication-2371495.shtml>, (Accessed August 17, 2008).

...Instead of meeting friends to talk about what is new in their lives, one can simply examine the Facebook “walls” of these people to get an up-to-date synopsis of their lives. Many young college students spend hours each day combing the site instead of actually socializing...the recent emergence of text messaging has replaced the need to actually talk to people and has reduced many cell phone users to firing short, encoded lines of text to each other. In place of intonation, there is poorly used punctuation. In place of emotion, there are cute facial icons to symbolize the sender’s intended mood...Text messaging’s older cousin, instant messaging, has been occupying the lives of teenagers for the past 10 years....The same type of emotional icons and shorthand is used to simulate unseen human responses, such as laughing out loud (“LOL”) or indicating amazement (“WTF”). Again, these modes of communication leave out the human element of speaking directly.⁹⁶

In the wake of all of this new technology many of these devices are becoming substitutes for face-to-face communication. An article from October 16, 2005 in the Baltimore Sun, entitled “Uneasy Relations: Blogs, Web sites and instant messaging offer more ways for college roommates to be dysfunctional,” offers the following finding:

Students are used to talking online and in text messages, and are often more comfortable communicating complaints (directly or indirectly) via online methods instead of in face-to-face communication. Students in the same room will often use Instant Messaging to communicate rather than turning and talking to each other. They may complain about their roommate on a blog or in a chat session or using text messaging on phones, creating new ways for students to become alienated from each other.⁹⁷

As a means to respond to the diminishing interpersonal communication skills of postmodern people high schools are using instant messaging “help lines” to resolve student conflicts. There are colleges that have begun web-based mediation intake forms in order to help facilitate the postmodern generation with their conflicts.⁹⁸

⁹⁶ Justin Jez, “Communication Breakdown: Technology Cuts Face-to-Face Conversation,” The Signal, September 3, 2008, <http://www.signal-online.net/home/index.cfm?event=displayarticleprinterfriendly&ustory> (Accessed April 7, 2009)

⁹⁷ Bill Warters, “Changing Patterns of Roommate Conflict Fueled by the Net,” Conflict Management in Higher Education Report, November 2005, [http://www.campus-adr.org/CMHR/Report Events/Edition6_1/roommates.html](http://www.campus-adr.org/CMHR/Report%20Events/Edition6_1/roommates.html) (Accessed June 26, 2009).

⁹⁸ Ibid.

Theresa Kasallis, in a recent web article titled “Text Messaging Affects Student Relationships” wrote:

Research has shown that if a person feels his or her likelihood of being rejected for a date is high, there is a better chance he or she will ask through a text rather than a higher risk way, such as over the phone or in person,” said Derek Westra, a 23 year old BYU senior who conducted a survey on the effects of technology on communication. “I think you know what I’m talking about...we all do it – I know I have.”⁹⁹

According to Wireless World Forum more than one in three college-aged students send messages from wireless devices, and this demographic is quickly becoming the fastest growing sect to use cell phones.¹⁰⁰

Along with the increase of technology come the abuses: cyber-bullying, online infidelity, pornography addictions, child predators, just to name a few. “There have been many breakups caused by IM or online relationships, and college students tend to break up often, via text messaging, since they view it as the most non-confrontational way to express themselves.”¹⁰¹

Instant messaging can be very addicting. One of the main reasons teens invest so much time in the internet is the easy communication management and environmental control it provides. According to the Teenage Research Survey, “Respondents ages 12 to 17 spent more than 26 minutes per day, on average instant messaging.”¹⁰² This phenomenon has trickled over into the work place and has created a whole new set of circumstances for businesses to contend with. Communications that are business related can be considered the property of the parent business. Businesses may be legally bound to save such communications. The problem is that

⁹⁹ Theresa Kasallis, “Text Messaging Affects Student Relationships,” Universe BYU.edu, July 5, 2006, <http://newsnet.byu.edu/story.cfm/60307> (Accessed June 26, 2009).

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² Ibid.

text messaging does not run through an enterprise network, but the carrier network, so there is no easy way to archive old text messages. “BlackBerry smartphones, for instance, have a ‘pin to pin’ feature that sends text directly between two devices. In that case, a company would have to develop a way to save text messages on the device.”¹⁰³

An example of such a technologically driven conflict occurred between the new head football coach of the Denver Broncos, 32 year-old Josh McDaniels, and the star quarterback, 20-something-year-old Jay Cutler. At the root of the conflict was McDaniels attempt to trade for another quarterback, Matt Cassel. The rumor of the trade attempt leaked out and bruised the ego of Jay Cutler. Cutler immediately demanded a trade from the Broncos. McDaniels response? He attempted to communicate with Cutler by text message. Mc Daniels said that he repeatedly text-messaged Cutler, and Cutler was not returning his texts. In a recent post on the Center for Creative Leadership, Notizen stated:

*Text messaged? Granted, text messaging is probably what Gen Xers and Millenials do to communicate. And, they are not in the same city to talk about his issue. But, if you as a manager had a conflict with one of your coworkers, would you want to text message the person and wait for his or her reply? Or, if you and your boss had a conflict, would you want to receive a text message from your boss as a way to deal with it?*¹⁰⁴

The bigger question is this: “What was McDaniel thinking?” His inability to handle a conflict face to face caused McDaniel’s to depend on a technological tool in lieu of face-to-face communication and, in turn, use it in an inappropriate manner. The Center for Creative Leadership asks the reader this simple series of questions: “Would you have text messaged your coworker if you were dealing with a conflict? Would you want to have a text message sent to

¹⁰³ Robert Mullins, “Web 2.0 Conflicts with E-Discovery,” Suite 101.com, January 28, 2009, http://office-software.suite101.com/article.cfm/web_20_conflicts_with_ediscovery (accessed June 26, 2009)

¹⁰⁴ “Text Messaging? The Young AND the Clueless,” Center for Creative Leadership Notizen, March 27, 2009, http://de-de.facebook.com/note.php?note_id=59961264078&comments&ref=mf Accessed June 26,2009.

you? Or, would you have been more proactive, and want to deal with the conflict directly, face-to-face perhaps, in a safe environment?”¹⁰⁵ These simple questions are not so simply answered by many in the postmodern generation.

Another example of text-messaging conflict was reported recently by Reuters News Service. In Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, a man recently divorced his wife by text message. The story states that the man was in Iraq when he sent a text message informing his wife that she was no longer his spouse. He followed the message with a telephone call to two of his relatives stating the fact of the text message. “A court in the Red Sea city of Jeddah finalized the split – the first known divorce in Saudi Arabia by text message – after summoning the two relatives to check they had received word of the husband’s intention.”¹⁰⁶ Saudi Arabia’s practice of strict Sharia law allowed the clerics, who preside as judges in court, to grant the divorce because they could verify that the man stated his desire for a divorce three times. Here again, the technology was used in such a way as to inappropriately deal with a conflict at hand. The text message became a shield for dealing with the conflict in an appropriate way.

Many of today’s postmodern children are using technology inappropriately to express feelings and emotions. There is a myth that technological communication is private and guarded. The truth of the matter is that technological communication is public and open. In a recent article on Todayshow.com a story was told of 18-year-old Jesse Logan who took her own life after a nude picture of her was passed around by e-mail. According to the story:

¹⁰⁵Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ “Saudi Man Divorces Wife by Text Message,” Thomson Reuters, April 9, 2009, <http://af.reuters.com/article/oddlyenoughnews/idAFTRE538SG20090409> Accessed June 26, 2009.

She had sent nude pictures of herself to a boyfriend. When they broke up, he sent them to other high school girls. The girls were harassing her, calling her a slut and a whore. She was miserable and depressed, afraid even to go to school. And now Jesse Logan was going on a Cincinnati television station to tell her story. Her purpose was simple: "I just want to make sure no one else will have to go through this again." The interview was in May 2008. Two months later, Jessica Logan hanged herself in her bedroom. She was 18.¹⁰⁷

This particular story highlights a growing trend among postmodern people: the use of technology under the guise of private communication. Sexting is a growing problem and leads to conflicts without healthy reconciliation or resolution.

A Generation of Conflict

According to a survey conducted by the Higher Education Research Institute at the University of California Los Angeles, 29 percent of the 31,000 freshman surveyed across the United States had experienced roommate problems.¹⁰⁸ Conflicts exist among roommates for a variety of reasons. For many students this is their first experience living away from home and sharing a bedroom or bathroom with other people. For others they may be confronted with "money management issues, time management, sexuality, health care and conflict resolution."¹⁰⁹

As a result, conflicts are on the rise among students on United States campus communities. According to Susan Fee, "Students who can't handle conflict run into trouble almost immediately...They avoid the issue rather than deal it, causing increased stress, lower

¹⁰⁷ Mike Celizik, "Her Teen Committed Suicide over Sexting: Cynthia Logan's Daughter was Taunted about a Photo She Sent to Boyfriend," Todayshow.com, March 6, 2009, <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/29546030> Accessed March 6, 2009.

¹⁰⁸ "How Can My Student Manage Roommate Conflict?" Baldwin Wallace College Webpage, <http://www.bw.edu/parents/newsletter/roommate/> Accessed June 26, 2009.

¹⁰⁹ Linda D. Griffin, "Understanding Your College Student," Louisiana Tech University Webpage, <http://www.latech.edu/students/counseling/understanding.shtml> Accessed June 26, 2009.

grades, and additional moving and housing expenses.”¹¹⁰ For the parents the inability to deal with conflicts is directly related to the rising costs of college education. Fee states:

*Children with poor communication skills can hurt your wallet. Kid’s who can’t get along with their roommates request single dorm rooms, which are not only more costly, but usually unavailable. Others move off-campus, transfer to another school, or return home. Grades can be affected by the stress causing some students to repeat semesters.*¹¹¹

Unfortunately, most students today would rather communicate using email, IM, text-messaging, Facebook, and other technological means. Fee states: “Without the benefit of facial expressions, tone of voice, and body language, messages can be misunderstood. Also... gossiping to others instead of talking to their roommate directly escalates the problem.”¹¹² The key to relationship health is not how an individual avoids conflicts but how a person responds to it. The challenge is to move beyond the technology to face to face conversation that is not necessarily confrontational in nature. The healthy relationship that needs to be forged is one that is based upon self-expression as well as empathy.

Concluding Thoughts...

The world has changed and it no longer resembles the world of modernity. Whether we refer to this new reality as “postmodern” or by some other label, the philosophical and practical marks are clearly identifiable. The postmodern generation desires greater connectivity with a desire to participate in those things that make a difference. It is driven by technology and an ever shrinking world. However, therein is the challenge. The technologically driven world has

¹¹⁰ Susan Fee, “Hidden College Costs: Roommate Conflicts,” Edina Articles.com, May 17,2005, <http://ezinearticles.com/?Hidden-College-Costs:--Roommate-Conflict&id=36867> Accessed June 26, 2009.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² Ibid.

reduced communication to sound-bites and text messages. It has influenced basic human communication and hampered the ability to engage in biblical reconciliation.

This review of postmodernism, technology, and communication are essential to the crafting of a postmodern conflict reconciliation ministry. It is important to understand the cultural trends that are buffeting the shores of a postmodern person. It is also important to understand how they learn, what kinds of teaching techniques engage participants, and what is most effective in communicating biblical principles to postmodern people. In the next chapter I will weave together the biblical, doctrinal and cultural data into a four session critical event postmodern conflict reconciliation ministry. These events will represent a cultural sensitivity to the way postmoderns think, learn, and do.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE PROJECT DEVELOPED

Introduction

What does a ministry for postmodern people look, sound, and feel like? How can the church respond to a generation of people who are notably absent from the vast majority of Christian churches in the United States? In this chapter I will seek to design and create a ministry that targets postmodern people (between the ages of 18 and 34). This ministry will be event driven and reflect a variety of teaching methodologies to engage the participants. The goal is to engage postmodern people with a ministry that reflects a deeper understanding, appreciation, and participation in relationships, communication, conflict, and reconciliation.

Research Tools and Methodology

The research for this project was carried out through the ministry of Fountain of Life Lutheran Church – Tucson, Arizona, where I serve as Senior Pastor. The congregation is located near the University of Arizona, and as a result, has several postmodern college-aged students who attend the University as well as the Church. The congregation also has a large population of postmodern people who have recently graduated from college and have settled into Tucson, Arizona. As a result, there is a significant population in the congregation of people between the ages of 18 to 29. Because a major focus of the project is relationships it was necessary to have two groups of seven participants instead of one large group of fourteen. The desire was to create an intimate environment where all participants are encouraged to participate instead of a “classroom” environment where people can remain silent.

In the process of conducting the theological and bibliographic research I created a framework of current attitudes towards the four key topics, namely relationships, communication, conflict, and reconciliation. Secondly, I developed a “user-friendly” guide through the four key topics as they relate to Scripture and Lutheran theology. Special attention was paid to Scriptural and historical figures that serve as both positive and negative examples of relationships that have traversed the waters of conflict-reconciliation. Thirdly, an examination of Christian doctrine (as it is articulated in the Lutheran Confessions, and 18th through 20th Century Lutheran thinking) was conducted in order to see if the Lutheran Church has anything to contribute to this topic.

In order to gain initial passport with the postmodern participants of the congregation, I had a “Graduates Only Night” at the church to introduce the project. This was held on Wednesday, September 16, 2009 at 6:30 PM. My hope was that I would be able to recruit many postmodern members of the congregation to participate in the project. Secondly, I asked each participant to recruit a friend to join him in the project. This introductory evening featured a meal, a brief overview of the project, introductions of Dr. Jahn and Mrs. McDougall, and a sign-up sheet in order to participate in the pre-testing.¹¹³ Some of those in attendance decided to take the pre-testing on that evening.

After fourteen participants were recruited and committed to the process, those who had not yet taken the pre-tests arranged to do so before the first class. The pre-tests were as follows:

1) The Postmodern Attitude and Action Survey. This survey focused on the following attitudes

¹¹³ For a further discussion and role of the credentials for Dr. Jeffrey Jahn and Mrs. Eileen McDougall please see chapter 1, *process*, page 11ff.

and competencies: relationships, communication, conflict, reconciliation, and the ability to understand and apply biblical principles of conflict reconciliation (See Appendices F and G); 2) The participants also took the Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument; and 3) The Conflict Resolution Questionnaire.

Each participant participated in the pre-event interview (Appendix H). The pre-event interview questions are my own creation. The questions are arranged around the topics of technology, relationships, communication, conflict, and reconciliation. The questions also seek to determine if they are aware of the biblical teaching on reconciliation and if they are able to apply it in their lives. There are three questions for each area to be covered in the critical events. Each participant was interviewed on the day they participated in the written interview process. However, a few could not stay for the interview so a time was arranged in order for the participant to meet with the interviewer prior to the critical events. The participants signed a consent form in order for the information gathered to be used in this project (Appendix J).

Following the initial written survey and pre-testing process, the participants then attended the four critical events. These events were held on four consecutive Wednesdays (September 23 to October 14, 2009). Each event began at 6:30 PM and concluded at 8 PM. These events were held in the Family Life Center of the church. At each event there was a gathering time over a common meal. During this time each participant was encouraged to share “highs” and “lows” from the week before. This time was critical to discern the comfort level each participant had with regards to self-disclosure and communication. Each student was also asked to share a positive relationship experience as well as a challenging relationship experience that occurred during the week.

Following the meal and personal sharing, there was a teaching event centered on one of the four themes (relationships, communication, conflict, and reconciliation). The teaching event included a Bible Study, a video presentation, discussion, role-playing, and intercessory prayer. At the close of the evening each participant was given a brief reading and Bible Study to be done and a personal challenge/task to be accomplished during the week ahead. The evening concluded with dessert.

In order to determine the effectiveness of the critical events, each participant was assigned an “accountability partner.” Each member of the partner team covenanted with the other member – holding each other accountable to participating in all four critical events, doing the reading and Bible study during the week, and accomplishing the challenge/task that had been assigned. The accountability was conducted in two ways - face to face and electronically. Each week, each partner group was asked as to which means of communication was most helpful – the face to face communication or the communication by electronic means.

Following the completion of the four critical events, each participant re-took the Postmodern Action and Attitude Survey Tool, the Thomas Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument, and the Conflict Resolution Questionnaire. Each participant also participated in a post-event interview using the same questions as the pre-event interview. The post-event testing was conducted on Wednesday, October 28, 2009 at 6:30 PM. The post-event testing was conducted by Dr. Jahn and Mrs. McDougall. On that evening each participant also participated in a post-event oral interview with Dr. Jahn or Mrs. Mcdougall. The participants were interviewed individually and then participated in a larger group discussion. The participants gathered, were given dinner, and followed the previous process of sharing “highs” and “lows” and offering

prayer requests. Following a time of prayer each participant participated in the post-event testing and interview. Those who could not attend made an appointment with Dr. Jahn and Mrs. McDougall to do so. All testing and interview (both pre and post participation) were conducted by the same person so as to maintain the integrity of the interview process. The validity of the research hinged on the quality of the pre and post testing and interview process. These tools were helpful in determining if attitudes and actions towards relationships, communication, conflict, and reconciliation have changed.

The results of this research project can potentially help mold and shape a critical event curriculum that can be used with postmodern people. It is also hoped that this research project further studies can be explored for high school aged students, college students, post-college aged people, as well as other potential groups of people (both “churched” and “unchurched”). Especially in an environment where technological means of communication are developing and evolving at an increasing rate, it is important to factor in the results of which means of accountability was most beneficial to the participants of the project – the face to face communication or the electronic communication.

The Four Critical Events

Each of the four critical events was designed with a specific goal and several objectives in mind. These were arranged in a specific order so as to build upon the previous lesson and direct the participants towards a logical conclusion. The four goals that guided the author in preparation of this seminar are as follows:

1. Affirm a positive attitude towards relationships and the interpersonal conflicts that will arise while applying sound biblical teaching.
2. Convince the participants of the value of learning and implementing better communication skills for managing interpersonal conflict.
3. Teach participants what the five basic styles of managing interpersonal conflict are and when it is appropriate to implement each style.
4. Equip each participant to be competent in developing his own working model for managing interpersonal conflict and reconciliation.

With these four goals in mind, the goals and objectives of the four critical events that make up the seminar follow. Each critical event builds upon the last leading the participant to the goal of a sound biblical understanding of reconciliation and interpersonal communication. Although each participant may glean various pieces of knowledge from each critical event, the following objectives represent a minimum of learning that the author desires from the projects.

Critical Event # 1 – Relationships

Goal: The participants will demonstrate a spiritually mature attitude towards the necessity for healthy interpersonal relationships with one another (as well as in the community).

Objectives:

1. Participants will learn through biblical and secular examples the variety of relationships they may possess.
2. Participants will establish a foundation for the relationship they will share with their accountability partner.

3. Participants will learn the values of creating and nurturing relationships both personally and professionally.
4. Participants will learn the biblical mandate for relationships as they mirror the relationship Christ has with us.

Critical Event #2 – Communication

Goal: Participants will demonstrate an ability to communicate intellectually, emotionally, and spiritually with each other by implementing non-verbal and verbal communication tools

Objectives:

1. Participants will learn essential non-verbal listening skills by means of face to face conversation.
2. Participants will learn how to identify voice inflection and tone to better understand moods and feelings.
3. Participants will be equipped to reflect and articulate the communication received from their accountability partner.
4. Participants will be able to pray for specific needs of their accountability partner.

Critical Event #3 – Conflict

Goal: Participants will be able to apply biblical principles to initiate conversation leading towards reconciliation.

Objectives:

1. Participants will learn what is the primary cause of conflicts.
2. Participants will learn what their response to conflict is by analyzing the Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Management Tool.
3. Participants will learn the five conflict management styles.
4. Participants will learn the Slippery Slope of Conflict.
5. Participants will learn what the biblical approach to conflict is and what it directs a person to do.

Critical Event #4 – Reconciliation

Goal: Participants will be able to express a biblical process of reconciliation and apply it to their interpersonal relationships.

Objectives:

1. Participants will learn the difference between reconciliation and resolution
2. Participants will learn the 4 G's (Glorify God, get the log out of your own eye, gently restore, go and be reconciled) and 7 A's of confession (Address everyone involved, avoid if, but, maybe, admit specifically, acknowledge the hurt, accept the consequences, adjust the behavior, ask for forgiveness and allow time).
3. Participants will learn why technology may hinder the process of biblical reconciliation.

In order to facilitate the greatest amount of information covered as well as to have order for the critical events, the following “Critical Event Outlines” were created and followed –

starting on the introductory session and then further presented in the four successive evenings. Each outline honored the goals and objectives previously discussed.

The Introductory Event “Graduates Only Night” – The Introductory Meeting (September 16, 2009)

I. The Gathering Meal

A. Introduction to the project

1. The Presenter: Rev. Jeffrey E. Skopak
 - a) Educational background
 - b) Family background
 - c) Professional background
2. The Reason for the project
 - a) Doctorate of Ministry Degree at Concordia Seminary - St. Louis, Missouri
 - b) Personal interest in postmodernism and reconciliation ministry
3. Establishing the Ground Rules
 - a) Commitment to all four sessions
 - b) Commitment to pre and post testing
 - c) Commitment to accountability partner
 - d) Willingness to learn in a creative way
4. Format of the Critical Events
 - a) Pre and Post Testing
 - (1) Postmodern Attitudes and Action Survey
 - (2) Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument
 - (3) Conflict Resolution Questionnaire
 - b) Four Sessions
 - (1) Relationships
 - (2) Communication
 - (3) Conflict
 - (4) Reconciliation

5. Getting Acquainted

- a) Everyone introduces themselves to the group
 - (1) Name
 - (2) Hometown
 - (3) High School graduated from
 - (4) Major in College
 - (5) How many text messages received and sent in a day
 - (6) A specific Prayer request
- b) Time for Questions and Answers

II. Closing Devotion

Critical Event #1 – Relationships (September 23, 2009)

“Towards a spiritually mature attitude for the necessity of healthy interpersonal relationships”

I. Gathering Meal

- A. Sharing of “highs” and “lows”
- B. Gathering of Prayer requests

II. Relationships: What does the world have to say?

- A. Sadhguru (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xkG0fKJt3dE>)¹¹⁴
- B. Scrubs (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BRAOnw49V8o>)¹¹⁵
- C. Joel Osteen (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=giDV7y7vHYM>)¹¹⁶

III. What kind of relationships do you have?

- A. Child/Parent (Genesis 22; Luke 2:4ff)
- B. Sibling (Genesis 4; Genesis 27; Genesis 37:12ff)
- C. Co-Worker (Luke 9:46ff; Acts 15:36)
- D. Friends (Luke 9:28; Luke 23:1ff)
- E. Spouse (Hosea 1:2ff; Matthew 1:18ff)

¹¹⁴ Sadhguru, “Why Relationships,” Youtube Website, November 11, 2007, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xkG0fKJt3dE> (accessed September 2, 2009).

¹¹⁵ Scrubs, “On Relationships,” Youtube Website, November 25, 2006, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BRAOnw49V8o>, (Accessed September 2, 2009)

¹¹⁶ Joel Osteen, “How to make relationships work,” Youtube Website, April 7, 2009, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BRAOnw49V8o>, (Accessed September 2, 2009).

- F. Mentoring (1 Kings 19:19ff; Acts 16)
- IV. Nurturing relationships
- A. Read Ecclesiastes 4:9-10 in your Small Group
 - 1. Write down the first names of the people in your life with whom you have close interpersonal relationships
 - 2. What must you do to strengthen openness and interdependence with them?
 - B. Fill out the Accountability Partner Worksheet
 - 1. Share your answers with your partner
 - 2. Share at least one hope or expectation you desire from these critical events
- V. The Biblical mandate for healthy relationships
- A. As a large group read Mark 12:28-34
 - 1. What does it mean to love God with:
 - a) Heart
 - b) Soul
 - c) Mind
 - d) Strength
 - 2. What does it mean to love your neighbor as yourself?
 - a) Are there people in your life who you don't love in this manner?
 - b) What reasons do you have for withholding love from them?
 - c) What must you do to be obedient to this command?
 - 3. Love for the neighbor expressed by a child
 (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HZ2K7xOI5IE>)¹¹⁷
- VI. Assignment of homework and closing prayer
- A. Over the course of the next week begin to deepen your relationship with your accountability partner
 - 1. Speak at least once on the phone about your day
 - 2. Meet face to face at least once outside of this class and share a troubling relationship

¹¹⁷ Dayne Johnson, "Love Your Neighbor as Yourself," Youtube Website, August 5, 2009, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HZ2K7xOI5IE>, (Accessed September 2, 2009).

3. Communicate at least once by text message or email concerning a difficult question regarding the Bible exercise below
- B. Read the story of Elijah and Elisha in 1 Kings 19:19-21 and 2 Kings 2:1-6 and answer the following questions:
1. What do you think is the significance of Elijah choosing Elisha by throwing a cloak over him?
 2. What does Elisha do to prepare to follow Elijah and why do you think he does this?
 3. Who is the “Elijah” mentoring you?
 4. What must you do to find him?
 5. Who is the “Elisha” that you are mentoring?
 6. How does Elisha respond to Elijah’s request to stay behind?
 7. Why do you think he responds this way?
 8. What does this reveal about their relationship?
 9. Who are the people that you never leave during challenging times?
 10. What relationships have you walked away from and what must you do to restore them?
- C. Closing Prayer

Critical Event #2 – Communication (September 30, 2009)

“Communicating intellectually, emotionally, and spiritually with one another”

- I. Gathering Meal
 - A. Sharing of “highs” and “lows”
 - B. Gathering of prayer requests
- II. What do I hear?
 - A. Listen to the following Audio Clips
 1. John F. Kennedy – “Inaugural Address” 1961¹¹⁸
 2. Martin Luther King, Jr. – “I have a Dream” 1963¹¹⁹

¹¹⁸ John F. Kennedy, *Inaugural Address, 1961*, “Great Speeches of All-Time, Volume 1,” iTunes Audio File, June 1, 1996.

3. Richard M. Nixon – “Resignation” 1974¹²⁰
 4. Adolf Hitler – “Occupation of the Sudetenland” 1938¹²¹
- B. Write down your answers to the following questions
1. What are they feeling, expressing, or saying?
 2. What is your reaction to the audio clip?
 3. Do you agree or disagree with the speaker?
 4. If you could respond to the speaker, what would you say?
- C. A Listening Exercise
1. Three Volunteers/Three Chairs – Two chairs angled in towards the one in the middle.
 2. The middle chair serves as the listener/The two outer chairs are the communicators.
 3. The two communicators speak about any subject for 30 seconds simultaneously
 4. Ask the listener the following questions:
 - a) What did you hear?
 - b) Did the words of the two communicators make any sense?
 - c) What were you missing in the communication?
- III. What do you see?
- A. Look at the following pictures and try to discern what the person/people are feeling
1. Picture one: 9/11 Firemen¹²²
 2. The Skopaks in Salzburg¹²³
 3. Soldier in Iraq¹²⁴

¹¹⁹ Martin Luther King, Jr., *I Have a Dream, 1963*, “Great Speeches of All-Time, Volume 1,” iTunes Audio File, June 1, 1996.

¹²⁰ Richard M. Nixon, *Resignation, 1974*, “Great Speeches of All-Time, Volume 1,” iTunes Audio File, June 1, 1996.

¹²¹ Adolf Hitler, *Occupation of the Sudetenland, 1938*, “Famous Speeches, 1913-1940,” iTunes Audio File, April 1, 2008.

¹²² *9/11 Fireman*, September 11, 2001, New York Fire Department.

¹²³ Louise Skopak, *The Skopaks in Salzburg*, 2007, Family Photo Album.

¹²⁴ John Moore, *War*, 2004, Associated Press.

4. Old Japanese Woman¹²⁵
 - B. What emotions do these pictures cause you to have?
 - C. How do the images convey the message to you?
- IV. Non-verbal communication (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VfDWQG47pAQ>)¹²⁶
- A. What do you need to pay attention to with regards to non-verbal communication?
 - B. Who communicates non-verbally: the speaker or the receiver?
 - C. How do you understand facial feedback?
 1. Watch the following video:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E0hTktMIyE>¹²⁷
 2. Non-Verbal practice: With your accountability partner share a story. The receiver of the story is to only respond by giving the speaker facial feedback. Then change places.
- V. The Technological Challenge
- A. With your accountability partner, communicate an important personal story using only text messaging. Each person should communicate this story. Answer the following questions concerning your partner's story:
 1. What emotions did your partner feel concerning this story?
 2. What were the important elements of your partner's story?
 3. How has this story impacted your partner's life today? Does it still impact them?
 - B. Get together with your partner and share your results
 1. How did technology help your communication?
 2. How did it hinder it?
- VI. Small group discussion time
- A. In your small group read Genesis 18:1-15
 1. Who are the three visitors?
 2. What do they communicate to Abraham and Sarah?

¹²⁵ Anonymous, *World's Oldest Woman: Yone Minegawa*, America Online News.

¹²⁶ Sunshine Studios, inc. "Non-Verbal Communication," Youtube Website, December 8, 2007, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VfDWQG47pAQ>, (Accessed September 3, 2009).

¹²⁷ Expertvillage, "Non-verbal tools: Facial Feedback," Youtube Website, October 5, 2008, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E0hTktMIyE>, (Accessed September 3, 2009).

3. What is Sarah's reaction? Why?
 4. What is Abraham's reaction? Why?
 5. What did Abraham possess in this story that Sarah did not?
- B. In your small group read Mark 9:2-13
1. Who is present in this story?
 2. Why is it significant that Elijah and Moses are visibly present?
 3. Why does Peter react the way he does?
 4. What communication tools did he possibly observe on the mountain?
 5. Discuss the conversation that followed. What communication tools are being employed by the disciples?

VII. Assignment of homework and closing prayer

- A. Over the course of the next week deepen your relationship with your accountability partner
1. Speak at least once on the phone about your day
 2. Meet face to face at least once outside of this class and share a difficult relationship
 3. Communicate at least once by text message or email concerning a difficult question regarding the Bible exercise below
- B. Read Matthew 15:21-28
1. Compare and contrast the communication styles of Jesus and the Canaanite woman
 2. What is the woman communicating to Jesus?
 3. What is Jesus communicating to the woman?
- C. Read John 4:1-26
1. Consider the dynamics of communication. What ones do you think Jesus is using?
 2. What are the communication tools that the woman is using?
 3. How does Jesus deepen the conversation?
 4. How does the woman communicate her response to Jesus' understanding of her life? Is she transparent or guarded?
 5. How would you respond?

- D. Going to the balcony: multiple perspectives
 - 1. Notice your conversations this week. Do you hold multiple perspectives?
 - 2. Ask 4 to 6 random people today how they feel about an issue in the news.
 - 3. Observe whom you talk to today.
 - a) Do you talk to people similar to you, with common backgrounds, experiences?
 - b) Do you often agree or disagree? How do you agree? How do you disagree?
- E. Closing Devotion and Prayer (watch *Surviving Technology: A Manifesto*)¹²⁸

Critical Event #3 – Conflict (October 7, 2009)

“Initiating Conversations that lead from Conflict to Reconciliation”

- I. Gathering Meal
 - A. Sharing of “highs” and “lows”
 - B. Gathering of Prayer requests
- II. The Definition of Conflict
 - A. Ask participants to define conflict
 - B. *Miriam Webster’s Tenth Collegiate Dictionary*: Conflict (Middle English, from Latin *conflictus* act of striking together, from *confligere* to strike together, from *com-* + *fligere* to strike — more at PROFLIGATE) (15th century) FIGHT, BATTLE, WAR; competitive or opposing action of incompatibles : antagonistic state or action (as of divergent ideas, interests, or persons); mental struggle resulting from incompatible or opposing needs, drives, wishes, or external or internal demands; the opposition of persons or forces that gives rise to the dramatic action in a drama or fiction¹²⁹
- III. What is the Source of Conflict?
 - A. Read James 4:1-3 and Matthew 15:19
 - B. The root cause of conflict

¹²⁸ *Surviving Technology: A Manifesto*, Sermon Spice Website, The Pumthugee Underground, (Accessed September 8, 2009).

¹²⁹ *Miriam Webster’s Tenth Collegiate Dictionary, Electronic Edition*, s.v. “Conflict.”

1. Unmet desires of the heart
 2. Ken Sande, *The Peacemaker*: “When we want something and feel that we will not be satisfied unless we get it, that desire starts to control us. If others fail to meet our desires, we sometimes condemn them in our hearts and fight harder to get our own way.”¹³⁰
- C. The Idolatrous Heart
1. Conflict is a form of idolatry – any desire that has grown into a consuming demand that rules our hearts will lead to conflict
 2. Read Exodus 20:2-3
 3. Read Martin Luther’s Explanation to the First Commandment from the *Small Catechism*.
 - a) Read Psalm 130:3-4. What is a biblical understanding of “fear?”
 - b) Read Matthew 22:37. What is a biblical understanding of “love?”
 - c) Read Psalm 37:5-6. What is a biblical understanding of “trust?”
- IV. How do you deal with conflict?
- A. Competing
 - B. Collaborating
 - C. Compromising
 - D. Avoiding
 - E. Accommodating
 1. Participants are given their Results to the Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument.
 2. Benefits and Costs of each conflict mode response
- V. The Slippery Slope of Conflict¹³¹
- A. Identify where on the slippery slope:
 1. The Waterboy (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v= ZpDnXYIFjo>)¹³²
 2. Cartoon Conflict (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sRLaTTqG-qQ>)¹³³

¹³⁰ Ken Sande, *The Peacemaker*, (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 2004), 102.

¹³¹ Ibid. 22.

¹³² *The Waterboy*, Youtube Website, March 14, 2007, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v= ZpDnXYIFjo>, (Accessed September 4, 2009).

3. The Office (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hfftQSyL0As>)¹³⁴

VI. Small Group Time

- A. Read Matthew 18:15-20
 1. What are the key elements of the passage?
 2. What is the goal at each step?
- B. With your accountability partner share a conflict that you have had and how you dealt with it
 1. What was the result?
 2. Are you at peace with how it worked out?

VII. Assignment of homework and closing prayer

- A. Read the following Bible stories:
 1. Genesis 4
 2. Genesis 27
- B. Identify in each text the following:
 1. What conflict mode did each character demonstrate?
 2. Where on the Slippery Slope was each character?
 3. Was there resolution or reconciliation?
- C. Over the course of the next week observe the following and share the answers to the following questions with your accountability partner:
 1. Notice when you feel upset, angry, or disturbed
 - a) How did you know that you felt that way?
 - b) What happened?
 - c) What assumptions did you make?
 - d) How did you respond?
 2. Observe when you defended yourself, your views, or your opinions
 - a) What happened?
 - b) How did you feel defending yourself?

¹³³ *Cartoon Conflict*, Youtube Website, May 15, 2007, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sRLaTTqG-qQ>, (Accessed September 4, 2009).

¹³⁴ *The Office*, Youtube Website, January 18, 2008, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hfftQSyL0As>, (Accessed September 4, 2009).

- c) Did you experience your “conflict mode” kicking in? Why or why not?

D. Closing Prayer

Critical Event #4 – Reconciliation (October 14, 2009)

“Expressing a Biblical process of reconciliation while applying it to interpersonal relationships”

I. Gathering Meal

- A. Sharing of “highs” and “lows”
- B. Gathering of prayer requests

II. Defining Resolution and Reconciliation

A. A Working definition of Resolution

- 1. Ask participants for a definition of Resolution
- 2. *Miriam Webster’s Tenth Collegiate Dictionary*: Resolution [Middle English, from Middle French or Latin; Middle French *resolution*, from Latin *resolution-*, *resolutio*, from *resolvere*] (14th century); the act or process of reducing to simpler form: as: the act of analyzing a complex notion into simpler ones; the act of answering : SOLVING ; the act of determining; the passing of a voice part from a dissonant to a consonant tone or the progression of a chord from dissonance to consonance; the separating of a chemical compound or mixture into its constituents; the division of a prosodic element into its component parts; the substitution in Greek or Latin prosody of two short syllables for a long syllable; the analysis of a vector into two or more vectors of which it is the sum; the process or capability of making distinguishable the individual parts of an object, closely adjacent optical images, or sources of light¹³⁵

3. An Example of Resolution:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S8IfCZocV5Y>¹³⁶

B. A Working definition of reconciliation

¹³⁵ *Miriam Webster’s Tenth Collegiate Dictionary, Electronic Edition, s.v. “Resolution.”*

¹³⁶ *The Bi-weekly Show: Conflict Resolution*, Youtube Website, May 1, 2009, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S8IfCZocV5Y> (Accessed September 8, 2009).

1. As participants for a definition of reconciliation
2. *Miriam Webster's Tenth Collegiate Dictionary*: [Middle English, from Middle French or Latin; Middle French *reconcilier*, from Latin *reconciliare*, from *re-* + *conciliare* to conciliate] (14th century) *transitive verb*; to restore to friendship or harmony (*reconciled* the factions); SETTLE, RESOLVE (*reconcile*) to cause to submit to or accept something unpleasant 〈was *reconciled* to hardship〉 ; to check (a financial account) against another for accuracy; to account for¹³⁷
3. An example of reconciliation:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fzZAcxJvZBo>¹³⁸

III. The Four G's of Reconciliation

A. In order for reconciliation to occur we need to have a working knowledge of the Four G's of the reconciliation Process

1. Glorify God
 - a) Read 1 Corinthians 10:31-11:1
 - b) Questions for Consideration
 - (1) How can conflict give me opportunity to Glorify God?
 - (2) How can I serve another person through a conflict with them?
 - (3) What do I struggle with that leads to conflict with others?
2. Get the Log out of Your Own Eye
 - a) Read Matthew 7:3-5
 - b) Questions for Consideration:
 - (1) Do I understand all of the issues involved in this conflict? Material? Personal?
 - (2) Is this an offense that I can simply overlook?
 - (3) What is my attitude and how is it affecting this conflict?
 - (4) What effect is this dispute likely to have on:

¹³⁷ *Miriam Webster's Tenth Collegiate Dictionary, Electronic Edition, s.v. "Reconciliation."*

¹³⁸ *PM Ministries: Church Split Reconciliation*, Youtube Website, January 21, 2009, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fzZAcxJvZBo> (Accessed September 8, 2009).

- (a) My witness for Jesus
- (b) My Family
- (c) My Friends
- (d) My ability to serve the church and community

3. Gently Restore

- a) Read Matthew 18:21-35
- b) Questions for Consideration:
 - (1) How has the other person sinned in this situation?
 - (2) Is this person's action hurting other people?
 - (3) If you have to seek outside help to resolve the dispute are there people who are likely to be trusted and respected by both you and your opponent?
 - (4) How can you demonstrate gentleness in the conflict instead of aggression?

4. Go and be Reconciled

- a) Read Matthew 5:24 and Colossians 3:13
- b) Questions for Consideration:
 - (1) Where do we derive the power to forgive?
 - (2) Are there consequences to the sin that need to be dealt with? If so, which ones and how?
 - (3) Are you having a hard time forgiving the person? Why? Has the person repented? Are your feelings getting in the way?
 - (4) How can I promote and model forgiveness to others?¹³⁹

IV. What do I do when I am the cause of the conflict?

A. The 7 A's of Confession

- 1. Address everyone involved (Luke 19:8)
- 2. Avoid if, but, maybe (Psalm 51)
- 3. Admit specifically

¹³⁹ The questions regarding the four G's of Reconciliation are adapted from Ken Sande, *The Peacemaker: A Biblical Guide to Resolving Personal Conflict*, (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2004).

- a) Sinful attitudes (James 4:1-3)
 - b) Sinful words (Ephesians 4:29)
 - c) Sinful actions (Mark 10:42-45)
 - 4. Acknowledge the hurt (Luke 15:21)
 - 5. Accept the consequences (Numbers 5:5-7)
 - 6. Alter the behavior (Ephesians 4:22-32)
 - 7. Ask for forgiveness and allow time (Psalm 130:1-4)¹⁴⁰
 - B. Questions for consideration
 - 1. What comfort is there for those who initiate a process following the seven A's?
 - 2. What are the benefits of confession and absolution?
 - 3. How is confession a part of reconciliation?
 - C. A Video Example of what we are after: *Confessions*¹⁴¹
- V. Technology as a hindrance to biblical reconciliation
- A. Watch *Text Message Illustration*¹⁴²
 - B. Questions for Consideration:
 - 1. What was missing?
 - 2. How does this apply to reconciliation ministry?
 - 3. How can we as a people technologically connected overcome technology to participate in healthy biblical reconciliation?
 - 4. How is technology antithetical to biblical reconciliation? How can it be helpful?
 - 5. What are some current examples of technology hindering reconciliation? Of technology deepening the conflict?
- VI. Small Group Time
- A. Read 2 Samuel 11 – 12:13

¹⁴⁰ The Seven A's of confession are adapted from Ken Sande, *The Peacemaker: A Biblical Guide to Resolving Personal Conflict*, (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2004) and Ambassadors of Reconciliation, *Training Manual: Getting to the Heart of Conflict – a DMin Course Offered through Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, MO*, (Billings: Ambassadors of Reconciliation, 2007).

¹⁴¹ *Confessions*, Sermon Spice Website, Awaken the Dream Productions, (Accessed September 8, 2009).

¹⁴² *Text Message Illustration*, Sermon Spice Website, Crossroads Creative (Accessed September 8, 2009).

1. Who has sinned?
 2. Who confronts the sin?
 3. What is the result of the confrontation?
 4. Does this make you uncomfortable? Why or why not?
- B. With your accountability partner share a conflict that you started
1. Did you come to a realization for the need for confession? Why or why not?
 2. Did you unknowingly (or knowingly) work through the seven A's of confession?
 3. Did you use technology appropriately or inappropriately?
- VII. Assignment of homework and closing devotion
- A. Read the following Bible story: Genesis 37-50
1. What conflicts can you identify?
 2. How were these conflicts handled?
 3. How does God use conflict for the greater glory?
 4. What characters do you relate best to? Which ones do you not?
- B. Over the course of the next week observe the following and share the answers with your accountability partner:
1. Identify possible conflicts that may be arising in your life
 - a) How do they make you feel?
 - b) How are you responding? Is it different than you would have prior to this experience? Why or why not?
 - c) If you had opportunity to apply the biblical principles of reconciliation how did you feel doing so?
- C. Closing Devotion: A Service of Corporate Confession and Absolution

Each participant received a *Postmodern Conflict Reconciliation Ministry Workbook*, created by the author. This workbook is located in Appendix L. Within the workbook is the Accountability Partner Ice-breaker worksheet (located in Appendix K). Each critical event was accompanied by a Powerpoint presentation. The five Powerpoint presentations and five

participant handouts are located in the appendices of this document (Appendices L through P). The Powerpoint presentations contained all the videos and the handouts included the accountability partner work as well as the homework for the week ahead.

Observations Made During the Critical Events

The Critical Events started on Wednesday, September 16, 2009 and concluded on Wednesday, October 14, 2009. In order to learn and improve the project it was important to observe, analyze, and make adjustments along the way. The following are observations that were made immediately following each Critical Event as well as the adjustments that were made to the project as a result of those observations.

Introductory Event - “Graduates Only Night” – The Introductory Meeting (September 16, 2009

This initial event began at 6:35 PM. I made the initial meal for the evening – baked penne pasta, garlic bread, and chocolate chip cookies for dessert. The meal served a critical role in breaking ice among the participants. Sitting in tables of three and four, this meal time enabled the participants to introduce themselves, talk about their participation in the project, and their relationship to the church (if they had a relationship to the church or not). The total number of participants that came to the initial meeting was 9. (However, five other people had committed to the process but could not attend the introductory meeting. A brief Sunday morning meeting enabled me to bring the remaining five up to speed on their participation in the project.) Following the meal I handed out the participant workbooks and introduced the project using the Powerpoint (Appendix M) and class outline (previously mentioned in this chapter).

Following the presentation I opened up a time of question and answer. Surprisingly, there were very few questions. Rather, there was an outright enthusiasm for this project.

Statements like: “I am really excited about this time and what it can become,” and “I can’t believe somebody designed something like this for our age group,” were shared. After the Q & A period each participant was asked to introduce themselves to the group using pages 4 and 5 of the workbook (See Appendix L). The sharing of personal information flowed freely, including a personal prayer request. The one question that brought the greatest amount of laughter, surprise, and embarrassment, was the “# of Text Messages Received and Sent a Day.” The number ranged from “0” to “800.” Most of the participants came in around 200 Text Messages a day. Those participants who were able then took the Postmodern Attitudes and Action Survey, The Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument, and the Conflict Resolution Questionnaire. These three tests took 20 minutes on average for the participants to fill out. Those who could not stay to do so made appointments with me to take them prior to the next session. The evening closed with prayer using the prayer requests made by the participants.

Critical Event #1 – “Relationships” – (September 23, 2009)

The meal for the evening was provided by Dr. Jeffry Jahn, one of the independent test and questionnaire evaluators. He served a German pasta dish, garlic bread, and salad. Cookies were served for dessert. Once the participants finished eating, I began the evening by arranging them into their learning teams. Two teams of seven were created at random. Each team consisted of a mix of both male and female. Team A ranged in age from 18 to 24; Team B’s age range was 18 to 34 (see Appendix R). There was an initial hesitancy to move to a different table away from the friends they may have been sitting with.

Once the participants were seated with the Learning Team I introduced to them the “Highs,” “Lows,” and “Prayer Concerns” found on page 6 of their workbook (see Appendix L). The participants were then instructed to introduce themselves to each other, share “Highs” and

“Lows,” and offer something that needed to be prayed for by the group. This time of initial sharing served as an ice-breaker for each team. Each group finished this time of sharing in short order and a sense of “team” began to emerge at each table.

Using the Powerpoint prepared for the class (Appendix N), the participants were next instructed to turn their attention to the screen to view the three video clips concerning the topic “Relationships.” After each clip I asked for reactions and comments concerning what the clips had to offer. Insightful comments were shared, some laughter with regards to the wide range of the clips (Sadhguru, Scrubs, and Joel Osteen), and an identification that there may be differences in how males and females approach and handle relationships. This initial use of media was helpful because it enabled the non-church attending participants to be involved in a meaningful way before introducing biblical information.

For those in attendance who did not own a Bible I provided one for them to use and keep following the critical events. Once the Bibles were distributed I asked the participants to consider the following question: “What kind of relationships do I have?” In order to answer this question we looked at the various kinds of relationships while matching them to biblical examples. The participants appreciated the topical approach to Scripture while demonstrating how the Bible can speak to us in our relationships today. I was pleased by the overall positive response to the use of Scripture in the study.

Due to time constraints I had to omit the brief look at Ecclesiastes 4:9-10 and move on to the Partner Ice-Breaker worksheet. At this point in the evening I assigned each participant an Accountability Partner (See Appendix R). They were asked to move with their partner to a place in the room where they could share with minimal distraction. Each person was instructed to answer the questions on the sheet (Appendix K). They were then instructed to take 10 minutes

and share their answers with each other. It was wonderful to sit back and observe how rapidly the Accountability Partnership Teams developed. In fact, it was difficult to draw them back to the larger group setting for the large group Bible Study on Mark 12:28-34.

Again, due to time constraints, the Mark 12 Bible study was cut short and the Video on “A Child’s Example of Being a Neighbor” was cut from the evening’s event. In order to further develop the participant’s consideration of neighborly love and service, each participant was asked to reconsider the questions from this Bible Study during the week as they moved about their day to day business. This was received well.

In order to respect and observe the 8 PM completion time, the “Work to be Done at Home This Week” was introduced. The participants received the Accountability Partner work well. We took a moment so they could exchange cell phone numbers and email addresses. I directed them to the Bible study material from 1 and 2 Kings (highlighting the fact that it involved reading a total of nine verses). This was received with some laughter. For those new to using the Bible I instructed them where to find 1 and 2 Kings in the Bible. The evening closed with a large group prayer honoring the prayer requests identified at the beginning of the evening.

Following this event a few important thoughts came to mind. First, the participants were open to the idea of learning teams, accountability partnerships, and Bible reading. These three items, prior to the start of the events, were a concern. My initial fear was that due to technology and its role in relationships the participants might be put off by the idea of learning teams and partner sharing. Quite the opposite occurred this night – there was a genuine hunger and thirst to share and be heard. Secondly, I was fearful that those from an unchurched background might “tune out” during the Bible study portion. Instead, what I observed was the Bible-literate

participants helped those less versed in Scripture and there was a real desire by the whole group to hear what the Bible had to say with regards to their lives today.

Already at this juncture I could observe a very important learning point for this project: postmodern people have a desire for intimate community. As we concluded our evening at 8 PM the participants lingered in the room. It was as if they didn't want to leave. As I was packing up my material I overheard the surrounding conversations. These conversations focused on the material covered that night, the work to be done at home, and arrangements for getting together outside of class to do the Accountability Partner work. A final observation on the evening was a challenging one: I have prepared more material than can be covered in our prescribed time for each event. Therefore, I will have to do significant editing prior to the next critical event.

Critical Event #2 – “Communication” (September 30, 2009)

The evening meal was provided by the presenter and included chicken and turkey fajitas, homemade guacamole, and fresh vegetables. The majority of the participants arrived early and sat with their learning teams. In order to conserve time the participants were instructed to turn to page 11 in their workbook (Appendix L) and share their “highs” and “lows” as well as something that needs prayer. The discussion during this time lengthened – each participant took more time in discussing “what was going on in their life.”

Following the time of sharing I took a moment to introduce Miss Victoria Tremper, Director of Ministry to Children, Youth, and their Families at Fountain of Life Lutheran Church to the group. Miss Tremper (who is 27 years old and is postmodern) would participate with the group that evening as means to better understand the nature of the class and connect with this community in the church. Miss Tremper was also introduced as the presenter for the next

Critical Event. To guide the evening the participants were directed to the Powerpoint (Appendix O).

A brief introduction for the evening topic (Communication) was shared with the group. The first group exercise was a listening exercise. The participants were asked to listen to famous speeches from John F. Kennedy, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and Richard M. Nixon. Following each speech a discussion followed concerning the feelings, attitudes, and expressions of the speaker, the reaction they had to the speech, and how they might respond to the speaker if they were in the audience. It was interesting to note how visual media has affected the participants. One of the participants referenced the Movie “Frost – Nixon” with regards to how the actor in the movie captured the intensity of the Nixon speech she just listened to. Her mental image colored her audible reception of the speech. One participant noted that when listening to the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. speech he felt like he was in church. He referenced the meter and rhythm of King’s words. Unfortunately, there wasn’t time to listen to the Adolf Hitler speech to see how a foreign language is received when not being able to see the speaker. Also, due to time constraints the “Third-sider exercise was omitted” so that more time could be spent on the rest of the evening’s material.

The next exercise the group did was a quick study of visual communication. The participants were asked to look at four photographs (found on pages 14 to 16 in their workbook, Appendix L). The group was asked to consider three questions: 1) What are the subjects in the picture feeling?; 2) What emotions do these pictures cause you to have?; and 3) What message does the image convey to you? It was more than impressive how the participants went beyond the surface image. They took note of body posture, facial expression, the intensity of eye focus,

surrounding circumstances, and the body language of the subjects in the pictures. One participant shared that each picture was a frozen moment of the subject's emotions and feelings.

The participants then watched a video on non-verbal communication. The video presented scenes from movies, featuring famous actors and actresses, in order to demonstrate the importance of non-verbal communication. The participants seemed to enjoy seeing scenes of movies, actors, and actresses the like. Following the video a group discussion followed. Participants were encouraged to share who their favorite actor or actress was and why they like the movies they were in. The group also discussed what actors and actresses had the best "looks," "glares," and "stares." Following this discussion the group was asked to consider this question: "Who communicates non-verbally: the speaker or the receiver?" The unanimous answer was: "Both."

In order to prepare the participants for partner time they watched a video on "Facial Feedback." This entertaining video brought laughs from the participants. Following the brief video the participants were asked to get together with their partners and face each other. One participant was to share a story while the other participant could only respond with facial feedback. After a period of five minutes a group discussion followed. The participants who had to give facial feedback shared that it was difficult to not talk. One participant shared that they were very "self-conscious" and was not sure if the person speaking knew they were listening or not. The partners who had to talk shared that they were really focused on their partner's face – especially the eyes. One participant stated that their partner's eyes gave them permission to keep sharing their story.

A brief group discussion followed concerning technological communication. The group developed a list of things that are missing when communicating with technology. The following

missing items were identified by the group (in no order of priority): body language, posture, facial expressions, eye contact, vocal tone, pace of speech, intensity of the voice, proximity of the speaker to the receiver, and the ability to touch.

Following this discussion the partner teams were asked to do the following: the person who had to give facial feedback was to text a story to their partner that should convey a feeling or emotion. The partner who receives the text messages should respond trying to decipher the emotion being shared. Following the exercise a discussion followed concerning technological communication. The participants identified several flaws with technological communication: cannot see the speaker, no voice/vocal inflection, limit to the number of characters per text, the inability of the technology to completely convey the feelings of the speaker. As a means to introduce the next lesson the participants were asked to consider how the use of technology might hinder a difficult relationship or a relationship that is in conflict.

The participants were then asked to return to their small group to do the Bible study. Due to the lack of time the groups were asked to do either Genesis 18:1-15 or Mark 9:2-13 found in the workbook (pages 17 and 18). Both groups chose the Genesis 18:1-15 passage. Following the small group discussion the participants were directed back to a large group summary of the Bible study. The participants were challenged to consider reading the Bible as “God’s communication with them.” The participants were directed to the feelings, emotions, facial expressions, body language, and non-verbal communication that may have been shared within the context of the Genesis 18 passage. The participants laughed at the thought of somebody telling their grandmother she would be pregnant, or Abraham’s expression on encountering “Three mysterious visitors.”

Following this brief discussion the participants were directed to pages 19 and 20 in the workbook (Appendix L) for the work to be done at home. A special emphasis was placed on the two Bible readings for the week as well as the “Going to the Balcony” assignment. The reason for this is because the “Balcony” assignment lends itself as a means of preparation for the next critical event. Before closing, the class was informed that Miss Victoria Tremper would be the guest leader next week and the meal would be provided by Dr. Jeffry Jahn. The prayer requests from the beginning of class were shared and the class ended with prayer.

Following the class a few critical learning discoveries were made. The use of media is critical with the postmodern age group. Whether it is audio or visual, these tools immediately drew their attention and focus to the task at hand. The more popular the media presented (for example, the video clip featuring actors and actresses presenting non-verbal communication) the greater the intensity of focus and participation. A second learning point was the desire of the group to talk and share with each other. The facial feedback exercise could have gone on longer if I added a second step of teaching clarifying comments, probing questions, and summary statements by the receiver. There is a desire to learn how to deepen communication and relationships with each other. A final observation is an affirmation of a previous discovery: there is an intense interest in developing healthy sharing community within this age group. They are aware that technology is hindering this development and they desire to overcome the limitations that technology is placing upon them.

Critical Event #3 – Conflict (October 7, 2009)

The event started with a meal of chicken, homemade macaroni and cheese, applesauce, and rolls. The meal was provided by Dr. Jeffry Jahn. The participants slowly arrived and began to eat and chat. When all the expected participants arrived, the two learning teams were asked to

begin sharing their “highs”, “lows”, and prayer requests as they continued with their meals. The conversation at the tables was very relaxed and free flowing. Participants shared real and meaningful “highs” and “lows”. At this time the participants were asked to have a table discussion concerning the time and location for the post event testing and meal. It was decided that the final session should be at my home with a barbeque. The Powerpoint used for this class can be found in Appendix P.

The first section of the critical event introduced the topic of conflict. The participants were asked to give a definition of conflict. Some ideas that were shared included: competition, escalating disagreements, differing opinions, and the concept that conflict can be both positive and negative. Webster’s definition of conflict was shared with the group. This served the purpose of affirmation regarding their ideas about conflict. The participants were asked to read and discuss several biblical texts which introduced the idea that conflict comes from our sinful desires and is actually a form of idolatry. The participants seemed to agree with this assertion.

The second section of the evening focused on the Thomas-Kilmann conflict mode instrument. The group was lead through their results along with an explanation and discussion of the conflict response modes of competing, collaborating, compromising, avoiding, and accommodating. This was the portion of the event that seemed to be the most interesting to the participants. Each participant also received a handout that shared strengths of each conflict response. However, the costs of each conflict response will need to be shared in the following session. The participants were very curious about how the factors of environment, gender, birth order, and personality possibly related to the results. It may be a good idea to revisit this portion of the lesson next session once the participants have had time to really examine their personal results.

The third section of the evening involved introducing and discussing “The Slippery Slope of Conflict” from *The Peacemaker* by Ken Sande. The participants were introduced to the diagram and received a summary of the basic information from the chapter that introduced the diagram. This visual tool presented the material in a very accessible way and enhanced the understanding of the personal results from the Thomas-Kilmann. However, the combination of the two tools might communicate that avoiding and competing are negative or weak ways of responding to conflict. Some participants with these conflict responses expressed some concern regarding their results.

The fourth section of the evening was spent in applying the knowledge gained from the Thomas-Kilmann inventory and the diagram. The participants were asked to watch three video clips and identify which responses to conflict were evident. The participants enjoyed this interactive activity. The clip from “The Office” seemed to spark the most response because it was the most realistic example of how the participants see conflict being handled in their daily lives.

The evening ended in small group time where the participants were asked to consider the biblical model of conflict reconciliation that is provided in Matthew 18. The discussion of this text was very straight forward because most the participants were familiar with the text. Maybe a new learning for the group was that each step is an ongoing process until it has been thoroughly exhausted before moving on to the next step. There was also some discussion about excommunication and reinstatement of members. This final group time was a nice transition to the topic for the next critical event. Homework and partner work assignments were shared and the evening closed the evening with prayer.

I had several observations from this critical event. First, the participants seemed to be the most engaged when the information being discussed was personal and very specific. The participants are eager to learn about themselves and seemed to want to focus on in-depth learning rather than generalities. This was evident in their response to the Thomas-Kilmann results. There was enough interest that with the right preparation and expertise by the instructor, an entire session could have been spent in exploring the personal results. As I reflected on the event, I wondered if a role playing or scenario exercise might have been another way to engage the topic. I hope that this group continues to meet in some way. I sense that besides the fellowship component the participants are looking for something that engage them personally and that encourages depth in discussion.

Critical Event #4 – Reconciliation (October 14, 2009)

The evening began with a meal of fried chicken, potatoes, coleslaw, salad, and rolls. The meal was provided by Dr. Jeffrey Jahn. The participants arrived on time and made their way immediately to the food. Without prompting the participants sat in their learning teams, began to share their “highs” and “lows,” “prayer requests,” and the happenings of the previous week. Realizing that last week’s lesson brought about many questions concerning the results of the Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode test, I lead a question and answer period concerning their results (as well as anything they may want to ask concerning last week’s lesson). The majority of participants were not surprised by the results of the Thomas-Kilmann; however, some expressed concern over how their conflict mode might influence their behavior negatively when conflict arises in their lives. Each participant received a copy of the “benefits and costs” of their respective conflict mode.

With the conclusion of the discussion the participants were directed to page 27 in their workbook (Appendix L). The Powerpoint that directed this event can be found in Appendix Q. The participants were asked to define “Resolution.” Following a discussion the participants were given the Webster’s dictionary definition of the term. They were then directed to a video called “Conflict Resolution” that was prepared by students of the University of Delaware. The participants were next asked to define “reconciliation.” Again, following a brief discussion the participants were given the dictionary definition of the term, followed by a video prepared by Peacekeeper ministries called “Church Split Reconciliation.” A discussion followed concerning the differences between “resolution” and “reconciliation.”

In order to introduce the concept of biblical reconciliation the participants were introduced to “The 4 G’s of reconciliation” from Ken Sande’s Book *The Peacemaker*. After reading the corresponding Bible passages the participants were lead through the discussion questions in their workbook. Very thoughtful questions emerged from this time of discussion. In order to assist the discussion participants were asked to share previous conflicts in their lives that would make the application of the 4 G’s more real. It is interesting to note that the conflicts that were shared were all recent conflicts (from that day to one week earlier). The immediate relevance and application of the material to their lives was critical for the success of this time of sharing and discussion.

Following the 4 G’s the participants were next directed to the question: “What if I am the cause of the conflict?” As a means of introduction the participants were asked the question: “Have you ever been the cause of a conflict?” This brought a unanimous “yes” from the group. A discussion followed on “how did they deal with the conflict they had caused?” The group, as a whole, determined that they did not handle the conflict in the best of ways and that there was a

general sense of regret or loss concerning the conflicts they were responsible for creating. The participants were introduced to Ken Sande's "7 A's of Confession." This was a most helpful and thoughtful time of learning, sharing, and questioning. The questions that were asked were personal, applicable to past and current conflicts, and demonstrated that the participants were not only processing the content, but were also seeking ways to apply it to their lives.

In order to drive the point home that confession is a necessary part of reconciliation a video called "Confessions" was shown to the group. This video demonstrates how sin can gnaw at your heart and soul when not confessed. Following the video a discussion followed concerning Jesus Christ as the "reconciler of our souls." For those who were not members of the church or active in a Christian community, this discussion seemed to spark a sense of understanding of the importance of faith in the life of Christian.

In order to make the connection between reconciliation and technological communication the participants watched a video called "Text Message Illustration." In this video a family talks to each other in text-message short-hand. The father, not versed in the language, sits at the table confused and lost in the discussion. Following the video the group was lead through a discussion about the role technology plays in conflict and reconciliation today. Practical examples, such as the Josh McDaniels/Jay Cutler controversy of the Denver Broncos was shared and discussed. The group discussed the role of technology in reconciliation and agreed that it can be a means of support but could not function as a means to bring about authentic reconciliation. One participant was quick to point out that text messaging, email, and IM's leave out critical pieces of the process of communication and, thus, hinders the ability to communicate fully the remorse, pain, anger, or sadness that conflict can create.

Due to the plethora of discussion there was no time left for small group time. However, the participants agreed to work through the small group time material on their own, along with the “work to be done at home.” It was agreed that the post-event testing would take place on October 28 at 6:30 PM at Pastor Skopak’s house. The group was asked for prayer requests and upon gathering those requests the evening closed in a time of prayer. For those who missed a session arrangements were made in order to “catch up” on the material missed so that the post-testing would be equal concerning the material covered in the critical events.

With the close of this critical event the significant learning, application, and teaching of this material has come to a conclusion. These events have caused a few significant observations concerning this project. First, there is a strong need for this type of ministry among this age group. However, what this ministry exactly is still needs further discussion and determination. At this point I know what it is not. It is not a Bible Study, Small Group or Care Group, Worship Service, or an educational event. It might fall along the line of a “postmodern social edutainment.”¹⁴³ Secondly, the necessity of the small group or learning team was not critical to the success of the critical events. In fact, each week the sharing among the larger group became more personal and detailed by all participants. The larger group was in fact a safe place. Thirdly, the initial gathering over food was critical. It created an immediate point of contact and comfortable social environment that was non-threatening and open. And fourthly, the simple fact that this was a church-based ministry created entirely for them had a profound impact upon the participants and their level of commitment to the process.

¹⁴³ A “Postmodern Social Edutainment” can be understood as follows: Postmodern by mindset; Social as understood by the gathering and intimacy of a group setting; Edutainment by combining an educational opportunity that has a component that is entertaining.

Concluding Thoughts...

As I consider the conclusion of this part of the process I realize that I have stumbled into something that has the potential for great value to a segment of the population that is largely missing from the church today. Although the topics of relationships, communication, conflict, and reconciliation guided the four critical events, I believe that any one of these topics could be expanded into four sessions for the postmodern age group. In fact, any variety of topics could serve in this capacity. Also, I believe that each critical event needs to be able to stand alone – the ability to commit to a social edutainment ministry for any length of time is a challenge in today’s technologically challenged and driven society – especially among postmodern people. Participants need to have ability and flexibility to move in and out of the process at will and without disruption to the rest of the participants. As this process draws towards its conclusion I look forward to the post-testing that will occur along with the group discussion with the participants concerning the project. My hope is that this can serve as a springboard to a new and emerging ministry in the life of the congregation for postmodern people.

In order to better create a postmodern ministry it is necessary to glean from this project the learning (both positive and negative) so as to better minister to the postmodern age group. In the next chapter I will present the findings of the pre-event and post-event testing as well as comments and thoughts of the participants from our de-briefing meeting that was held at my home on Wednesday, October 28, 2009. Finally, I will make comments concerning these findings and how they influence potential ministry offerings to this age group.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE PROJECT EVALUATED

Introduction

At the conclusion of the four critical events the participants in the project were invited to my home for a “Thank You Dinner,” the post-event testing, and a time of sharing and debriefing. In this chapter I will present the findings of the project. I will compare pre and post testing results in order to demonstrate any changes in the attitudes and actions of the participants towards the use of technology in relationships and communication, with a special emphasis on conflict and reconciliation.

In this chapter I will also analyze the data that has been gathered in order to discern trends, patterns, and the overall effectiveness of the project on the participants. The analysis of the data has been conducted with the help of Dr. Jeffry Jahn and Mrs. Eileen McDougall.¹⁴⁴ This chapter will focus primarily on the Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument and the Postmodern Attitude and Action Survey. A secondary focus will be on the testing results from the Conflict Resolution Questionnaire.

Process

The project involved fifteen participants. Each participant took the three pre-tests and participated in a pre-event interview with questions based on technology, reconciliation, relationships, communication, and conflict, on Wednesday, September 16, 2009. Following the pre-testing and pre-event interview the participants attended the four critical events that were held on successive Wednesday evenings (from September 23 to October 14, 2009). Following

¹⁴⁴ For a further discussion and role of the credentials for Dr. Jeffry Jahn and Mrs. Eileen McDougall please see chapter 1, *process*, page 11ff

the four critical events the participants took the post event tests and participated in the post-event interview on Wednesday, October 28, 2009. The post-event tests and interview were administered two weeks after the last session in order to see if the critical events had a lasting effect on the participants.

One person who initially participated in the introductory session and pre-testing was unable to participate in the four critical events due to a change in work schedule. Labeled as participant A1, this individual was able to attend the post-testing event. Therefore, participant A1 and his pre-event test and post-event test results will not be considered in this analysis. A list of participants can be found in Appendix R.

Findings from the Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument

The Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument identifies a person's preferred mode of conflict management. The Instrument involves thirty pairs of statements describing possible behavioral responses. For each pair the participant is asked to circle "A" or "B" of the statement that best describes their behavior. The statements reflect two basic dimensions of conflict behavior – assertiveness and cooperativeness. Assertiveness is understood as the "degree to which you try to satisfy your *own* concerns."¹⁴⁵ Cooperativeness is understood as "the degree to which you try to satisfy the other *person's* concerns."¹⁴⁶

The participant's answers to the thirty pairs of statements are then transferred to a scoring sheet that is organized around five conflict modes: competing, collaborating, compromising, avoiding, and accommodating. Each conflict mode has a possibility of 12

¹⁴⁵ Kenneth W. Thomas, *Introduction to Conflict Management*, (Mountain View, CA: CPP, Inc., 2002) page 3.

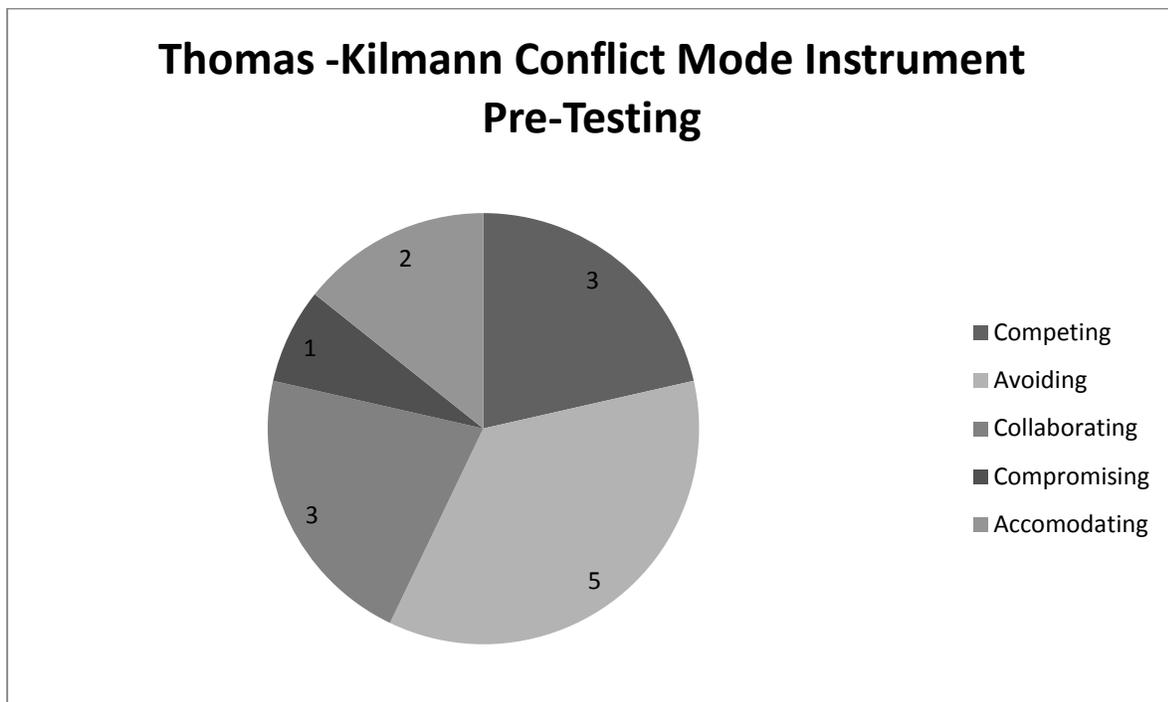
¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

affirmative statements. The participant's answers are then added up for each column. The column with the highest number determines the participant's preferred conflict mode.

Kenneth W. Thomas defines the modes as following:

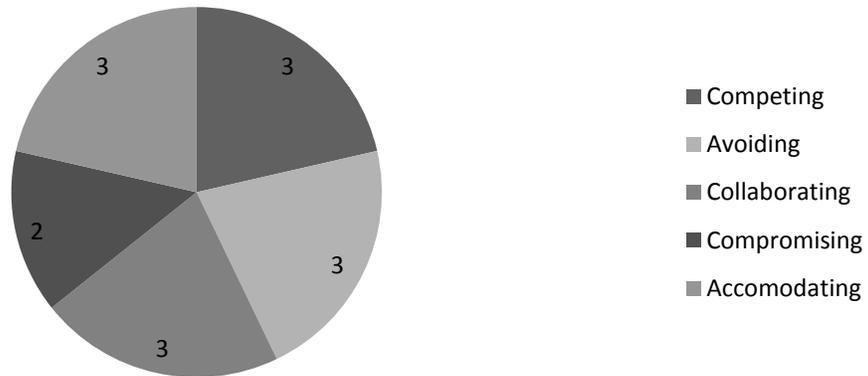
*Competing is assertive and uncooperative. You try to satisfy your own concerns at the other person's expense. Collaborating is both assertive and cooperative. You try to find a win-win solution that completely satisfies both people's concerns. Compromising is intermediate in both assertiveness and cooperativeness. You try to find an acceptable settlement that only partially satisfies both people's concerns. Avoiding is both unassertive and uncooperative. You sidestep the conflict without trying to satisfy either person's concerns. Accommodating is unassertive and cooperative. You attempt to satisfy the other person's concerns at the expense of your own.*¹⁴⁷

Each participant took the Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument twice – once before the critical events and then again two weeks following the conclusion of the critical events. The following are the results of the testing from the pre-testing and post-testing using the Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument:



¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument Post-Testing



The following is a comparative chart of pre-event testing and post-event testing by individual participant:

Pre-Event and Post-Event Participant Chart for the Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument

Participant	Pre-Event Testing	Post-Event Testing
B2	Avoiding	Accommodating
B3	Collaborating	Collaborating
A4	Compromising	Compromising
A5	Competing	Accommodating
B6	Avoiding	Avoiding
A7	Competing	Competing
B8	Avoiding	Avoiding
B9	Collaborating	Collaborating
A10	Competing	Competing
B11	Accommodating	Accommodating
A12	Avoiding	Avoiding
B13	Collaborating	Competing
A14	Accommodating	Collaborating
A15	Avoiding	Compromising

In order to discern the overall effectiveness of the project the participant results from the pre-event testing and the post-event testing have been added together and averaged in order to discover the “mean.” Also, the pre-event and post-event “range” was determined as a point of comparison for the results of the test. Finally, positive and/or negative change scores were determined and recorded. Only descriptive, not inferential statistics, were used in the following analyses.

The author does not have background and training in the use of inferential statistics. Therefore no overall probabilistic inferences can be made from the reported data. The size of the sample group and the magnitude of the change scores make it doubtful that statistically significant differences would have been observed even if they had been used. However, the results do suggest interesting directions for persons who would like to replicate this research.

Pre-Event and Post-Event Mean and Range Chart for the Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument

Conflict Mode	Pre-Test Mean	Post-Test Mean	Pre-Test Range	Post-Test Range	‘Change’ Scores
Competing*	4.71	5.0	11	12	+.29
Collaborating#	5.92	6.92	10	9	+1.0
Compromising	7.21	6.5	8	7	-.71
Avoiding*	6.35	4.85	11	10	-1.5
Accomodating	5.78	4.65	8	9	-1.13

**indicates that lower scores are the ‘preferred’ scores, e.g., it is typically considered better if participants are lower on their scores for competing and avoiding.*

#indicates that higher scores are the ‘preferred’ scores, e.g., it is typically considered better if participants are higher on their scores for collaborating

The data from The Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument reveals that the “competing” mode had an increase of .29 by the fourteen participants. This is a surprise because the critical event on conflict had focused on how “competing” was detrimental to biblical conflict reconciliation. However, the data shows a decrease in the “avoiding” conflict mode

category by the participants from the pre-event testing to the post-event testing by 1.5. This is an anticipated decrease because the critical event on conflict focused on how detrimental avoidance in conflict can be to an individual. The data also showed an increase in the “collaborating” mode of conflict by the participants by 1.0. This was an expected outcome of the critical event on conflict because “collaboration” was taught as a preferred method of conflict reconciliation.

Findings from the Postmodern Attitude and Action Survey

The Postmodern Attitude and Action Survey is a series of statements concerning attitudes towards communication, the use of technology to communicate, conflict, attitudes towards conflict, and the means by which reconciliation was achieved or not achieved in previous relationships (see Appendix F). A secondary component of the evaluation tool is to measure if they are knowledgeable regarding the biblical teaching of reconciliation, especially as it is found in the New Testament.

This tool uses a scale of 1 to 5 (1-strongly disagree; 2-disagree; 3-neither agree or disagree; 4-agree; 5-strongly agree). The survey questions are organized in five categories: technology, reconciliation, relationships, communication, and conflict. Each category has from 4 to 7 questions. The answers to the questions in each category are averaged to produce a category score. The following chart details the participant results from the pre-event testing and the post-event testing by adding together and averaging the scores in order to discover the “mean.” Also, the pre-event and post-event “range” was determined as a point of comparison for the results of the test. Finally, positive and/or negative change scores were determined and recorded.

Pre-Event and Post-Event Mean and Range Chart for the Postmodern Attitude and Action Survey

A&A Measurable	Pre-Test Mean	Post-Test Mean	Pre-Test Range	Post-Test Range	‘Change’ Scores
Technology*	2.6	2.4	2.29	2.1	-.20
Relationships#	3.43	3.69	1.75	1.75	+.26
Communication*	3.55	3.58	1.5	1.5	+.03
Conflict#	3.88	4.54	.8	3.65	+.66
Reconciliation*	3.62	3.28	2.25	1.25	-.34

**indicates that lower scores are the ‘preferred’ scores, e.g., it is typically considered better if participants are lower on their scores for attitudes towards technology, communication, and reconciliation.*

indicates that higher scores are the ‘preferred’ scores, e.g., it is typically considered better if the participants are higher in their scores on relationships and conflict.

The data from the Postmodern Attitude and Action Survey showed an increase of .03 by the fourteen participants concerning attitudes towards communication. This was a surprise because the critical event on communication should have had the opposite effect on the participants. The anticipation was to see a decrease in the post-event test mean. The area of technology saw a decrease of .2 by the participants in their post-test mean. This was an anticipation of the all four critical events which focused on the negative effects of using technology as the primary means of communication. There was also a decrease of .34 by the participants concerning reconciliation. This was the anticipated outcome based on the teaching concerning reconciliation from critical event #4 – reconciliation.

The data reveals an increase of .26 by the participants concerning relationships. This is an expected outcome because of the focus of the teaching of the first critical event on

relationships. There was also an increase of .66 in the conflict category. This was an expected result due to the material covered in critical event #3 – conflict. The increases in relationships and conflict are in line with the teaching of the critical events with the fourteen participants.

Findings from the Conflict Resolution Questionnaire

The Conflict Resolution Questionnaire uses a scale of 1 to 5 for scoring and interpretation. The survey was developed at Quinebaug Community College, located in Danielson, Connecticut, by members of Professor Jock McClellan's class on conflict reconciliation in 1993. The survey is based on attitudes and methods of conflict reconciliation recommended by Dudley Weeks in *The Eight Essential Steps to Conflict Reconciliation* as well as on principles in Roger Fischer's and William Ury's *Getting to Yes*. The questionnaire attempts to discern the following about a person: view of conflict as natural or positive, atmosphere, clarify perceptions, note needs and not wants, productive positive partnership, focus on future first, open up options, develop "doables," make mutual benefit agreements, and extra considerations. The questionnaire operates on a very simple principle – the higher your score in a particular area the more likely you are to be effective at arriving at resolutions that meet both people's needs and assist in the development of healthy relationships. Conversely, the lower a score in a particular area, the more likely an individual will need to develop skills in order to increase competency and effectiveness.

In order to discern the overall effectiveness of the project the participant results from the pre-event testing and the post-event testing have been added together and averaged in order to discover the "mean." Also, the pre-event and post-event "range" was determined as a point of comparison for the results of the test. Finally, positive and/or negative change scores were determined and recorded.

Pre-Event and Post-Event Mean and Range Chart for the Conflict Resolution Questionnaire

Survey Learning	Pre-Test Mean	Post-Test Mean	Pre-Test Range	Post-Test Range	‘Change’ Scores
View Conflict as Natural	12.5	11.85	4	8	-.65
Atmosphere	10.43	11.43	11	11	+1.0
Clarify Perceptions	11.15	12.0	11	11	+.85
Note Needs	12.85	13.07	11	12	+.22
Productive Partnership	12.35	12.07	8	8	-.28
Focus on Future	13	12.75	5	8	-.25
Open to Options	13.57	14.07	5	9	+.50
Develop “Doables”	12.21	12.93	7	12	+.72
Make Mutual-Agreements	12.21	13.14	7	10	+.93
Extra Considerations	11.35	12.71	11	13	+1.36

The data gathered from the Conflict Resolution Questionnaire demonstrates that an overall learning from the four critical events by the fourteen participants occurred. The questionnaire should have increased from the pre-event testing and the post-event testing. There was an increase in the following categories: Atmosphere (1.0), Clarify Perceptions (.85), Note Needs (.22), Open to Options (.50), Develop Doables (.72), Make Mutual Agreements (.93), and Extra Considerations (1.36). The increases are in line with the teaching of the four critical events. However, there were decreases in the following categories: View Conflict as Natural (-.65), Productive Partnership (-.28) and Focus on Future (.25). These results are not in line with the teaching of the critical events and are surprising.

Analysis of the Data in Light of the Project Hypothesis

“Does technology impede the ability of the postmodern person in their interpersonal communication – especially in conflict reconciliation?” In order to better assess the effectiveness of this project I employed three testing apparatus – The Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument, The Postmodern Attitude and Action Survey, and The Conflict Resolution Questionnaire. The Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument would assist this project by establishing how each participant most naturally handled conflict prior to the start of the critical events. Post-event testing with the Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument would allow me to assess if the teaching from the critical events had any impact on the participant’s initial reaction or approach to a conflict.

The second measuring tool, The Postmodern Attitude and Action Survey was designed to glean information concerning the overall effectiveness of the critical events. By having each participant take the Survey prior to and following the critical events it allowed me to see if the critical events had any impact on the areas of: technology, communication, relationships, conflict, and reconciliation. Also, the survey would give me insight into their biblical competency regarding these topics before and after the critical events.

The third measuring tool, The Conflict Resolution Questionnaire, was used as a secondary measuring tool. The questionnaire did not necessarily fit well with the specific areas that were covered in the critical events. The Questionnaire has not been received well by the social science community (for a further discussion concerning the effectiveness of the Questionnaire see Appendix E). However, I decided to use the Questionnaire as a third

measuring device and to participate in the conversation of its effectiveness in assessing an individual's conflict resolution skills.

Analysis from The Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument

When deciding to use the The Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument for this project my initial thought was that there should be no discernable change in the participant's pre-event testing and post-event testing results. The test is designed to measure a person's tendencies in dealing with interpersonal conflict. My belief was that in four critical events there would not be a large enough body of teaching to influence or change a person's natural responses to conflict. I believed that The Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument would serve a valuable purpose in the project by identifying for the participants how they dealt with conflict so as to better focus their individual attentions to specific areas of four critical events.

Prior to the pre-event testing the participants were interviewed concerning biblical competency, attitudes towards relationships, communication, conflict, and reconciliation. Participant B2 identified himself as, "A person who runs away from conflict...that's why there's a vibrate mode on my phone. I don't have to answer it." It was no surprise that The Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument identified him as an "avoider." Participant A4 stated, "I don't fear conflict. I just want everyone to get along. I don't like all of the tension." When taking The Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument she was identified as a person who pursues compromise when in conflict.

Overall, my initial conjecture that the participants would not have a change in their conflict mode was confirmed by participants B3, A4, B6, A7, B8, B9, A10, B11, and A12. Each

of these participants pre-event and post-event Thomas-Kilmann results were the same. However, I was surprised that there was a change by participants B2, A5, B13, A14, and A15. The change in conflict mode response by these participants was interesting. Participants B2, A5, and A15 moved from polar positions (avoiding or competing) to more centrist positions (accommodating or compromising). I believe that this demonstrates a net gain from the critical event teaching. The participants were introduced to Ken Sande's *Slippery Slope of Conflict*. On the *Slippery Slope* avoiding and competing can be understood as negative responses to conflict. Avoidance is understood as an escape response to conflict whereas competing would be seen as an attack response to conflict. The participants also were introduced to biblical examples of how escape responses (such as Jacob and Esau) and attack responses (such as Cain and Abel) are unhealthy means by which to resolve conflict. It is my assessment these three participants were positively affected by the critical event teaching.

There was a positive change in The Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument results for participant A14. In the pre-event testing participant A14 was accommodating. However, in the post-event testing her results moved to collaborating. I believe that this participant was influenced by the critical event on reconciliation – especially working through Matthew 18:15-20. There was an emphasis in critical event #4 – reconciliation on the role each person plays in the conflict. Innovative thinking, creative brainstorming, and assertive conversation were presented as positive steps in the reconciliation process. I believe this participant was influenced by this teaching.

One of the participants had a change from the pre-event to post-event testing and that change is curious. In the pre-event testing participant B13 was identified as collaborating, but in

the post-event testing moved to competing. However, I spoke with this individual outside of class. She had been engaged in a five month conflict with a roommate. They had not spoken in four and half months. She explained that she realized from the class that she was not being assertive enough in expressing her needs and desires to her roommate. Following the critical event on reconciliation she explained to me that she and her roommate were now talking. Although their conflict has yet to be resolved, at least they are now in the process. I believe that her change from collaborating to competing reflects a significant learning from the critical events and has had a positive influence on this participant.

The participants really enjoyed taking The Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument. They found it to be insightful, accurate, and fair. It was a pivotal tool in critical event #3 – conflict. The participants are eager to see the results of the post-event testing. Participant B8 stated, “I liked the conflict mode test and I liked the fact that your conflict mode is not a bad thing; it’s how you deal with conflict.” This tool could serve in an increased role in prolonged series on conflict. The follow-up book, *Introduction to Conflict Management – Improving Performance Using the TKI* by Kenneth W. Thomas, would be a helpful tool for distribution to the participants. One last observation from using The Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument – in the pre-event testing the modes with the largest number of participants were competing and avoiding. In the post-event testing all areas were equal. I found that to be a curious statistical occurrence. I do not have any explanation to this even distribution other than the influence of the project on the participants.

Analysis from The Postmodern Attitude and Action Survey

The Postmodern Attitude and Action Survey is a tool that was specifically designed to measure the effectiveness of this project. Using a scale of 1 to 5 (1-strongly disagree; 2-disagree; 3-neither agree or disagree; 4- agree; 5-strong agree) the participants reacted to 22 statements concerning technology, reconciliation, relationships, communication, and conflict. The tool also identified biblical understanding with regards to conflict and reconciliation ministry. Each statement was written in such a way that it directly connected to specific teachings from the critical events which allowed me the opportunity to better measure the effectiveness of the project. In order to analyze the project through the lenses of this tool it is necessary to examine the results in each of the five areas.

Technology

Technology (especially technological communication) was a consistent thread throughout all four critical events. Critical event # 2 – communication had an exercise dedicated to the use of text messaging to convey a story (see page 17 of the Participant Workbook, Appendix L). Overall, I was very pleased with the results in this portion in the Attitude and Action Survey. The participants’ answers in the post-event test demonstrated learning and application of the material presented in the critical events. For example, the majority of the participants disagreed or strongly disagreed with questions #15, #18, and #19 in the post-event test:

15-Using technological communication to apologize is okay in close relationships

18-Communicating through email or texting provides an effective way to deal with conflict

19-Healthy relationships can be sustained by technological means only

The postmodern person considers technological communication as an integral part of their communication arsenal. This includes email, social networking websites, instant messaging, and the technology of preference at the moment – text messaging. The fact that the majority of the participants understood and accepted the necessity for face to face communication in conflict reconciliation is significant. This area of the project could have been the topic for all four critical events. During the project I was aware that the participants were dependent upon technological communication. Although I was able to raise awareness for the need for face to face communication (especially in conflicts) some of the participants were unwilling to completely dismiss technological communication in conflict. Participant B9 wrote on her post-event test, “You gotta understand where I’m coming from – I’ve been communicating with my boyfriend over IM for five months with no real opportunity to see each other in person.” She wrote this on the side of question #15 (Using Technological communication to apologize is okay in close relationships).

The technological challenge for the postmodern is a very serious challenge. Although they are able to communicate instantly with a wide variety of people at once, the quality of communication is reduced to symbol, shorthand, and sound bites. In assessing this area of the project I conclude that although I have experienced measurable success with the participants, I do believe that more time and attention needs to be devoted to developing further curriculum to assist, educate, and challenge postmodern people to think and use technological communication in a better way.

Reconciliation

The understanding, articulation, and application of the biblical model of reconciliation was the goal of critical event #4. I was very pleased by the results of this portion of the Attitudes

and Actions survey. The teaching of Ken Sande's *Four G's of Reconciliation* and *The Seven A's of Confession* was well received and the participants were able to reflect on them two weeks later at the post-event testing session at my home.

Although I am pleased with the overall response of the participants to biblical reconciliation and their readiness to receive this teaching in a positive light, I was very excited about the impact of this portion of the study on participant B13. She does not have a regular church home nor does she have a well-developed Christian faith. I realize that in a project of this nature that you should not focus on individual results. However, the realization by this participant that this project has had a positive impact upon her life and has already paid dividends in her relationship with her roommate is profound. Participant B13 can now articulate and put into practice the basic elements of biblical reconciliation.

Although I am pleased with the positive reception and response by the participants to this area of the Attitudes and Actions survey, I do believe that the critical events only scratched the surface of the learning that needs to go on for the postmodern person. I believe that a more complete curriculum needs to be developed using a variety of media to present the biblical model of reconciliation. The participants were very receptive to the teaching and desired more. Unfortunately, due to the constraints and design of the project there was no more time to develop reconciliation further.

Relationships

The theme of critical event #1 was relationships. The participants enjoyed the teaching about what kind of relationships they do possess. Critical event #1 had a focus on how the Bible contains examples of the relationships we have in life. The participants seemed to enjoy this aspect of the event and this is reflected positively in their post-event test answer to question #10

(The Bible contains examples of all the relationships I have in life). Special attention was paid to this teaching in critical event #1 on page 7 of the Workbook (see Appendix L).

I am pleased with the responses and results from this section of the Attitude and Action Survey. I feel that one critical event on relationships was sufficient for the project. The area of relationships could easily be expanded and turned into four to six critical events on its own. The participants demonstrated understanding, acceptance, and enthusiasm for the topic. The topic of relationships was a good way to develop rapport with the participants and introduce biblical themes in a safe way – especially with those, who prior to the critical events, did not possess a deep background in biblical knowledge.

Communication

The Attitude and Action Survey produced some interesting results with the participants when comparing the pre-event and post-event tests. Some of the participant results moved in a direction that reflected positive reception of the teaching, especially the teaching from critical event #2 – communication. However, some of the participant results moved in a direction reflecting a negative reception of the teaching from the same critical event. I can draw one of two conclusions: 1-The critical event was not clear and caused confusion among the participants; or 2-The questions on the Attitude and Action Survey were not clear and could be mis-read in such a way as to produce the opposite results desired.

An example of this confusion was demonstrated in participant B3. In the post-event interview participant B3 stated, “This re-affirmed my need to use and read non-verbal communication in a more intentional way.” This affirms the teaching from the critical event on communication. However, participant B3 does not reflect that statement in his post-event survey answer to question #12 (Non-verbal communication is equally important as verbal

communication). This leads me to believe that the question was not as clearly written as it could have been. Although I think the critical event was well received by the participants I am lead to wonder if it was effective to the overall project. It may be necessary to re-work this critical event in light of the Attitude and Action Survey results from the post-event testing.

Conflict

Of all the areas of the Attitude and Action Survey the questions concerning conflict saw the most positive change. This demonstrates that the material covered in the critical event was clear, applicable, and understood by the participants. One factor that made this critical event successful is that it was intensely personal for each participant. During this critical event they received back the results from The Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument. The participants were genuinely excited to get these results back. Secondly, the participants enjoyed the media clips for this lesson. By far they were the best received. Thirdly, the participants were able to understand *The Slippery Slope of Conflict* (found on page 23 of the Participant Workbook, Appendix L). Finally, the participants were able to understand and follow the biblical model of dealing with conflict as found in Matthew 18. It was a familiar text of Scripture that is clear in its teaching. Based on the post-event results I believe that critical event #3 – conflict was the best critical event and most understood and appreciated by the participants.

Analysis of the Conflict Resolution Questionnaire

When looking over the pre-event and post-event results from the Conflict Resolution Questionnaire I have come to realize that this tool was not necessarily designed to benefit the parameters of this project. First, the Questionnaire was designed to discover the strengths of an individual in conflict *resolution*. The nature of this project was to lead the participants towards a road of *reconciliation*. A second problem with the Questionnaire was that it was designed

around two books that were neither consulted nor used in any way in this project. Although individuals may benefit from using the Questionnaire it may be necessary to use it in conjunction with the reading of Dudley Week's book *The Eight Essential Steps to Conflict Reconciliation* and Roger Fischer's and William Ury's *Getting to Yes*. It is quite obvious that the Questionnaire was written to reflect positive learning from these two sources. When writing the critical events I did not consult or use these two resources.

However, I am glad that I used the Questionnaire as a third resource for testing in the project. The statistical data seemed to mirror or mimic the individual results from The Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument. I believe that the Questionnaire (used in conjunction with the Conflict Mode Instrument) might serve further value if a critical event ministry was expanded to include four sessions on conflict with the introduction of Dudley Week's book *The Eight Essential Steps to Conflict Reconciliation*.

Analysis of the Pre-Event and Post-Event Interview Questions for the Participants

In order to gain insight regarding the impact of the critical events on the participants each person took part in a pre-event and post-event interview. The questions were the same for both the pre-event and post-event interviews. The interviews were conducted by Dr. Jeffry Jahn and Mrs. Eileen McDougall. The interview questions can be found in Appendix H of this paper.¹⁴⁸

Technology

In the pre-event interview process the general consensus of the participants was that technological communication was a intricate part of their daily communication. For example participant B9 claimed to spend three to four "solid" hours a day in front of her computer.

¹⁴⁸ Two participant pre-event and post-event interviews can be found in Appendix I of the paper. For the remaining twelve participant pre-event and post-event interviews the reader is directed to contact the author for copies.

Participant B13 said, “I send hundreds of text messages a day. I am totally dependent on technology to communicate with my friends.” However, in the post-event interview participant B13 stated, “I probably use my cell phone too much. I’m still going to text people; but I am going to be more intentional about getting together so we can talk face to face. Participant B2 stated, “I’m going to text less and hang out more with my friends.”

With regards to sustaining a relationship by technological means, the pre-event interview yielded some interesting answers. Participant A5 claimed, “I have technology friends. That is, we don’t really see each other. We only communicate by our technology.” Participant B8 stated, “I guess you can sustain relationships by technology...Why not?” However, in the post-event interviews participant A5 did an about face, “I don’t think they are real relationships when technology is your only connection. It’s artificial.” And participant B8 stated, “Technology is not enough. There needs to be face to face time.”

With regards to the question concerning technology and its role in conflicts the general consensus in the pre-event interviews was that text messaging, instant messaging, and email were okay to use when in a conflict. Participant A12 stated, “I have dealt with a conflict using a text. No big deal.” And participant B11 stated, “I have ended a friendship by email. It worked.” However, in the post event interview the general attitude of the group was different. Participant A12 said, “Technology will hinder reconciliation. All it does is resolve – and not the way I probably should resolve my conflicts.” Participant B13 said, “You shouldn’t end a relationship with a text message. It’s so cold and impersonal.

Overall, the group seemed to grow in their understanding of technological communication, especially when it is appropriate and not appropriate to use. Participant B6 stated, “This project made me aware of text messaging and how I was using it to deal with my

conflicts. I realized how useless my previous attempts to deal with my conflicts were and how technology was only making them worse...not better.” And participant B11 stated, “I am more sensitive to how, when, and why I use technological communication. This has had an impact on my life.”

Reconciliation

In the pre-event interview process special attention was paid to biblical understanding with regards to reconciliation. Participant A12 stated, “I don’t have a Bible. I really never went to Sunday school or Church growing up. I’m not sure what the Bible has to say about reconciliation.” When considering reconciliation participant B8 said, “I know the Bible stories but I really don’t know how to apply them in my life.” Although participant B8 could state the biblical model for reconciliation she was unable to explain any of the particulars of how the process worked. In the post-event interview participant B8 was able to articulate not only the process of reconciliation, but how long each step should be given and how true reconciliation is achieved.

With regards to the difference between resolution and reconciliation there was a great change in the pre-event and post-event interviews. In the pre-event interviews participant A15 stated, “They are the same.” Participant A12 stated, “Resolution is reconciliation.” And participant A7 stated, “I don’t know. I don’t think there is any difference between the two.” However, in the post-event interview the same participants showed a significant change in understanding. Participant A15 said, “Resolution solves a conflict, reconciliation heals a conflict.” Participant A12 said, “Resolution brings a conflict to an end. Reconciliation restores a relationship.” And finally, participant A7 said, “Resolution is worldly. Reconciliation is biblical.”

In the pre-event interviews the participants did not demonstrate a deep understanding of the steps of reconciliation. For example, participant B3 could not articulate the process of Matthew 18. And when asked what might be an inappropriate step in reconciliation he stated, “Fighting in public, talking behind someone’s back... I don’t know, I’m not really sure.” However, in the post-event interview participant B3 was able to articulate the following, “Go talk to the person face to face. When you’ve exhausted that line, bring an objective person with you. When that’s exhausted, tell them you have to have nothing to do with them until they understand how and why they hurt me.”

The area of reconciliation demonstrated positive learning by the participants. For example participant B13 stated, “This was a huge reminder: mom and dad aren’t around to fix my problems and solve my conflicts. I need to take ownership of my relationships.” Participant B3 stated that “The slippery slope and the 7 A’s are things that I am going to go back and review. I think they will really help me in my relationships.” Participant B13 stated, “I am now talking to my roommate for the first time in four months.” I am really excited that the participants not only understood the teaching from the critical event concerning reconciliation, they seem to be applying it in their day to day lives.

Relationships

In the pre-event interview the participants were asked about the Bible and relationships. In the pre-event interview participant B3 stated, “I’m sure the Bible has relationships like I have today. But I’ve never given it much thought.” Participant B6 stated, “I’m not sure if it has relationships like I have. It must, right?” However, in the post-event interviews the participants were able to affirm the biblical relationships that are demonstrated in their lives, but they were also able to cite specific examples. Participant B11 stated, “Sibling – Cain and Able, Jacob and

Esau; Parent-child – Abraham and Isaac; co-worker – the disciples...” The other participants had answers similar to that of participant B11. Participant B8 stated in her post-event interview, “I never thought that the Bible had examples of all the relationships I have right now...All relationships are reflected in the Bible, Scripture gives us parallels, examples, and guidance in our relationships.”

With regards to the second question concerning relationships they have in life, the pre-event and post-event interviews bore little difference. Participant B8 stated, “I am a very relational person. I have family, friends, church friends, you name it.” Participant A14 shared, “I have lots of relationships. But I’m not sure how to manage them; especially when conflict arises.” The overall tenor of the participants was a firm understanding of the variety of relationships they have in life – both in the pre-event and post-event testing.

There was a change in answers concerning technological communication in maintaining relationships. In the pre-event interview participant B2 stated, “Technology is how I keep in touch and maintain relationships.” Participant B13 stated, “Technology helps me keep up to date with everyone.” However, in the post-event interview the participant’s answers showed a change in technology’s role in relationships. Participant B6 said, “Technology can help a relationship in so far as it leads you to see the person face to face.” Participant A14 stated, “If the relationship is totally dependent upon technology, it’s in trouble.”

Communication

How the participants communicate with friends, family, co-workers, and the like was the focus of the pre-event and post-event interviews. In the pre-event interview the participants were asked about their preferred method of communication. Not surprisingly, the participant’s answers reflected a dependency on technological communication. Participant B3 stated, “I like

text messaging. It's quick, easy, and efficient." Participant B2 said, "I'm dead without my cell phone." Participant B9 shared, "I live in front of my computer. It's how I communicate and how my friends communicate."

In the post-event interview the answers reflected a change of attitude towards technological communication. Participant B3 said, "I like text messaging. But face to face conversation is so important." Participant B2 said, "I learning to slow down and enjoy being in other people's company." And participant B9 shared, "I still live in front of my computer. But what I really want to do is be with my boyfriend in Michigan."

In the pre-event interview the participants reflected that face to face communication wasn't necessarily essential for healthy communication. Participant A12 shared, "Texting, IM-ing, Email, is just the same as face to face. It's the words that matter." And participant A4 stated, "A text message is just as valid as a face to face conversation. However, in the post-event interview participant A12 said, "Body language, facial expression, the tone of the voice...I don't get that with a text message. Those are all important." And participant A4 stated, "A text message is words. A face to face is a conversation." These answers demonstrate a learning from critical event #2 on communication. Overall, the post-event interviews reflected a learning that face to face communication is not the same as technological communication. Being in the presence of another person with whom you are communicating gives you so much more understanding. This attitude was reflected in participant A15, "You need to sit down...face each other...look at facial expressions...watch body language. Your cell phone can't do that."

Conflict

The critical event on conflict seemed to have the most impact upon the participants. This was evidenced not only in the quantitative data but also in the qualitative research. In the pre-

event interview regarding the first question participant A10 stated, “I don’t mind conflict so long as I get my way.” Participant B6 said, “I don’t like conflict and I don’t like dealing with the people I am in conflict with.” Participant B8 said, “If I can avoid conflict I will. That’s my way of dealing with it.” However, in the post-event interview the participants reflected significant learning in their answer to the same question. Participant A10 stated, “I know I want my way when I am in a conflict. But I need to be more sensitive to the other person’s needs.” Participant B6 said, “I have to express my needs in a conflict. It’s not all about getting the thing over.” And participant B8 said, “Conflicts happen in life. I can’t avoid them. I need to confront the other person and work through the issues.”

When asked about the role of technology in conflicts the pre-event interview yielded an overall acceptance by the group. Participant B3 stated, “You can use technology...it’s just another way to express yourself.” And participant B6 said, “There is no problem in using technology in a conflict. I have texted to a friend during a conflict and it seemed to be okay.” And participant B9 said, “There’s nothing wrong texting somebody how you feel. It’s just how things can be expressed today.” However, the participants demonstrated a shift in thought and attitude in the post-event interviews. Participant B3 said, “You need to see the person face to face. The cell phone can miss so many of the important things in a conflict.” Participant A15 said, “Technology can hide you from the real problems. You need to go and see the person face to face.” And participant A4 said, “I used to think texting was okay in conflicts. Not anymore. It’s inappropriate.”

In the discussion concerning how they handled conflicts in the past the participants reflected lament over how they handled some of them. Many of the participants pre-event interview answers to this question were similar. Participant A10 stated, “I’m not sure what you

mean by ‘handling the conflict well.’ Can you handle a conflict well? People’s feelings are hurt. Friendships are damaged. And there’s now a wedge between you and the other person.”

Participant B13 said, “I can tell you about a lot of conflicts that didn’t go well. But conflicts that went well? Is there such a thing?!”

However, in the post-event interview two of the participants demonstrated a learning and application of the learning from the critical events (especially critical event #3 on conflict and #4 on reconciliation). Participant B13 stated, “I’m talking with my roommate for the first time in four months.” And participant B2 said, “I recently was tempted to text a friend who I had a fight with. Instead, I called her and asked her to meet me at Starbucks for coffee. In the end, we worked things out much more quickly.” Answers like this were consistent throughout the whole group.

Concluding Thoughts...

The Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument, The Postmodern Attitude and Action Survey, and the Conflict Resolution Questionnaire were all well received by the participants. None of the participants had any problem participating in the pre-event and post-event testing. The participants were excited to learn about the results and were eager to be a part of a project that could potentially be developed into a ministry for people their age. The Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument was the most polished and professional of the three testing apparatus used. The Postmodern Attitude and Action Survey gleaned the necessary data to measure the success of the project. And the Conflict Resolution Questionnaire, although a decent tool for individual use, was the least helpful to the project.

The data reflected learning on the part of the participants. Not only did the participants learn about relationships, communication, conflict, and reconciliation, they were able to apply

biblical principles and challenge ingrained attitudes towards the use of technology. The data demonstrates that a potentially important first step in ministry was taken. However, the data also shows that there needs to be follow up teaching in all of the areas. If the project simply ends on this note the overall gains by the participants will more than likely be minimal. However, if a critical event ministry can be developed around each of the areas of consideration (technology, relationships, communication, conflict, and reconciliation) I believe that the growth in the individual participants will be profound.

“Does technology impede the ability of the postmodern person in their interpersonal communication – especially in conflict reconciliation?” After spending significant time with fourteen postmodern people, engaging them in four critical events, and socializing with them through pre-event and post-event gatherings (for the purpose of introduction, testing, and wrap-up) I am convinced that technology plays a substantial role in the postmodern person’s inability to practice interpersonal communication without technological means in order to bring about reconciliation in conflicted situations. Electronic communication has become a means to avoid face to face conversation in conflict. Like a shield, it deflects the harsh reality of the conflict while creating a safety net around the person so as to not expose oneself to harsh words or feelings. This is a false sense of security because the relationship crumbles in the midst of such avoidance or bravado by means of text messaging, instant messaging, email, social networking web pages, or whatever means of electronic communication they may use.

But there is a way out of the maze of technological dependency and its effect upon conflict reconciliation ministry. In the next chapter I will discuss the impact of this study on the ministry I serve as well as the possible impact of the study on the North American Church.

People with a postmodern mindset are hungry to learn and have a desire to experience ministry that is directly applicable to their life circumstance. There are opportunities for ministry to happen among this group of people and a critical event type of ministry can serve that purpose. There needs to be awareness that the attitudes and actions of the person with a postmodern mindset are different than the pre-modern or modern thinker. The ministry will look, act, and behave differently – but it will be a ministry with great impact if you are willing to take the step into the world of the person with a postmodern mindset.

CHAPTER SIX

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Introduction

This chapter is dedicated to summarizing the project. In this chapter I will explore the contributions to the ministry where this project was conducted – Fountain of Life Lutheran Church, Tucson, Arizona. Secondly, I will look at the implications of this project for the sake of the broader church – both The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod as well as the larger Christian community in North America. I will then turn my attention to how this project has personally impacted me. And finally, I will conclude with recommendations for a future ministry to postmodern people.

Contributions to Ministry

A ministry to postmodern people designed to determine the effect of technological communication on conflict reconciliation makes three assumptions: 1) there are postmodern people in the congregation (and community) who are in conflict; 2) technology has played a role in contributing to or prolonging the conflict; and 3) postmodern people need help in learning how to deal with conflict by means of biblical reconciliation tools. When surveying the people at Fountain of Life Lutheran Church I was able to make the following observations: 1) there are postmodern members of the congregation and they had conflicts; 2) they all use technology freely, including their dealings with conflict; and 3) they are not well versed in biblical principles of biblical reconciliation ministry. It was a natural fit – a conflict reconciliation ministry for the postmodern people of Fountain of Life and the Tucson community.

Having gone through the pre-event testing and introduction, the four critical events, and the post-event testing, I have come to the realization that this project has made important contributions to the ministry of the congregation. The first contribution the project made to Fountain of Life was the identification of the need for a ministry uniquely created for the postmodern members of the church. Prior to this project congregational ministry looked something like this: Sunday school, youth ministry, off to college, disappear for a few years, get married, return to the church, find a niche. There was no specific ministry dedicated to those people falling between the ages of post-high school and parenthood. And there wasn't a ministry uniquely designed for the postmodern person, taking into consideration how they learn and think.

Finding participants was not a problem. Finding a night they could all attend was the problem. There were many excluded from the project due to the fact that it was only offered on one evening of the week. A key learning was that there is a need for a ministry resembling this project and it should be offered on a variety of evenings during the week. There was a genuine hunger and thirst for something for this age group. The topics of relationships, communication, conflict, and reconciliation guided the evenings. However, I believe that I could have chosen any number of topics and postmodern people would have participated. This project has identified a large sub-culture of the congregation, and now there is a great desire for this ministry to continue (and grow).

A second contribution to the ministry at Fountain of Life is the growing attention being paid to conflict and biblical reconciliation. I have observed that Fountain of Life suffers from a common strain in its ministry – the inability to deal with conflict in a biblical manner. Although the members can quote the verses of Matthew 18:15-20, putting those same verses into practice

is a whole different matter. Many of the members of the congregation do not even know the context of the reconciliation process that Jesus prescribes in these verses. Members of the congregation tend to avoid face to face conversation with those they are in conflict with. This project opened the door to this discussion for people who are hungry to learn, are impressionable, and are emerging leaders within the church. When walking them through the critical event on reconciliation the participants eagerly shared current conflicts from work and school for the group to assist them.

People at Fountain of Life want to deal with their conflicts in a God-pleasing manner. They want to follow biblical principles of reconciliation. They simply need direction, help, and guidance in doing so. This project opened the reconciliation doors wide to a wonderful group of postmodern people who desire to follow their Lord, live according to His Word, and make a difference in this world. This project contributed to their lives in this journey. Through this project there was evidence that it had some impact on their understanding and management of conflicts. I believe this project could be adjusted and used with high school students, gen x-ers, and even baby-boomers. I also believe that I will repeat this critical event ministry in the future with college students and other postmodern people who could not participate in this initial project.

A third contribution of this project to the ministry of Fountain of Life is in the area of technological communication. Technological communication is not bad. However, dependence upon it, especially in dealing with conflicts, can lead to deepening conflict and personal hurt. This project has raised awareness among the participants in how they use technology to communicate and when it may not be the right tool to use. Members of the congregation have

come to realize that I do not use e-mail as my primary means to communicate. They have learned that I don't like to text message. My staff expects me to walk into their office instead of paging them on the intercom. Face to face communication is what I do. Face to face communication is what our Lord did. Face to face communication is the means by which we get the greatest amount of information – verbal, physical, and emotional communication.

The participants are already putting into practice what they have learned and I am witnessing the effect it is having on their parents and peers in the congregation. I am pleased that they were so willing to participate and even more pleased that they received the four critical events with enthusiasm. It is the hope that this ministry will have a lasting impact for the future of Fountain of Life as these young people grow in age and stature and take their place in leadership in the congregation.

But as I look beyond Fountain of Life I realize that this project may have implications for the congregation's future. Postmodernism is here to stay. What is old is gone and what is new has arrived. The problem, as I see it, is that the postmodern generation is notably absent from the congregational life at Fountain of Life. They are silently standing in the background. As the associate pastor of Fountain of Life, The Rev. Gregory Rachuy, observed, "There's a lot of white hair out there on Sundays." I believe that this is a result, in part, of Fountain of Life and its leadership not striving to develop new means by which to connect the gospel ministry to people in the postmodern community. This project has taught me that most postmodern people learn differently than people who identify with preceding generations. Postmodern people are visual, sensual, high-touch and high-feel learners. They value experience and sharing. They want to be

part of something that makes a difference not only in their lives, but the lives of others. And they need technology.

This project was well received by the participants partly because it was developed, researched, and written for them. They were the only group of people I considered when preparing the project. The critical events were written with people who possess a postmodern mindset as the target group. I have considered the idea of showing one of the critical events to some of the senior citizens in the church. I wonder what they would see, hear, and feel as they moved through the chosen critical event? My suspicion is that those without a postmodern mindset would not receive the event with the same fervor of the postmodern participants. The reason – most postmodern people learn differently than those with a modern mindset. The church needs to be ready to research, prepare, and present the gospel to postmodern people in new ways that respect how they learn.

Secondly, the North American Church needs to catch up when considering the world of technological communication. Postmodern people are technologically savvy. They have grown up with cell phones and laptop computers. As fast as new means of communication arise, they are easily replaced by new types of communication that are even more efficient and technologically slick. Many churches have a web page. The cutting edge churches may use iTunes or blogging. But most churches are not versed in this technological world. The church needs to catch up because the postmodern world is passing it by.

A third contribution of this project to the North American Church is a result of the previous observation concerning technology – the postmodern world is one that struggles with conflict and has become increasingly uncomfortable with reconciliation ministry. Reconciliation

ministry needs to be intentional. The pastor(s) and leaders need to practice this ministry openly in the congregation. When problems arise conversations have to happen face to face. The biblical model needs to be taught, understood, and practiced by the whole congregation. It will define who we are as a people of God – reconciled by Jesus Christ through His Cross, reconciled to each other by a ministry reflecting God’s grace through reconciliation. A postmodern world is starving for this kind of place. The postmodern world needs Jesus.

This project enters the stream of an emerging academic debate – how does the church minister to the postmodern person? To date, there is not a significant pool of research to draw from when considering the attitudes and actions of postmodern people. As discussed in chapter three of this work, there are many speculations and thoughts concerning the postmodern person. But there is still not enough research to make broad generalizations regarding their faith and spiritual life. The hope is that the results of this project can further the discussion regarding postmodern ministry as the church strives to connect this generation to Jesus.

Contributions to Personal and Professional Growth

Having researched, studied, written, recruited, presented, shared, evaluated, and celebrated this project with the members of Fountain of Life, my postmodern participants, my staff and colleagues, and my family, I know one thing for certain - we have an awesome God and He is very good. Through the time of research and study my personal understanding of conflict and reconciliation has grown. I no longer look at the Bible through the same lenses – I can now see the relationships found in Scripture in a whole new light. I can easily look at stories such as Cain and Abel, or Jacob and Esau, and relate it comfortably to conflict reconciliation ministry.

These biblical relationships tell us about our sinful nature and how we respond to conflict. We can see ourselves through these biblical people.

My appreciation and understanding of the rich doctrinal heritage of the Christian Church, especially as it is understood through the Lutheran Confessions and significant Lutheran theologians (such as Martin Luther, Philip Melancthon, and C.F.W. Walther) has grown exponentially. Through a thorough examination of their writings I have come to understand their desire for a healthy Christian Church – one built upon the cross of Christ and living a reconciled life to God and each other. The doctrine of the church is not confined to tomes that sit on the shelves of my office. The doctrine of the church needs to be liberated from the shelves and shared with the people of the congregation. The people need to see that the church of the past speaks to the church of today. The postmodern person needs to encounter God’s Word; the postmodern person also needs to encounter the doctrine of the church, as articulated by the fathers of old, to better know his Lord.

Through this project I have gained a greater appreciation for the process of creating a critical event ministry. The research and writing was very natural. However, developing lesson plans, Powerpoint presentations, the participant workbook, combing the internet for media, and devising and implementing measuring tools were all new experiences for me. More than gaining an appreciation for the task, it is in the “doing” where real growth occurred. The process was challenging as well as exciting; difficult but rewarding; tedious as well as fulfilling. This postmodern ministry project opened me up to explore gifts of ministry I may not have discovered otherwise. The personal growth was in the process and not in the completion of this project. As

this project draws to a conclusion it serves as a marker along the academic pursuit of excellence in the ministry of the gospel of Jesus Christ that I have trod.

Recommendations

“So where do we go from here?” Postmodernism is here to stay. Technology is only going to become more intrusive in our lives. And conflicts will continue to abound among the generations of people inside (and outside) of the church. The findings from this project should serve as a springboard for further research in the areas of communication and conflict reconciliation ministry. The results of this project are a small sampling. Further testing among postmodern people with regards to attitudes and actions towards technology, communication, conflict, and reconciliation needs to continue. If the church is to craft ministry that reaches and teaches postmodern people it needs to be aware that their attitudes and actions are different from people who do not possess a postmodern worldview.

In order to better connect with postmodern people I would recommend that critical event ministry be done in the context of a home instead of an institutional setting such as a church. I would recommend a primary component be a meal along with a time of sharing and prayer. The postmodern participants in this project had a high value on all of these things. I believe that a better survey tool, crafted by people who know how to write such things, needs to be done so that better data can be gathered. Although the Postmodern Attitude and Action Survey was helpful, it was by no means perfect and without flaw. Finally, working with postmodern people is like herding cats – you can do it, but it’s not easy. Further research needs to reflect the fluidity of the postmodern peoples’ life. They need to be able to jump in and out of such a ministry

without missing a beat. Their lives are chaotic. The ministry needs to embrace that chaos and not chastise it.

A Final Thought...

A ministry to postmodern people designed to determine the effect of technological communication upon conflict reconciliation can be a daunting task. What makes the task so difficult is that it will be dependent upon the participation of people who are notably absent from many of the mainline American Christian Churches (Fountain of Life – Tucson, Arizona included). Once those participants are committed, the second difficult task arrives: ensuring their ongoing participation in the project. The postmodern person is one who lives in a world of constant distractions. A postmodern person's life is fluid – it is in a constant state of flux. Arriving at a time table of commitment to four critical events may seem easy to many people. But a commitment to four critical events by a postmodern person is just short of committing to a membership in an organization. It speaks of dedicated scheduling, a promise to do the work assigned, and a trust with the other participants to show up and be prepared. Without the participants there would be no opportunity for a conflict reconciliation ministry for postmodern people. With all of those challenges the Lord raised up participants for this project.

The participants in this project were a blessing. I learned from them as much (I hope) as they learned from me. They were willing to share, willing to grow, and willing to be challenged. The fourteen people who committed to the pre and post event testing and the four critical events are amazing people. Each postmodern person possessed gifts, talents, and a faith that humbles me. Each person eagerly and excitedly participated in this project in order to further the discussion about a ministry to people such as themselves. For their participation in this project I

will be eternally grateful. Beyond my personal thanks for their participation in the project, on behalf of Fountain of Life Lutheran Church (and dare I say, the North American Christian Church) I thank each one of them for their time and dedication to this project. Postmodernism is not going away. And postmodern people are not going to conform to the “business as usual” attitude of some in the church. These fourteen people (plus the one participant who could not attend the four critical events) are not the church of tomorrow...They *are* the church of today!

Soli Deo Gloria!

APPENDICES

Appendix A



February 23, 2009

Technology is fast becoming the latest driving force behind what is often called the "generation gap." While Americans of every age have become quite comfortable with and dependent on technology, a new study by The Barna Group explores how technology is

shaping different experiences and expectations among generations.

Although all Americans - both young and old - benefit from technology, the generational divide brought on by digital tools is significant.

The key findings of the research include the fact that each successive generation is adopting and using technology at a significantly greater pace than their predecessors. Yet, the study also shows the exponential reliance on digital tools among Americans under the age of 25.

Importance of Tech

Technology usage is not the only chasm between the young and old. Another gap is each of the generation's perceptions about technology. Not surprisingly, younger adults are more likely to admit "gadget lust" than is true of older adults. For instance, among the youngest adult Americans - those ages 18 to 24, a group the Barna Group labels Mosaics - more than one-fifth (22%) said they consider owning the latest technology to be a very high priority in life, compared to only one out of every 11 adults over the age of 25 (9%).

Mosaics are the biggest technophiles. However, when taken together, America's two youngest generations (Mosaics and Busters) are significantly more likely than the two oldest cohorts (Boomers and Elders) to say a desirable lifestyle is being at the cutting edge of technology.

Mainstream Technologies?

The Barna study categorized "mainstream" technology as those weekly activities relied upon by 50% or more of computer users. For example, the use of email and Internet search are mainstream because they are used by more than half of all computer users each week, regardless of generation.

Among Elders and Boomers, of the 14 activities assessed in the research, the only mainstream digital activities are email and search. Among Busters, four behaviors qualify as mainstream: email, search, text messaging and hosting a personal website or homepage (such as MySpace or Facebook). The Mosaic generation doubles this by reaching mainstream status on eight different technologies. These eight elements overlap the same four as Busters but also include: instant messaging, posting comments on other blogs, watching videos online and downloading music online (both legally and illegally).

Emerging Technologies?

"Emerging" technologies were classified by Barna research as those used by at least 20% but not more than half of computer users. These are technologies that have gone beyond fringe activities but have failed to become a weekly digital ritual of the majority.

One example of an emerging technology is online purchasing. It is a common denominator of all

New
Research
Explores
How
Techno
Drives
Genera
Gap

four generations of computer users, but fewer than half made a purchase online in the last week (22% of Mosaics, 26% of Busters, 29% of Boomers and 24% of Elders).

Several spiritual elements were classified as emerging among the youngest three generations: listening to church podcasts and visiting their church website (measured for past year, not the past week). For their part, Elders have yet to move beyond limited digital access to spiritual content.

Other emerging activities among Boomers were texting and watching videos online. Among Busters, emerging uses of digital tools included instant messaging, watching videos and downloading music. Mosaics added to their considerable technological footprint by qualifying as budding bloggers. While millions of older adults are active bloggers, realize that just 11% of Busters and 5% of Boomers say they maintain a personal blog.

There were only two areas of limited technological expression among Mosaics: their admittance to viewing online pornography and downloading movies.

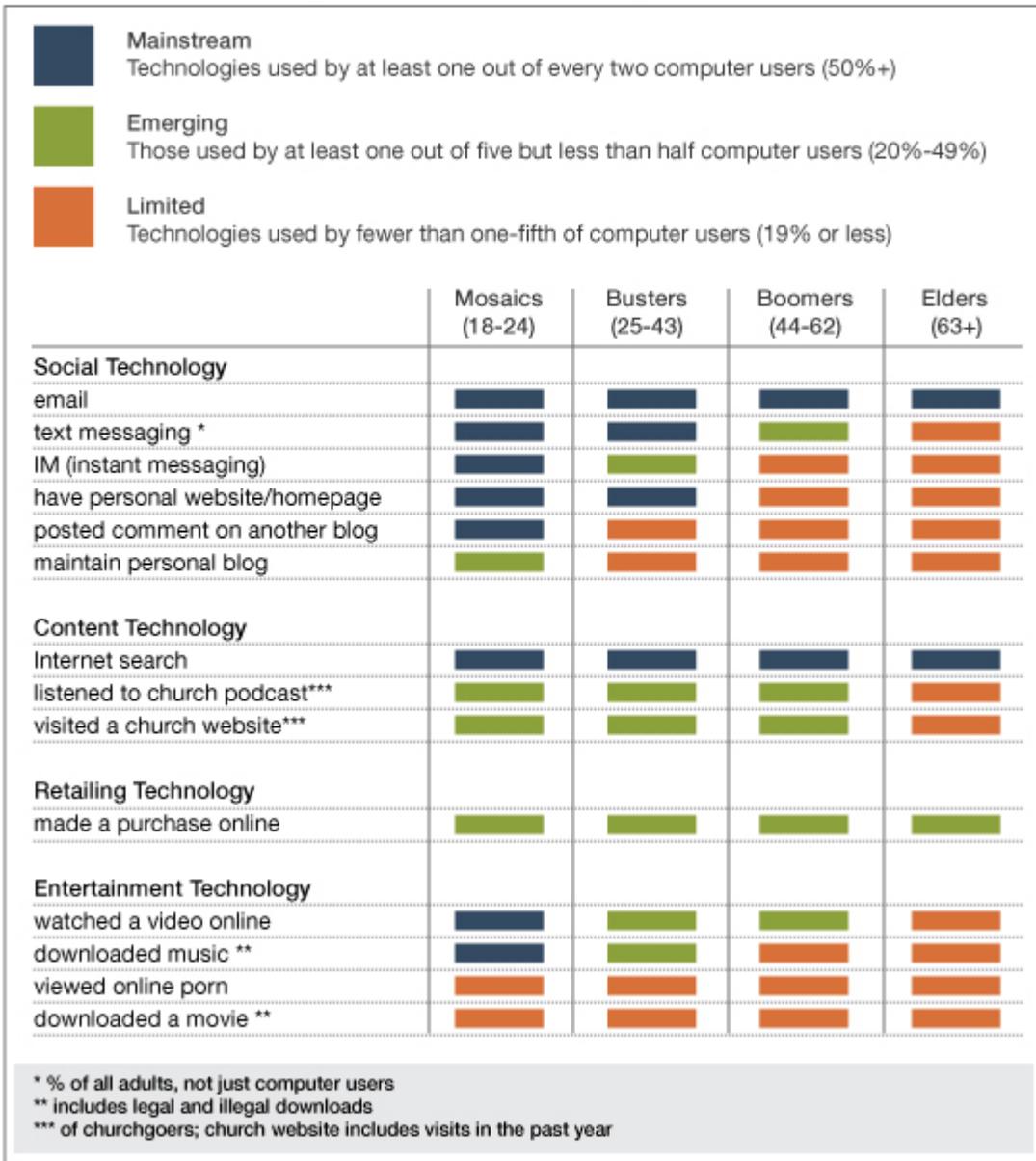
Deciphering the Results

The survey data points to a number of conclusions, according to David Kinnaman, president of The Barna Group:

1. Even though young people are sometimes called the "Net Generation," every age segment is becoming dependent on the Internet. In fact, because Boomers and Busters represent about two-thirds of the adult population, they are far more numerous users of technology than are adults under the age of 25. For instance, the majority of online purchases are made by those between the age of 30 and 55. And many of the bloggers, music downloaders and users of social networking websites are from the Boomer and Buster cohorts.
2. Still, despite the preponderance of middle-age technology users, the nation's youngest adults (Mosaics) are light-years ahead in their personal integration of these technologies, even blazing beyond the comfort of Busters. While Busters differ dramatically from their predecessors, Mosaics are even further down the path of integrating technologies into their lifestyles. On effect of this is that younger adults do not think of themselves as consumers of content; for better and for worse, they consider themselves to be content creators.
3. All Americans are increasingly dependent on new digital technologies to acquire entertainment, products, content, information and stimulation. However, older adults tend to use technology for information and convenience. Younger adults rely on technology to facilitate their search for meaning and connection. These technologies have begun to rewire the ways in which people - especially the young - meet, express themselves, use content and stay connected.
4. For church leaders, it is notable that a minority of churchgoing Mosaics and Busters are accessing their congregation's podcasts and website. While technology keeps progressing and penetrating every aspect of life, churches have to work hard to keep pace with the way people access and use content, while also instructing churchgoers on the potency of electronic tools and techniques.
5. Since technology is pervasive, many of the age-old questions about human development and human flourishing are taking on new dimension. How does technology help or hinder communication, or for that matter, relationships between the generations? Are social skills better or worse? Are reading and writing skills improving or not? And what does adequate preparation for tomorrow's workforce look like? Educators, parents, youth workers and other leaders must continually fine-tune their responses to these issues

The Technological Divide

How computer users of each generation have used technology, in the past week.



Source: The Barna Group, Ltd. / 2009

About the Research

This report is based upon telephone interviews conducted by The Barna Group in three nationwide surveys. These surveys were conducted in July-August 2007, December 2007 and May 2008. Each of these surveys involved interviews with 1000 adults. The maximum margin of sampling error associated with the aggregate sample for each of those surveys is ± 3.2 percentage points at the 95% confidence level. Statistical weighting was used to calibrate the sample to known population percentages in relation to demographic variables.

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In order to obtain permission to use this paper the following emails were exchanged with the Barna Group on September 24, 2009:

From: rvskopak@aol.com [mailto:rvskopak@aol.com]
Sent: Thursday, September 24, 2009 3:09 PM
To: permission@barna.org
Subject: Use of a Barna Blog in a Doctorate Paper

To whom it may concern:

I am requesting permission to use the following Barna Blog in a Doctorate of Ministry Thesis: "New Research Explores How Technology Drives Generation Gap" dated February 23, 2009. This blog would be an Appendix to the paper. The paper is in partial fulfillment of the DMin. program at Concordia Seminary - St. Louis, Missouri. The blog is quoted in the paper and I would like to direct the reader to a fuller reading of the blog by including it as an Appendix. The paper is about teaching Biblical conflict and reconciliation skills to postmoderns who are hindered by dependence on technology. The data in the blog serves as a means to support the necessity of such a project/paper.

The paper will be printed by Concordia Seminary and be available on TREN for use by various ministries. I will not be receiving any payment for the paper in part or whole. My contact information is as follows:

Rev. Jeffrey E. Skopak
10629 E. Ralph Alvarez Place
Tucson, Arizona 85747
Cell: 520-247-9045
Office: 520-747-1213
rvskopak@aol.com

Thank you in advance for your consideration in this matter

In His Peace,

Pastor Jeffrey E. Skopak

(A reply was sent on September 24, 2009 at 3:45 PM):

Dear Rev Skopak,

Thank you for contacting the Barna Group with your permission request. Using copyrighted Barna information in your Doctorate of Ministry Thesis from the Feb 23, 2009 Barna Update (article, not a blog), *New Research Explores How Technology Drives Generation Gap*, will be just fine. Please note the following:

1. Please quote information verbatim
2. Please be clear where your information came from by stating the source (title of book or article) of the information, date (if possible) and the Barna Group's simple website address, www.barna.org, in your resource credits.

Feel free to contact me at any time should you have any further questions about using Barna's information or statistics. I wish you all the best as you present your thesis.

Lisa

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Appendix B

Conflict Resolution Questionnaire

How Do You Deal with Conflict?

Answer the questions below as a way of examining how you deal with conflict. The survey was designed by members of [Jock McClellan's](#) 1993 class on Conflict Resolution. The questions are based primarily on the methods recommended by Dudley Weeks in *The Eight Essential Steps to Conflict Resolution* (Los Angeles: Jeremy Tarcher, 1992), as well as on principles in Roger Fisher's and William Ury's *Getting to Yes* (Penguin Books, 1991).



First, print the survey. Then use the print-out to rate each of the following statements from **1 - 5** using the ratings below to indicate how often you do as the statement says. Please write your responses in the **LEFT** column of dashes. Answer the questions to portray your most usual way of dealing with conflicts like those at home or at work. Do not take long on any question. Give your initial reaction. The more honest your answers, the more useful the results will be. When you are through, go to the pages with [instructions for scoring](#) and [interpretation](#).

- 1. Almost never**
- 2. Occasionally**
- 3. Half the time**
- 4. Usually**
- 5. Almost always**

-
1. ___ / ___ I feel that conflict is a negative experience.
 2. ___ / ___ When I resolve a conflict, it improves my relationship.
 3. ___ / ___ I am afraid to enter into confrontations.
 4. ___ / ___ I feel that in conflicts someone will get hurt.
V ___
 5. ___ / ___ When I prepare to meet to discuss a conflict, I try to arrange for a mutually acceptable time and setting.
 6. ___ / ___ I feel it is important where a conflict takes place.
 7. ___ / ___ I try to make people feel comfortable when meeting with them about a conflict.
 8. ___ / ___ When I start to discuss a conflict with the other party, I choose my opening statement carefully to establish positive realistic expectations.
A ___
 9. ___ / ___ I state my true feelings when dealing with conflict.

10. ____ / ____ During a conflict I ask questions to clarify a statement that I'm not sure of.
11. ____ / ____ I try to be aware of how my negative and positive self-perceptions influence the way I deal with a conflict.
12. ____ / ____ In conflict my reactions are based on how I think the other party perceives me.

C ____

13. ____ / ____ I feel that only my needs are important.
14. ____ / ____ I feel for a relationship to last, the needs of both parties must be considered.
15. ____ / ____ In a conflict I strive to distinguish between real needs and desires.
16. ____ / ____ In order not to harm the relationship, I may temporarily put aside some of my own less important personal wants.

N ____

17. ____ / ____ I share my positive attitude, hoping they will do the same.
18. ____ / ____ I find it necessary to overpower others to get my own way.
19. ____ / ____ I am aware of the other person may need to feel in control of the conflict.
20. ____ / ____ In a conflict, I believe there should be no upper-hand.

P ____

21. ____ / ____ I find it easy to forgive.
22. ____ / ____ I bring up old issues from the past during a new conflict.
23. ____ / ____ When dealing with a conflict, I consider the future of the long-term relationship.
24. ____ / ____ In conflict I try to dominate the other party.

F ____

25. ____ / ____ I listen with an open mind to alternative options.
26. ____ / ____ I feel there is just one way to solve a problem.
27. ____ / ____ When dealing with a conflict, I have preconceived notions about the other party that I am unwilling to let go of.
28. ____ / ____ I can accept criticism from others.

O ____

29. ____ / ____ I feel that winning the war is more important than winning the battle.
30. ____ / ____ I strive for a complete and genuine resolution of a conflict rather than settling for a temporary agreement.
31. ____ / ____ When dealing with a conflict I have a pre-determined solution to the outcome.
32. ____ / ____ I feel the need to control an argument.

D ____

33. ____ / ____ If I had my way, I win, you lose.
34. ____ / ____ When in a conflict with someone, I ask them to explain their position.
35. ____ / ____ I bargain to resolve conflict.

36. ____ / ____ At the end of a conflict, it matters to me that the other person's needs have been met as well as my own.

M ____

37. ____ / ____ I express anger constructively.

38. ____ / ____ In difficult conflicts, I would consider requesting a third party facilitator.

39. ____ / ____ I overlook my partners anger in order to focus on the real issues to conflict.

40. ____ / ____ I feel that it is okay to agree to disagree on specific issues in a conflict.

X ____

Total _____

Using the same **1-5** scale above, how often do you feel you are effective at resolving conflicts in a way that builds your long-term relationship with the other parties?

___ 1 Almost Never

___ 2 Occasionally

___ 3 Half The Time

___ 4 Usually

___ 5 Almost Always

Appendix C

Scoring the Conflict Resolution Questionnaire

1. Reverse the scores for the 12 questions that give high scores for unrecommended responses.

Dudley Weeks says some responses to conflict lead to resolutions which build a relationship, and some do not. All **40** questions need to be on the same scale, giving a high number for desirable or effective responses and a low score for ineffective ones. But **12** of the questions are worded so that ineffective answers get a **"5"** instead of a **"1"**.

For example, question #1 reads **"I feel that conflict is a negative experience."** Weeks would say that someone who answers **"Almost always"**, a **"5"**, will probably have difficulty approaching a conflict and that this will reduce the person's effectiveness. Therefore that response deserves a low score, and the **"5"** needs to be reversed to a **"1"**. Doing this for the **12** questions will assure that all scores will be consistent, with higher scores going to **"better"** responses.

Please reverse the scores for the following questions: **1, 3, 13, 18, 22, 24, 26, 27, 31, 32, 33,** and **35**.

Reverse those questions by looking at the response given in the left hand column and writing in a reversed score in the right hand column as follows:

Answer:	Score:
5	becomes 1
4	becomes 2
3	remains 3
2	becomes 4
1	becomes 5

2. For the questions that do not need to be reversed.

For the questions that do not need to be reversed, write the same number given in the left-hand answer column in the right-hand score column.

3. Compute sub-totals and the total.

The **40** questions are in groups of **4**, based on topics in Week's book. Add the scores for each group of **4** and put the result in the blank. (The letter is just an abbreviation for the topic of that group.)

Then add the sub-totals and enter the result in the **"Total"** blank.

4. Interpret the results, and learn from them.

The higher your scores, the more effective you are likely to be at finding resolutions that meet everyone's real needs and that build your long-term relationship. Of the **10** sub-totals, which were the highest? These are probably areas where you are effective. Which sub-totals were the lowest? These are probably areas where you might try a different approach. Use the sheet "[Learning from the Survey](#)" to understand where you might improve. Pick **2** or **3** of the questions with the lowest scores, and try out behaviors which might make you more effective at resolving conflicts productively.

- [Conflict Resolution Questionnaire](#)
 - [Learning from the Survey](#)
 - [Conflict Resolution - Main Page](#)
-

Last updated on July 17, 1997

Questions? Comments? E-mail [Jock McClellan](#)

Appendix D

Guideline for Conflict Resolution

Learning from the Survey

The higher your score on any question or section of the survey, the more likely you are to be effective at arriving at resolutions that meet both people's needs and that build the relationship. Low scores may indicate areas where you could increase your effectiveness.

For each question on the survey, some advice is given below. The advice was compiled by the Conflict Resolution class and is based primarily on Dudley Weeks' *The Eight Essential Steps to Conflict Resolution*, but also includes ideas from other sources, including *Getting to Yes* by **Roger Fisher** and **William Ury**. The guidelines are given in groups of four, corresponding to the ten lettered groups in the survey, which are in turn based on the topics or steps in Weeks.

For the questions or sections on which you got the lowest scores, read the guidelines and consider trying them.

They may help you be more effective.

V. VIEW CONFLICT AS NATURAL AND POSITIVE.

View conflict as a natural outgrowth of diversity among people, which can be addressed in a win-win way that strengthens your relationships. Remember the value of building your long-term relationship. View the resolution of the conflict and the building of the relationship as inter-related parts. Prevention works best.

1. View conflicts as opportunities for growth - for you and the other person, and for your relationship.
 2. Handle the differences in a way that strengthens your relationship - together you will find more satisfying resolutions for this and future conflicts.
 3. Address differences directly, realizing you are more likely to meet both your concerns and the other's if you discuss issues openly.
 4. Separate the people from the problem, so you can protect the relationship while addressing the problem.
-

A. ATMOSPHERE.

Start by establishing an effective atmosphere that promotes partnership and problem-solving.

5. Meet with the other at a mutually satisfactory time, when you both have plenty of time and are free from distractions.
6. Meet in an equally acceptable place that is tranquil and gives you equal power.

7. Help the other feel comfortable and safe, affirming the importance of the relationship.
8. Start by saying you know the two of you can invent some solutions together that are mutually acceptable.

C. CLARIFY PERCEPTIONS.

Work with the other so both are very clear about what the conflict is really about. Eliminate ghost issues that arise from misperceptions. Separate the people from the problem. Acknowledge emotions as legitimate. Then face the problem together.

9. Be clear with yourself and with the other how you feel and how you perceive the problem. Use "**I - Statements**" to tell the other how you feel, rather than "**You - Statements**" that blame. Assert your needs without attacking the other.
10. Ask questions to clarify your perception of the other's perceptions. Listen actively. Acknowledge what the other says.
11. Look at yourself honestly, clarifying needs and misperceptions.
12. Clear up misperceptions and stereotypes. Avoid pushing "**buttons.**"

N. Note NEEDS, not wants.

Identify the needs that are essential to you, your partner, and your relationship.

13. Acknowledge the legitimate needs of the other, as well as those of your own. Recognize that there are usually multiple interests. Fractionate the problem.
14. Recognize that sustaining your relationship requires meeting needs of both.
15. Distinguish between real needs and secondary desires. Identify the other's core goals you can support.
16. Postpone contentious demands that may damage the relationship until you and your partner have worked on meeting needs of the relationship first.

P. Produce Positive Partnership POWER.

Build "**power with,**" shared power which enables lasting resolutions and relations.

17. Be positive; be clear about yourself and your values. Keep reaching for the other's positive power and potential for constructive action. Recognize the power of effectiveness that comes from having the skills to develop the relationship, understand interests, invent options, and agree based on objective criteria.
18. Avoid negative "**power over,**" which wastes energy in seesaw battle, and which may backfire, not achieving your lasting goals. Treat others as you want to be treated.
19. Don't stereotype the other only by their negative power; keep options open for the other's constructive power. Don't ask who is more powerful; be optimistic about outcomes.
20. Work as a team, realizing you need each other's positive power to act effectively. Be unconditionally supportive of the relationship.

F. Focus on the FUTURE first, then learn from the past.

21. Forgive (which does not mean you approve). Acknowledge all fall short. Move beyond negative past; look to positive potential. Be hard on the problem and soft on the people.
 22. Focus on the current issue. Don't pick old wounds. Learn from the past; recall good resolutions.
 23. Remember the importance of the long-term relationship. Create images of an improved relationship resulting from effective resolution of the conflict.
 24. Work as partners for mutually beneficial agreements which will nurture your relationship.
-

O. Open up OPTIONS for Mutual Gain.

25. Listen with an open mind to alternative options. Ask for the other's options first; learn from them.
 26. Prepare for discussions by inventing several specific new options that meet shared needs. Don't view these as final goals, but as starting points. Together, brainstorm new possibilities. Separate inventing from deciding. Postpone critical discussion.
 27. Beware preconceived answers. Look for common ground behind seeming oppositions. Avoid stereotypes.
 28. Listen actively and acknowledge what is being said (which does not mean agreeing with it).
-

D. Develop "DOABLES," Stepping-stones to Action.

29. Develop small steps that lead you closer to a mutually healthy decision on larger issues. Chose ones that meet shared needs and that you have shared power to implement.
 30. Do not rest with temporary fixes which are not sufficient to meet the long-term problem. As the three little pigs learned, solid construction will last.
 31. View this as a cooperative process whose best outcome cannot be foreseen alone at the beginning.
 32. You will have a more satisfactory outcome if all factions participate as equals. Understand that the others have interests and needs too.
-

M. Make MUTUAL-BENEFIT AGREEMENTS.

33. Avoid win-lose solutions, which damage the long-term relationship. Consider the needs of your partner, you, and your relationship, and you both will win. Avoid a contest of wills. Yield to reason, not pressure. Do not be a "**door-mat.**"
34. Ask the other to clarify his/her interests; clarify your own.
35. Avoid bargaining, posturing, demands, and threats, which kill cooperative problem-solving. Acknowledge non-negotiable elements. Focus on interests, not positions, but do build large agreements on small prior doables.
36. Be caretaker of the other's welfare as well as your own. Make agreements that meet objective, reasonable standards of fairness. Make agreements that meet the needs of both,

and that build the relationship.

X. EXTRA Considerations.

37. Express anger constructively. Emotions are legitimate and communicate. Channel anger's energy. Focus on the angering behavior, not the person.
 38. Define your best alternative to a negotiated agreement. Seek a third party facilitator when you and the other lack needed skills or when there seem to be intractable differences.
 39. Hear the other's anger non-defensively. Don't react to emotional outbursts. Look for what is within it you can do something about it together.
 40. Agree to disagree on specific value differences. Don't feel you have to agree on everything.
-

- [Conflict Resolution Questionnaire](#)
 - [Scoring the Conflict Resolution Questionnaire](#)
 - [Conflict Resolution - Main Page](#)
-

Last updated on July 17, 1997

Questions? Comments? E-mail [Jock McClellan](#)

Appendix E



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**THE INTERNET
AND HIGHER
EDUCATION**

Reliability of the Conflict Resolution Questionnaire: Considerations for using and developing Internet-based questionnaires

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Abstract

In the current information age, there is a growing use of and reliance on the Internet. One area of concern for educators is the communication of information using an electronic questionnaire interface. Therefore, it seems pertinent to look at the issue of dissemination of Internet questionnaire information and the integrity of this process. Internet-based questionnaires are commonly used to capture responses from the public that can then be used as data for making so-called meaningful interpretations and suggestions. One such questionnaire is the Conflict Resolution Questionnaire (CRQ). This paper is divided into three parts. The author evaluates the reliability of the CRQ. Secondly, the author reflects upon this evaluation and considers the use of Internet-based questionnaires in a more general sense. Thirdly, the author presents some existing solutions and safeguards in using the Internet and in monitoring the use of Internet-based assessment. The results of this preliminary study suggested that the CRQ has weak intrafactor reliability, therefore prompting serious reflection on the use of Internet-based questionnaires. This preliminary study raises questions about the authenticity of similar questionnaires that are available from the Internet.

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Keywords: Conflict Resolution Questionnaire; Internet; Reliability; Privacy; Security; Consumer protection; Learning and tort liability

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1. Introduction

The Internet is one of the main sources of information for students and academics in the present age. This valuable resource mechanism has made the job of the educator and researcher so much easier, making information easily accessible in terms of time and expense. Despite these significant benefits, educators must ask how convincing is the information on the Internet? If this information is not credible, it can be ambiguous and, indeed, in some extreme cases, detrimental to learning.

Many researchers have used the Internet to develop devices for measuring phenomena in the area of the behavioral sciences. Many of these devices can evaluate respondents' response patterns, resulting in the provision of informative feedback. An example of an Internet self-evaluation instrument is the Conflict Resolution Questionnaire (CRQ) (McClellan, 1997a). The CRQ is a free resource developed by a higher education provider in the United States, which can be accessed without difficulty from the Internet by any person interested in promoting their self-awareness of conflict, and in solving existing and potential conflict situations. A research question arose for the present author regarding the CRQ's psychometric properties, given that it is easily accessed and a viable option to more established questionnaires in this area that are costly and not so easily accessed (Kilmann & Thomas, 1974; Rahim, 1983). The CRQ is based on published material in the area of conflict resolution (Fisher & Ury, 1991; Weeks, 1994). The ideas posed by Fisher and Ury, and Weeks are well documented in the conflict resolution literature as being viable procedures for identifying and resolving conflict situations. Nonetheless, as with many Internet-based questionnaires, such as the Jasper–Goldberg Questionnaire and the Index Learning Styles Questionnaire (Felder & Soloman, 1999; Jasper & Goldberg, 1993), the CRQ requires a systematic review by researchers of its psychometric properties related to reliability to confirm its utility.

The authenticity of questionnaire information collected via the Internet is becoming a major area of concern (Harper, Slaughter, & Norman, 1998), especially as Internet information can be misleading even though Internet authors may wish to inform rather than to intentionally deceive (Beredjikian, Bozentka, Stenberg, & Bernstein, 2000; Latthe, Latthe, & Khan, 2000). Requests for responses from Internet-based questionnaires and the availability of feedback to respondents poses several ethical and legal dilemmas. These dilemmas may be related to privacy and security issues (Brebner et al., 2001; Dhillon & Moores, 2002; Moore, 1998; Papazafetropoulou & Pouloudi, 2002), consumer protection and electronic commerce (Higgins, 1999), education (Beredjikian et al., 2000; Champelli, 1995; Kinnaman, 1995; Latthe et al., 2000; Ministry of Health, 2000), and tort liability (Kizza, 2003). The potential for misrepresentation and negligence also has implications for professional practice (Gross, 1993; InternetNZ, 2002; Kizza, 2003; Reynolds, 2003; The British Psychological Society, 2003) and research into Internet-based instruments (Felder & Soloman, 1999; Jasper & Goldberg, 1993; McClellan, 1997a; Psychometrics.com, 2003; Psychtests.com, 2002).

In the current information age, there is a growing use of and reliance on the Internet. One area of concern for educators is the communication of information using an electronic questionnaire interface. Therefore, it seems pertinent to look at the issue of dissemination of Internet questionnaire information and the integrity of this process. Internet-based questionnaires are used commonly to capture responses from the public that can then be used as data for making so-called meaningful interpretations and suggestions. One such questionnaire is the CRQ. This paper is divided into three parts. The purpose of this paper is, firstly, to review the reliability of the CRQ. Secondly, the author aims to extend the examination of the CRQ, and to reflect on the use of Internet-based questionnaires in a more general

sense. Finally, the author presents some existing solutions and safeguards to using the Internet and in monitoring the use of Internet-based assessment. The results of this preliminary study suggested that the CRQ has weak intrafactor reliability, therefore prompting serious reflection on the use of Internet-based questionnaires. This preliminary study raises questions about the authenticity of similar questionnaires that are available from the Internet. There are further considerations with respect to questionnaires that require online responding and those that require a purchase cost. Educators are concerned with areas related to privacy, security, consumer protection, learning, and tort liability. The author highlights the need for consumer protection in terms of adhering to guidelines presented by consumer watchdogs and professional bodies. The need for increased vigilance also extends to the requirement for more rigorous research in this area.

2. Methods

2.1. Participants

CRQ responses were obtained from 338 university students, from two major faculties (Business and Arts). The students were a self-selected sample; the author canvassed both the business and arts faculties inviting students to participate voluntarily in this project. Students were invited to complete the questionnaires in a face-to-face classroom environment. The students were from diverse cultural backgrounds. Ethics approval for the collection and use of data was obtained from the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 24th April 2002 (AUTEC Reference number 02/19).

2.2. Materials

The CRQ is a paper-based questionnaire available on the Internet and there is no provision for responding online. A user needs to print off the questionnaire, before answering the items and then refers back to the scoring criteria to learn about the way they respond to conflict situations (McClellan, 1997a, 1997b, 1997c). The CRQ (McClellan, 1997a) has 41 items incorporating 10 factors, the 41st item not being part of the 10-factor configuration. Each CRQ item measures responses on a 5-point response format ranging from 'Almost never' to 'Almost always'.

Essentially, a high score on any item within the CRQ suggests that the respondent is successful at creating resolutions to conflict that satisfy everyone's needs and that will likely enhance the relationship between conflict participants. Low scores may indicate areas where a respondent can look at, in terms of increasing their effectiveness, in resolving conflicts (McClellan, 1997b, 1997c).

As noted above, the CRQ comprises 10 factors, each with four items. The CRQ factors have been derived from class discussion regarding two published works in the area of conflict resolution (Fisher & Ury, 1991; Weeks, 1994). The 10 CRQ factors proposed were: (1) view of conflict; (2) atmosphere; (3) clarification of perceptions; (4) needs; (5) power; (6) future; (7) options; (8) 'doables'; (9) mutual-benefit agreements, and (10) extra considerations (McClellan, 1997b, 1997c). All 10 factors approximately parallel the chapters of Weeks' book. This makes it convenient for users of the CRQ to interpret their scores in line with the suggestions made by McClellan (1997b, 1997c) and to access more substantial suggestions regarding intervention in Weeks' book. The factors are described below.

health information can be used and disclosed. Four of the 12 rules are relevant to electronic consultation: 3, 5, 10, and 11 (Brebner et al., 2001). These relate to issues of informed consent regarding personal information being gathered, security and storage of electronic information, and disclosure of health information (Brebner et al., 2001). In the UK provisions are made under the Data Protection Act (1998) concerning the protection of private information, rights of access, the need for advocacy groups to advise and direct individuals, and the responsibilities for government, organizations, individuals, and the information industry in the way they use personal information (Moore, 1998).

3.2.3. *Consumer protection*

The third set of issues relates to concerns for the user (consumer) especially if information released is of a dubious quality. One of the worrying aspects of electronic communication is when financial transactions are made concerning the retrieval of information. There are two areas of legislation within the New Zealand context that are relevant: the Consumers Guarantees Act (CGA) and the Fair Trading Act (FTA) (Higgins, 1999).

In the first instance, in New Zealand if a questionnaire is based on unwarranted assumptions, then it may be construed to be unfit for its intended purpose. In a business, sense providers that do not adhere to this basic principle are contravening the CGA, and the author may be subject to the risk of claims that can lead to damages and loss of reputation, possibly resulting in loss of business. In addition, if claims of an author regarding a questionnaire are inaccurate then elements of misrepresentation may be in place, which means that the author may be contravening the FTA. The best way of avoiding such problems is to create a questionnaire that is accurate and fit for its intended purpose (Higgins, 1999). If the questionnaire does not adhere to these guidelines, then a disclaimer needs to be put in place so the user is warned of its limitations. The CGA and FTA are only strictly applicable to the New Zealand context, which is one of the main problems with regulating the global nature of the Internet, whereby each country has its own particular legislation.

Furthermore, the New Zealand government has also passed the Electronic Transactions Act (2002), in an attempt to maintain a sense of legal 'sanity' in the ever-increasing use of e-commerce. The purpose of this Act is to monitor the use of electronic technology in three ways. These include: ensuring that electronic communication is legal, establishing that there are regulations for transmitting and receiving communication, and determining that the laws related to paper-based communication apply to electronic media (Ministry of Economic Development, 2003). There are also similar statutes that have been passed in other countries such as the Australian Electronic Transactions Act, the Irish E-Commerce Act, the Singaporean Electronic Transactions Act, and the Canadian Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act.

3.2.4. *Learning*

The fourth issue considers the concept of learning, although much of the apprehension regarding Internet information is related to how education providers can guard against the use of inaccurate or unacceptable material in their institutions (Campbell, 1998; Kinnaman, 1995). Most of the information presented in this context refers to how students can be protected from exposure to offensive material such as pornography. However, the implementation of acceptable use policies can have wide-ranging implications for questionnaires. For example, disclaimers can be devised to alert Internet users about issues such as reliability. The issue of educational integrity and the Internet is strongly linked to tort liability.

3.2.5. *Tort liability*

The final issue considers the release of medical and psychological information over the Internet and the need to consider tort liability. Tort liability is related to negligence, malpractice, strict liability, and misrepresentation (Kizza, 2003). Malpractice is a type of negligence, and it can easily be applied to services rendered (Kizza, 2003). Negligence occurs when a product, such as a questionnaire, is being provided and that product does not comply with a reasonable standard of care, skill, and competence. Carelessness or incompetence can occur in the design stage of a questionnaire. In addition, malpractice can occur if information is passed through the Internet and this service is negligent. Furthermore, if there is evidence that the resulting information has caused injury or harm to a person, then in the US a lawsuit may apply (Kizza, 2003).

As an example, in terms of distributing medical education, a legal consideration regarding misrepresentation of information is the notion of medical malpractice (Beredjikian et al., 2000; Latthe et al., 2000). In some cases, the questionnaire information filtered back to Internet users is the provision of therapeutic advice. If this advice is inherently faulty, then there is a case for medical fraud. In New Zealand, the Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act (2003) was devised as a framework for occupational legislation. A part of this legislation is the notification to the standards authority of any malpractice, and the consideration of temporary suspension if there is public risk. These competency issues are linked to the need for registered practitioners to maintain a set of quality assurance activities, such as monitoring any circumstances that may hinder the quality of a particular health service.

3.3. *Solutions and safeguards in using Internet-based questionnaires*

Stahl (2002) suggested that certain key areas require carefully monitoring. These include: (1) the area of Internet power; (2) privacy concerns; (3) mechanisms for monitoring relevance and authenticity of material being transmitted via the Internet; and (4) the problem of access and the level of awareness regarding Internet information. Monitoring relevance and authenticity of material can be implemented by consumer supervisory bodies (InternetNZ, 2002). In New Zealand, one such watchdog is InternetNZ (InternetNZ, 2002); this body was formed to monitor Internet use and to ensure that Internet users comply with high standards of ethics and integrity. As such, InternetNZ is a prominent regulatory body that influences government, academia, media, and industry. These regulatory bodies provide a professional code of ethical practice that enhances ethical decision-making, create high standards of communication, create trust and respect, and provide a useful frame of reference (Reynolds, 2003).

Gross (1993) suggested that this kind of professional code needs to be affirmative, not punitive, in nature. Therefore, professional responsibility needs to be commensurate with professional authority. In this way, professionals can be encouraged to make decisions that encourage competency such as further professional development. In contrast, other authors (Kizza, 2003) proposed that a code of practice should be linked to legal consequences such as enforcement, reporting, hearings, damages and appeals, and that in this way, the code would be a more effective set of guidelines.

The British Psychological Society [BPS] (2003) addressed the need for guidelines to monitor the use of computer-based assessment. The BPS has created a set of principles that have addressed the problems of assessment scoring and interpretation, storage, retrieval, and transmissions. The principles relate to: (1) issues of informing users of the idea of best practice; (2) the creation of clear and unambiguous documentation related to the purpose and empirical value of the assessment; (3) the limitations of assessments regarding competency requirements to using the computer-based assessment; and (4) the

following discussion aims to consider the use of Internet questionnaires in terms of establishing greater vigilance and thus providing greater safety and assurance for respondents and consumers. The following discussion will focus on issues related to the unintentional provision of misleading data, privacy and security, consumer protection and electronic commerce, learning and tort liability.

3.2.1. Unintended provision of misleading data

The first issue to be addressed is a major concern related to the dissemination of possible misleading information through the Internet and is linked to the notion of unintentional deception (Beredjikian et al., 2000; Earthe et al., 2000). There is some suggestion that the many authors of Internet-based questionnaires have the user's best interests at heart, in that these questionnaires often do not require monetary exchange and are easily accessible. Nevertheless, many do not acknowledge the sophisticated psychometric science in designing and developing questionnaires (e.g., Jasper & Goldberg, 1993; McClellan, 1997a), although some authors are beginning more in-depth psychometric analysis of their Internet-based questionnaires (Felder & Solomon, 1999).

Nonetheless, well-meaning organizations like higher-education providers can unwittingly present misleading information, due to the problems associated with not establishing reliability and validity. This misleading information, in the form of guidelines for scoring questionnaires and interpreting those scores, can have an unintended authoritative association. Thus, the inexperienced user may consider the questionnaire information to be authentic as they may equate higher education with academic rigour. Furthermore, if the original author considers their questionnaire to be beneficial, their intent may be based on a belief their product is 'good'. This assumption, if misdirected, may create unforeseen problems for the user, especially when the questionnaire is unable to distribute accurate and relevant information.

3.2.2. Privacy and security

The second issue relates to users responding to Internet-based questionnaires that require online responding. In this case, there are both privacy and security concerns (Dhillon & Moores, 2002; Papazateiropoulou & Pouloudi, 2002). Dhillon and Moores (2002) proposed that Internet privacy concerns are related to the idea of unauthorized intrusion whereby personal information is being monitored and stored in information databases worldwide, which creates a potential problem for privacy infringement.

Several factors relate to the access of personal information, such as collecting this type of information, unauthorized use of the information, wrongful access, and the potential for errors. The intent of the collection agency and the potential for further use of the information can be linked to both positive and negative pathways (Dhillon & Moores, 2002). In a positive way, this information can be used to refine and develop products more in line with the users' needs. Data from an Internet-based questionnaire could be used to evaluate its psychometric credibility. In a more negative light, this information could be used as marketing data for creating unwanted links back to the consumer.

Privacy and security concerns have influenced legal considerations. However, due to the global nature of the Internet, it is difficult to provide comprehensive legal regulation. In New Zealand, the Privacy Act (1993) is intended to promote and protect individual privacy (Brebner et al., 2001). The Privacy Act has a set of 12 principles related to issues of collection, use and access of personal data, and security provisions for ensuring the safe use of personal data. Legislation relevant to the health sector is the Health Information Privacy Code (1994). This area of legislation consists of 12 rules related to the way

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Appendix F
The Postmodern Attitudes and Action Survey
Technology, Relationships, Conflict, and Reconciliation
(Please circle your answer located on in the left column)

1-Strongly Disagree 2-Disagree 3- Neither Agree or Disagree 4-Agree 5-Strongly Agree

- | | |
|-----------|--|
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 1-I tend to use my cell phone more for text-messaging rather than talking |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 2-I can articulate the Biblical model of conflict reconciliation |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 3-Using Facebook or other social networking resources is usually helpful in resolving conflicts |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 4-Healthy relationships are built upon the love God has for us |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 5-I can discern what a person is feeling by listening to their voice more than by a text or email |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 6-There is more than one way in which I deal with conflict |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 7-Text messaging is a helpful communication tool in order to bring about reconciliation |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 8-Our response to conflict often reveals our idols |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 9-Conflict-resolution and reconciliation are the same thing |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 10-The Bible contains examples of all the relationships I have in life |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 11-Using Technological communication to respond to someone who has admitted wrong is okay in close relationships |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 12-Non-verbal communication is equally important as verbal communication |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 13-My neighbor is anyone I come into contact with |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 14-When listening to another person my body language is not important |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 15-Using technological communication to apologize is okay in close relationships |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 16-Conflict is caused by desires of the heart |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 17-Reconciling conflict is an opportunity to bring Glory to God |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 18-Communicating through email or texting provides an effective way to deal with conflict |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 19-Healthy relationships can be sustained by technological means only |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 20-I prefer speaking face to face with somebody that I am in conflict with |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 21-Confession and forgiveness is a form of reconciliation |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 22-No matter the circumstances, when I am in a conflict I have contributed to it in some way |

Appendix G

**Attitudes and Actions Survey
Technology, Relationships, Communication, Conflict, and Reconciliation**

Answer Key

Participant #: _____

Participant Name: _____

Pre Test/Post Test

Date Administered: _____

Technology:

1: _____ 3: _____ 7: _____ 11: _____ 15: _____ 18: _____ 19: _____ Average Score: _____

Reconciliation:

2: _____ 9: _____ 17: _____ 21: _____ Average Score: _____

Relationships:

4: _____ 10: _____ 13: _____ 19: _____ Average Score: _____

Communication:

5: _____ 12: _____ 14: _____ 20: _____ Average Score: _____

Conflict:

6: _____ 8: _____ 16: _____ 20: _____ 22: _____ Average Score: _____

Appendix H

The Pre-Event and Post-Event Interview Questions for the Participants

Technology

1-How often do you communicate a day using technology? What type of technology do you prefer for your communication?

2-Can you sustain a relationship with another person by using only technological means?

3-Do you believe that technology can help or hinder your ability to reconcile your conflicts? Why or Why not?

Reconciliation

1-What is the Biblical model for conflict reconciliation?

2-What is the difference between resolution and reconciliation? Is there a difference?

3-What are the appropriate steps in reconciliation? What do you consider to be inappropriate steps for reconciliation?

Relationships

1-Do you believe that the Bible contains examples of all of your present day relationships? Why or why not?

2-What kinds of relationships do you have?

3-Does the use of technological communication help or hinder your relationships? Explain.

Communication

1-What is your preferred method of communication: cell phone, face to face, text-messaging, computer? Why?

2-How important is it to you to see the person you are communicating with? Why?

3-Is technological communication the same as face to face communication? Explain.

Conflict

1-How do you deal with conflict when it arises in your life?

2-Do you believe it is appropriate to use technological communication when dealing with your conflicts? Why or why not?

3-Describe a conflict that you handled well. Describe a conflict that did not go well. What are the differences between the two? What are the similarities.

Appendix I

The Pre-Event and Post-Event Interview Questions for the Participants

Pre-Event X

Post-Event _____

Interviewer Jahn

Participant Interviewed B13

Technology

1-How often do you communicate a day using technology? What type of technology do you prefer for your communication? *I send hundreds of text messages a day. I am totally dependent on technology to communicate with my friends. I use my computer and occasionally IM people. I use email to communicate with mom and dad and adults back home. If I had to choose which technology to use? Cell phone...definitely.*

2-Can you sustain a relationship with another person by using only technological means? *I guess you can sustain a relationship with technology. Isn't that what I'm doing when I email back home or IM a friend at a different school? I mean, I can't see them face to face. It's not like we are in the same room or something. So, why not?*

3-Do you believe that technology can help or hinder your ability to reconcile your conflicts? Why or Why not? *I know I have blown off another person with a text message. It worked. We didn't have a nasty face to face confrontation. It just ended. So I guess it technology helped in that conflict. I have a friend who broke off her engagement by an email. I thought that was kinda cold. But it did bring an end to a bad relationship that nobody thought was good. So I guess you could say technology helped in that conflict as well.*

Reconciliation

1-What is the Biblical model for conflict reconciliation?

I know that the Bible says we should talk with each other face to face, turn the other cheek, stuff like that. And I know we are supposed to be forgiving to others. I don't know, is there more than that?

2-What is the difference between resolution and reconciliation? Is there a difference?

I have always seen these words used interchangeably. They mean the same thing – an end or peace in a conflict. There isn't a difference between the two.

3-What are the appropriate steps in reconciliation? What do you consider to be inappropriate steps for reconciliation? *Overlook the problem...maybe talk to the person if it's really bad. Don't let the problem stand between you and the person unless it's really bad. And if necessary, end the relationship if it's really hurtful to you.*

Relationships

1-Do you believe that the Bible contains examples of all of your present day relationships? Why or why not? *I don't know. I guess it does. I know that the Bible has lots of people who are in relationship with each other – husbands and wives, children, brothers and sisters. You know, it's like what we have today.*

2-What kinds of relationships do you have? *Friends, family, classmates, parents...I have a sister. I have a roommate. My mom and dad are together and at home. I have really good friends and people who are more like acquaintances.*

3-Does the use of technological communication help or hinder your relationships? Explain. *Technology helps me keep up to date with everyone. I can text-message people while doing other things. I email mom and dad and some of my other relatives. When I'm working on my computer I can IM my friends at other schools. Technology definitely helps my relationships.*

Communication

1-What is your preferred method of communication: cell phone, face to face, text-messaging, computer? Why? *I prefer text-messaging. Why? Because it's quick and easy. I don't have to have a long conversation. Text-messaging gets right to the heart of the matter without wasting a lot of time.*

2-How important is it to you to see the person you are communicating with? Why? *It's not that important. When Skype first came out it was pretty cool to see mom and dad while talking with them. But I think the novelty has worn off a little bit. It's the words that matter most.*

3-Is technological communication the same as face to face communication? Explain. *Sort of. Communication is communication. The important part is the words. Yeah, there are some things missing when communicating with technology. But for the most part I would have to say that it's the same so long as you are conveying your thoughts and feelings.*

Conflict

1-How do you deal with conflict when it arises in your life?

I try to talk to the person. I may text the person to say we need to talk or to share my feelings. If I can avoid it and not make a big deal about it that tends to be the way I prefer to deal with it. If we can work together to find a common ground that's what I like to do the best.

2-Do you believe it is appropriate to use technological communication when dealing with your conflicts? Why or why not? *Yes, you can definitely use your cell phone or computer in your conflicts. You have to remember, that's how I communicate. Technology is just a part of my communication. That's how my friends would expect me to reach out to them and deal with our problem.*

3-Describe a conflict that you handled well. Describe a conflict that did not go well. What are the differences between the two? What are the similarities? *I can tell you about a lot of conflicts that didn't go well. But conflicts that went well? Is there such a thing?! Okay, I know of a conflict that went well. My friend and I were working on a project in the library together. She had to leave early because she said she had to go and study for another test when in reality she was going out on a date with a new guy. When I found out I was really mad because we had this partner project to do and I got stuck with more work. Thank God I found out late at night. I didn't talk to her until the next day. I guess it gave me time to cool down because when I saw her I wasn't as mad. In fact, it really wasn't that important to me. A conflict that went well? I know of one. My roommate "borrowed" my new top to go to a party. She didn't ask me if she could "borrow" it. When I walked in the room and she was standing there wearing it I started to flip out. I walked out of the room to cool down. When I came back in she had taken it off and had on something else. We talked and I began to feel bad that I flipped out. After talking I told her that she should wear it to the party and that it looked good on her. We laughed and made up on the spot. What was similar? In both cases I got really upset. I was wronged or lied to by a friend. I had to cool down before I could talk. It worked out in the end.*

The Pre-Event and Post-Event Interview Questions for the Participants

Pre-Event _____
Post-Event _____ X _____
Interviewer _____ Jahn _____
Participant Interviewed _____ B13 _____

Technology

1-How often do you communicate a day using technology? What type of technology do you prefer for your communication? *I am still using my cell phone to text message – and I am still texting a lot. But I have to admit. I probably use my cell phone too much. I'm still going to text people; but I am going to be more intentional about getting together so we can talk face to face. I still love my cell phone!*

2-Can you sustain a relationship with another person by using only technological means? *I'm not so sure you can sustain a relationship using only technology to communicate. I realize you have to see each other face to face and not just through a webcam. That's why I look forward to seeing my family and friends when I go home – face to face is very important. Technology can't replace that.*

3-Do you believe that technology can help or hinder your ability to reconcile your conflicts? Why or Why not? *Technology can help and hinder you in a conflict. You shouldn't end a relationship with a text message. It's so cold and impersonal. But technology can help by reaching out to a person who may not want to talk to you at first. But I don't think the technology should be the only means in how you deal with the conflict.*

Reconciliation

1-What is the Biblical model for conflict reconciliation? *Talk to the person you are in conflict with (face to face whenever possible). Talk and talk some more. When that fails, you need to bring along some help. Not to attack the person, but a person to help you both through the issue. And when that fails, you have to end the relationship to show damaging the conflict is.*

2-What is the difference between resolution and reconciliation? Is there a difference? *Resolution brings an end to the conflict. Reconciliation brings healing to the relationship that is in conflict. There is a big difference. Resolution and reconciliation are not the same.*

3-What are the appropriate steps in reconciliation? What do you consider to be inappropriate steps for reconciliation? *Overlook...talk to the person...talk some more...bring along help. If necessary, stop communicating with the person if it's creating more damage. Inappropriate steps? Pretending the conflict doesn't exist or attacking the person at every turn. It's a two way street. This was a huge reminder: mom and dad aren't around to fix my problems and solve my conflicts.*

Relationships

1-Do you believe that the Bible contains examples of all of your present day relationships? Why or why not? *Yes. The Bible has every kind of relationship I have today. Family, friends, co-workers, you name it. Pastor showed us all different kinds of relationships in the Bible and had us consider how we have the same kind. I never really thought of the Bible that way before.*

2-What kinds of relationships do you have? *All different kinds: Parents, sister, friend, classmate, co-worker, leader, follower, student, stranger to some.*

3-Does the use of technological communication help or hinder your relationships? Explain. *Technological communication helps my relationships because it keeps me connected with other people. I am able to keep in touch with relatives and friends who I would otherwise not be able to communicate with as regularly. I am able to make dates with friends, organize get-togethers, and keep up to date with their lives.*

Communication

1-What is your preferred method of communication: cell phone, face to face, text-messaging, computer? Why? *I still like text-messaging. It's quick and easy and I don't have to think about it too much. But I do know that I need to be more intentional about getting together and talking face to face with my friends and family.*

2-How important is it to you to see the person you are communicating with? Why? *It has become more important. Facial feedback helps you better understand what the person is really feeling or saying.*

3-Is technological communication the same as face to face communication? Explain. *Not really. Technology is good at conveying the words. The face, body language, and voice conveys the feelings.*

Conflict

1-How do you deal with conflict when it arises in your life? *I reach out to the person and try to find a time when we can meet face to face. If I can overlook it, I will. But if I am really hurt, I will make sure the other person knows they hurt me and how they hurt me. We have to talk it out so this doesn't stand between us.*

2-Do you believe it is appropriate to use technological communication when dealing with your conflicts? Why or why not? *You can use technology if it is minor or if it is to set up a face to face. If you are only using technology you are probably going to cause a bigger conflict.*

3-Describe a conflict that you handled well. Describe a conflict that did not go well. What are the differences between the two? What are the similarities? *I want to tell you about a conflict that went well. My roommate and I have been fighting for four months. In fact, we haven't really talked to each other during this time. It's been sort of passive aggressive. I set up the TVO to record a show, she cancels it. I finish the milk and then don't replace it. Childish stuff like that. All that childish stuff only escalated our problems. It was horrible. I would go to our room and she would be there and we wouldn't even look at each other. But after the class on reconciliation I realized that I had contributed to our problems. In fact, I was probably the reason it all started. I never thought of confession in this way – but I needed to confess my role in the conflict to her. It was really awkward and difficult. But the more I began to share with her, the better I began to feel. She looked shocked. But the good news is that I'm talking with my roommate for the first time in four months. We still have a long way to go. But at least we are talking.*

The Pre-Event and Post-Event Interview Questions for the Participants

Pre-Event X

Post-Event _____

Interviewer McDougall

Participant Interviewed A5

Technology

1-How often do you communicate a day using technology? What type of technology do you prefer for your communication? *I use my cell phone a lot – maybe one to two hours a day. I text message but not as much as I used to. I may send two to three dozen text messages a day. I live in front of my computer – at work especially. We use IM-ing in the office so that we can communicate faster between members of the team. If I had my preference I would say the computer is my favorite type of technology to use to communicate.*

2-Can you sustain a relationship with another person by using only technological means? *I think you can sustain a relationship by technology. I have technology friends. That is, we don't really see each other. We only communicate by our technology.*

3-Do you believe that technology can help or hinder your ability to reconcile your conflicts? Why or Why not? *I think technology can help in a conflict. People who are afraid to speak face to face can at least get their point across to another person through the technology.*

Reconciliation

1-What is the Biblical model for conflict reconciliation? *People need to talk out their conflicts with each other. You shouldn't fight or get nasty with each other. It's about loving your neighbor even when you disagree with them.*

2-What is the difference between resolution and reconciliation? Is there a difference? *Resolution and reconciliation are two words describing the same thing: bringing an end to a conflict or disagreement. They are the same.*

3-What are the appropriate steps in reconciliation? What do you consider to be inappropriate steps for reconciliation? *Talk to each other. Overlook the little stuff. Find common ground. Forgive each other. It would be inappropriate to name call, talk behind their back, and not consider the other person's side of the issue. Selfish behavior is inappropriate in a conflict.*

Relationships

1-Do you believe that the Bible contains examples of all of your present day relationships? Why or why not? *I guess it does. After all, the Bible is all about God and people and people have relationships. So it makes sense that the Bible has examples of the kinds of relationships I have today.*

2-What kinds of relationships do you have? *Roommate, Son, Brother, Co-Worker, Junior Staff member. I don't know, there are lots of relationships that I have with lots of people.*

3-Does the use of technological communication help or hinder your relationships? Explain. *I think it helps. It allows people to get their ideas across faster and as they wish to express them. Technology is everywhere and I think we are adapting to how to use it in a positive way.*

Communication

1-What is your preferred method of communication: cell phone, face to face, text-messaging, computer? Why? *I like the computer. I use it all day long at work. When I am home I use it to communicate with my parents, friends, and everyone else. We use email and IM-ing. I use Facebook to keep up with friends from high school and back home.*

2-How important is it to you to see the person you are communicating with? Why? *I don't think it's that important. We send pictures as attachments to emails; we post pictures on Facebook. A picture is worth a thousand words. I don't need to see them while we are talking or communicating.*

3-Is technological communication the same as face to face communication? Explain. *I think to some extent it is. We are sharing the words and the words are what is important. Face to face communication is important too, don't get me wrong. But if all you have is technology to keep you connected, I think it works just fine.*

Conflict

1-How do you deal with conflict when it arises in your life? *I don't really like conflict. But when I am right I am right. Sometimes I may come on too strong. But if a person has wronged me they need to know they have wronged me. I can be verbal when necessary.*

2-Do you believe it is appropriate to use technological communication when dealing with your conflicts? Why or why not? *If you use the technology to get your point across I think it is okay. If you use it to attack another person I don't think so. I think it is important to limit the use of technology to keeping with the issues of the conflict*

3-Describe a conflict that you handled well. Describe a conflict that did not go well. What are the differences between the two? What are the similarities. *A conflict I handled well was with my roommate. We had a major blow out about shared expenses and shopping. Not that either of us cooks, but we do share the grocery expenses. We were getting ready for work and there was nothing left to eat for breakfast. My roommate eats cereal all the time. So I called him on it. I told him that he ate all of the cereal and left nothing for me for the morning. In the end, he reached into his pocket and gave me the money so I could buy breakfast. A conflict that didn't go so well. Well, I have one at work. My boss never tells me what he really wants and then complains that I'm not doing what he wants me to do. Every time I try to talk to him about it he comes up with an excuse to go the other way. What is similar between the two? I guess I'm the one pointing out the issue or the problem. Beyond that, I don't see any other similarities.*

The Pre-Event and Post-Event Interview Questions for the Participants

Pre-Event _____
Post-Event X
Interviewer McDougall
Participant Interviewed A5

Technology

1-How often do you communicate a day using technology? What type of technology do you prefer for your communication? *I still live in front of my computer. We use IM-ing at work along with email. However, I have introduced Skype to my parents and we are trying it at home. It's really good seeing them when we talk. I would say that I spend as much time now as I did before using technology to communicate.*

2-Can you sustain a relationship with another person by using only technological means? *I used to think you could sustain a relationship by technology. Now, I'm not so sure. I don't think they are real relationships when technology is your only connection. It's artificial. Your missing the personal link between people.*

3-Do you believe that technology can help or hinder your ability to reconcile your conflicts? Why or Why not? *I still think technology can help provided it is used properly; not as the sole or only source of communication. Maybe if you use it to connect with another person for a face to face meeting. Then its okay.*

Reconciliation

1-What is the Biblical model for conflict reconciliation? *Biblical reconciliation is face to face; dealing with the issues; hearing each other out. It's seeking help when help is needed to work out all of the problems. It's also recognizing that you have contributed to the conflict in some way, shape, or form.*

2-What is the difference between resolution and reconciliation? Is there a difference? *Resolution brings an end to a conflict. Reconciliation brings peace and restoration between the parties. There is a difference.*

3-What are the appropriate steps in reconciliation? What do you consider to be inappropriate steps for reconciliation? *Like I said before: face to face, dealing with the issues, listening to one another; owning your own contributions to the problem. It would be inappropriate to do it out in public, tearing the other person down behind their back, escalating the problem.*

Relationships

1-Do you believe that the Bible contains examples of all of your present day relationships? Why or why not? *Yes. The pastor gave us examples of different kinds of relationships and showed them to us using the Bible. I thought that was really good. I never thought about the Bible in light of my own life and relationships. I thought it was very helpful.*

2-What kinds of relationships do you have? *Son, Co-Worker, apprentice, roommate, friend, boyfriend, just to name a few. There are lots.*

3-Does the use of technological communication help or hinder your relationships? Explain. *Technology is a help but not the sole way to communicate with friends and other relationships I have. It's how we keep in touch. But being with each other is so more important than I thought before.*

Communication

1-What is your preferred method of communication: cell phone, face to face, text-messaging, computer? Why? *I still like the computer because of its versatility. My parents are now using Skype to communicate with me. That's working out really well. I'll still use my cell phone and computer, but I am more sensitive in how I use them.*

2-How important is it to you to see the person you are communicating with? Why? *It's more important now than before. I think it's important to see their face, hear their voice, watch their body language. I am even more sensitive to it when I watch a movie or television show.*

3-Is technological communication the same as face to face communication? Explain. *Technological communication is similar to face to face, but not the same. You are only getting part of the message. Your missing so much of what is being communicated beyond the words.*

Conflict

1-How do you deal with conflict when it arises in your life? *I am more sensitive to the needs of the other person in the conflict. I try to hear them out and see how I may have contributed to the conflict. I am still pretty good at confronting the other person to get the conversation started. But maybe I'm not as intense as I was before.*

2-Do you believe it is appropriate to use technological communication when dealing with your conflicts? Why or why not? *You can use technology to set up the meeting. After that, you need to be in each other's presence. Otherwise, you may miss what's most important to the other person.*

3-Describe a conflict that you handled well. Describe a conflict that did not go well. What are the differences between the two? What are the similarities. *Let me tell you what happened at work. I finally asked my boss if we could have lunch together. I asked him to honestly evaluate my performance on the project. He wasn't too quick to share my weaknesses with me. To help I shared with him what I thought I was doing well and what I thought I was failing at. Once I pointed the finger at me in a negative way, he was able to open up and share with me helpful criticism. I told him that it was helpful and not hurtful. I think our relationship has grown. I told him that I saw him as a mentor and that his criticism of my work was helpful. I feel like I have peace at work finally!*

Appendix J

CONSENT FORM

The research in which you are about to participate is designed to investigate postmodern relationships, communication, conflict, and reconciliation. In this research you will participate in pre and post learning assessments. Please be assured that any information that you provide will be held in strict confidence. At no time will your name be reported along with your responses. Please understand that your participation in this research is totally voluntary. By your completion of the pre and post assessments you are giving informed consent for the use of your responses in this research project.

Name of Participant _____

Signature of Participant _____

Date _____

Appendix K

The Partner Ice-Breaker

(Please take a few moments and answer the following questions. When you are finished share your answers with your accountability partner)

1. My favorite color is _____
2. I have _____ brother(s) and _____ sister(s)
3. If I could travel anywhere in the world I would go to _____
4. My favorite subject in school was/is _____
5. I like: dogs/cats/both/neither (circle one)
6. My mom and dad are: married/divorced (circle one)
7. I have a Facebook account: yes/no (circle one)
8. I am more comfortable: texting/talking on my phone (circle one)
9. I prefer to: watch television/do something outside (circle one)
10. My greatest achievement in life so far is _____
11. My greatest failure in life so far is _____
12. I see conflict as: an opportunity/something to be avoided (circle one)
13. My greatest fear in participating in these sessions is: _____
14. From participating in these sessions I hope/expect/desire the following to happen in my life: _____
15. Something you need to know about me that I haven't told you already: _____

A Postmodern CONFLICT and Reconciliation Ministry



Participant's Guide

Introduction of the Postmodern CONFLICT and Reconciliation Ministry

Welcome to the **Postmodern Reconciliation Project**. This project was designed with you in mind! Over the course of the next **four weeks** we will learn, share, and grow in our knowledge of *Relationships, Communication, Conflict, and Reconciliation*. We will also look at how technology affects how we deal with these four important areas of our lives.

Who Am I???

My name is **Jeffrey Eric Skopak** and I will serve as the primary presenter during this critical events. I am a graduate of **Concordia College – Bronxville, NY** (with a Bachelor's of Arts, 1988) and a graduate of **Concordia Seminary – St. Louis, MO** (with a Master's of Divinity, 1992).

My wife is **Amy Parr Skopak** (of Portville, NY) and we have two children: **Madelyn Sophia (13)** and **JAROD WALTER (12)**. We have two dogs (**Dennington the Greyhound** and **Chi Chi the Chihuahua**). We have lived in *Hastings-on-Hudson - New York, Toms River – New Jersey, Setauket - Long Island, and now in Tucson - Arizona.*

I have served a variety of ministries: from small struggling churches, campus ministry, senior care ministry, transitional ministry, and now a large and diverse ministry here in *Arizona.*

The Reason for the Project...

In 1990 I served my year of internship at **The First Lutheran Church of Boston, MA**. In my capacity as “vicar” I worked with the campus outreach ministry. I have always had a heart for campus ministry. During my tenure as the pastor of **St. Matthew's Ev. Lutheran Church – Hastings-on-Hudson, NY**, my congregation continued to serve the campus community at **Concordia College – Bronxville, NY**. In 2003 I enrolled in the Doctorate of Ministry degree program at **Concordia Seminary – St. Louis, MO**. This project is the culmination of my higher education road. This is it – the end – the finale – the last graded work of my academic career...and you are a part of it!

Because of my interest in Campus ministry, **postmodernism**, and **CONFLICT-Reconciliation** ministry, I married the three together and voila!

The Ground Rules...

Yes...there are some RULES...and yes, I want you to abide by them. These are the RULES I am asking you to observe:

1. **Please commit to ALL FOUR SESSIONS!** Your presence at each session is critical to the success of the events and everyone else's participation and learning.
2. **Please commit to taking the PRE and POST Testing...** There are three tools we will use; none of them are long; they are relatively painless; and you may learn something about yourself and how you learn.
3. **Please commit to your Accountability Partner!** You will have a partner throughout these sessions. As you learn, so shall your partner. Hold each other accountable to the "out of classroom work."
4. **Open your mind to learn in a creative way...** We will be doing some conventional things and some not-so-conventional things. Be willing to allow yourself to learn in new ways.

The Pre and Post Tests:

The same three tests will be taken at the beginning and three weeks after the completion of the critical events. Not too bad!

The Postmodern Attitudes and Actions Survey: This is short...I mean, really short! 20 statements that you react to using a scale of 1 to 5 (strongly disagree to strongly agree).

The Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument: 30 A or B statements concerning conflict. You choose the one that best describes you!

The Conflict Resolution Questionnaire: 40 questions concerning conflict where you answer from 1 to 5 (almost never to almost always).

Here's the good news: **YOU DON'T HAVE TO GRADE THEM!** This will be done by two independent graders (**Dr. Jeffrey Jahn and Mrs. Eileen McDougall**).

The Four Critical Events

RELATIONSHIPS – In the first critical event we will look at **RELATIONSHIPS**. What does the world say about them, what kinds do we have, how do we nurture them, and what does the **Bible** have to offer us.

COMMUNICATION – In the second critical event we will look at **Communication**. How do we hear, what do we see, and what do we project by our **body language**. We will also look and see how **TECHNOLOGY** affects our **communication**.

CONFLICT – In the third critical event we will explore the wild world of **CONFLICT**. We will define it, explore where it resides in each of us, learn how we deal with it, and understand how others deal with it. We will take a look at the **Bible** and explore what it has to teach us.

RECONCILIATION – In the fourth critical event we will study **Reconciliation**. We will explore **RESOLUTION and Reconciliation** to learn if they are the same or different; we will look at the **Biblical Model of Reconciliation** to better understand the process; we will look at our opportunity for **(CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION)**; and, we will conclude with a look at **TECHNOLOGY** and its role in **reconciliation**.

Let's Get Acquainted with Each other!

(Use the Space Below to you are Ready when your Turn arrives)

Name: _____

Hometown: _____

HS Graduated from: _____

Major in College: _____

of Text Messages Received and Sent a day: _____

A Specific Prayer Request: _____

Critical Event #1 – Relationships

My “Highs” this week were:

My “Lows” this week were:

Something I need to pray for:

What does the World have to say
about...Relationships?

MY REACTION TO:

Sadhguru: _____

Scrubs: _____

Joel

Osteen: _____

WHAT KIND OF RELATIONSHIPS DO I HAVE?

Child/Parent: _____

Sibling: _____

Co-Worker: _____

Friends: _____

Spouse: _____

Mentoring: _____

How am I supposed to nurture these relationships?

Read Ecclesiastes 4:9-10

These are the people in my life with whom I have close interpersonal relationships:

This is what I can do to **STRENGTHEN openness and *Interdependence with them:***

Take a moment to fill out the ***Partner Ice-Breaker Worksheet*** on the next page

The Partner Ice-Breaker

(Please take a few moments and answer the following questions. When you are finished share your answers with your accountability partner)

16. My favorite color is _____
17. I have _____ brother(s) and _____ sister(s)
18. If I could travel anywhere in the world I would go to _____
19. My favorite subject in school was/is _____
20. I like: dogs/cats/both/neither (circle one)
21. My mom and dad are: married/divorced (circle one)
22. I have a Facebook account: yes/no (circle one)
23. I am more comfortable: texting/talking on my phone (circle one)
24. I prefer to: watch television/do something outside (circle one)
25. My greatest achievement in life so far is _____
26. My greatest failure in life so far is _____
27. I see conflict as: an opportunity/something to be avoided (circle one)
28. My greatest fear in participating in these sessions is: _____
29. From participating in these sessions I hope/expect/desire the following to happen in my life: _____
30. Something you need to know about me that I haven't told you already: _____

Now Share your answers with your accountability Partner!

After sharing your answers, share at least one hope or expectation you desire from these critical events:

Bible Time: Mark 12:28-34

What does it mean to love God with:

Heart: _____

Soul: _____

Mind: _____

Strength: _____

What does it mean to love your neighbor as yourself?

Are there people in my life who I don't love in this manner? _____

What is my reason for withholding love from them? _____

How can I get in line with God's command? _____

The love for the neighbor expressed by a Child video moved me in this way: _____

WORK TO BE DONE AT HOME THIS WEEK

Deepen my relationship with my accountability partner by doing the following:

- 1. Speak at least once on the phone about each other's day**
- 2. Meet face to face at least once (outside of the critical events) and share a troubled relationship**
- 3. Communicate at least once by text messaging or emailing each other concerning a difficult question regarding the Bible exercise below:**

The Bible Study for the Week:

1 Kings 19:19-21 and 2 Kings 2:1-6

1. What do you think is the significance of Elijah choosing Elisha by throwing a cloak over him?
2. What does Elisha do to prepare to follow Elijah and why do you think he does this?
3. Who is the "Elijah" mentoring you?
4. What must you do to find him?
5. Who is the "Elisha" that you are mentoring?
6. How does Elisha respond to Elijah's request to stay behind?
7. Why do you think he responds this way?
8. What does this reveal about their relationship?
9. Who are the people that you never leave during challenging times?
10. What relationships have you walked away from and what must you do to restore them?

CRITICAL EVENT #2 – COMMUNICATION

My "Highs" this week were:

My “Lows” this week were:

Something I need to pray for:

A Listening Exercise

Listen to the Four Audio Clips and answer the following questions



What is he feeling, expressing, or saying?

What is your reaction to the audio clip?

Do you agree or disagree with the speaker?

If you could respond to the speaker, what would you say?

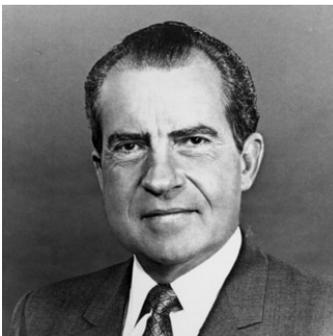


What is he feeling, expressing, or saying?

What is your reaction to the audio clip?

Do you agree or disagree with the speaker?

If you could respond to the speaker, what would you say?



What is he feeling, expressing, or saying?

What is your reaction to the audio clip?

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If you could respond to the speaker, what would you say?



What is he feeling, expressing, or saying?

What is your reaction to the audio clip?

Do you agree or disagree with the speaker?

If you could respond to the speaker, what would you say?

THIRD-SIDER EXERCISE

React: Can you listen to two conversations at the same time?

In this exercise, what did the third-sider miss?

Visual Communication

Look the following pictures and try to discern what the person/people are feeling:





What emotions do these pictures cause you to have?

How do the images convey a message to you?

Non-Verbal Communication

Watch the following video and consider the following questions:

1. What do you need to pay attention to with regards to non-verbal communication?
2. Who communicates non-verbally: the speaker or the receiver?

Watch the second video and consider the following: how do you understand facial feedback?

Let's Practice: with your accountability partner share a story. The receiver of the story is to only respond by giving the speaker facial feedback. Then change places.

THE TECHNOLOGICAL CHALLENGE

With your accountability partner communicate an important personal story using only text messaging. Each person should communicate a story. Answer the following questions concerning your partner's story:

1. What emotions did your partner feel concerning the story?
2. What were the important elements of your partner's story?
3. How has this story impacted your partner's life today?
4. Does it still impact them?

Now share your results with your partner face to face

1. How did the technology help the communication?
2. How did the technology hinder the communication?

Small Group Time...

READ **Genesis 18:1-15**

1. Who are the three visitors?
2. What do they communicate to Abraham and Sarah?
3. What is Sarah's reaction? Why?
4. What is Abraham's reaction? Why?
5. What did Abraham possess in this story that Sarah did not?

READ **Mark 9:2-13**

1. Who is present in this story?
2. Why is it significant that Elijah and Moses are visibly present?
3. Why does Peter react the way he does?
4. What communication tools did he possibly observe on the mountain?
5. Discuss the conversation that followed. What communication tools are being employed by the disciples?

WORK TO BE DONE AT HOME

Over the course of the next week deepen your relationship with your accountability partner:

Speak at least once on the phone about your day

Meet face to face at least once outside of this class and share a difficult relationship

Communicate at least once by text message or email concerning a difficult question regarding the Bible exercise below:

Read **Matthew 15:21-28**

Compare and contrast the communication styles of Jesus and the Canaanite woman

What is the woman communicating to Jesus?

What is Jesus communicating to the woman?

Read **John 4:1-26**

Consider the dynamics of communication. What ones do you think Jesus is using?

What are the communication tools that the woman is using?
How does Jesus deepen the conversation?

How does the woman communicate her response to Jesus' understanding of her life? Is she transparent or guarded?
How would you respond?

Going to the balcony: multiple perspectives

Notice your conversations this week. Do you hold multiple perspectives?

Ask 4 to 6 rand people today how they feel about an issue in the news.

Observe whom you talk to today. Do you talk to people similar to you, with common backgrounds, experiences? Do you often agree or disagree? How do you agree? How do you disagree?

Critical Event #3 - CONFLICT

My “Highs” this week were:

My “Lows” this week were:

Something I need to pray for:

How do you define Conflict?

What is the Source of Conflict?

The root cause of conflict is:

1. _____

2. _____

Conflict is a form of _____.

Let's Look at the Bible: Exodus 20:2-3

Now Let's Read Martin Luther's Explanation to the First Commandment from the Small Catechism:

"You shall have no other Gods."

What does this mean? We should fear, love, and trust in God above all things.

Fear (Psalm 130:3-4) _____

Love (Matthew 22:37) _____

Trust (Psalm 37:5-6) _____

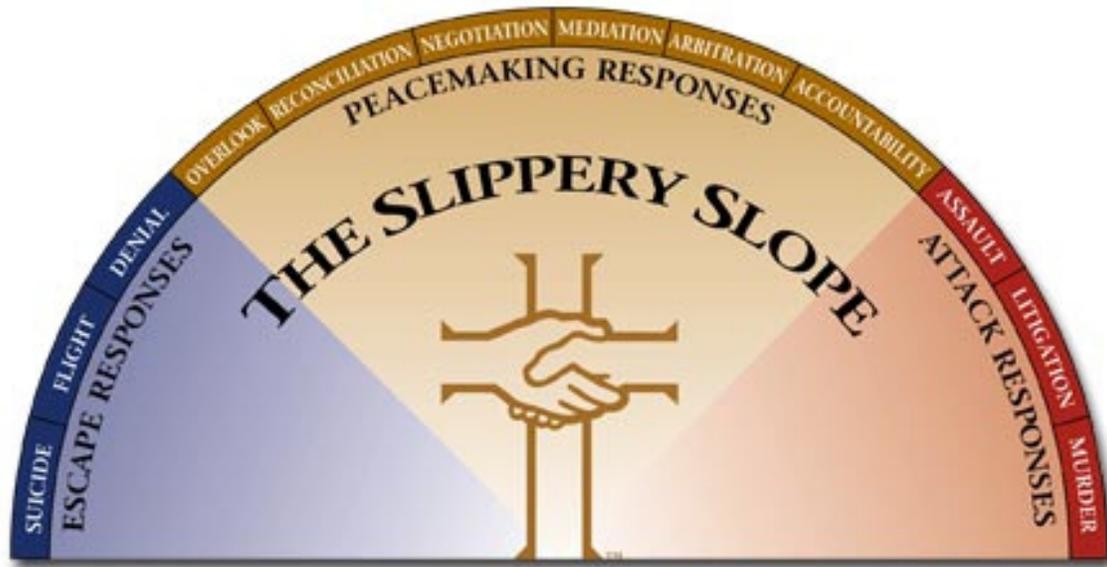
How do you deal with conflict?

- E. Competing:
- F. Collaborating:
- G. Compromising:
- H. Avoiding:
- I. Accommodating:

My Results from the Thomas-Kilmann Conflict

Mode Instrument: _____

The Slippery Slope of Conflict



Identify where the following characters are on the slope:

The Waterboy

Cartoon Conflict

The Office

Small Group Time

Read Matthew 18:15-20

What are the key elements of the passage?

What is the goal at each step?

With your accountability partner share a conflict that you have had and how you dealt with it

What was the result?

Are you at peace with how it worked out?

Work to be Done at Home

Read the following Bible stories:

Genesis 4

Genesis 27

Identify in each text the following:

What conflict mode did each character demonstrate?

Where on the Slippery Slope was each character?

Was there resolution or reconciliation?

Over the course of the next week observe the following and share the answers to the following questions with your accountability partner:

Notice when you feel upset, angry, or disturbed

How did you know that you felt that way?

What happened?

What assumptions did you make?

How did you respond?

Observe when you defended yourself, your views, or your opinions

What happened?

How did you feel defending yourself?

Did you experience your “conflict mode” kicking in? Why or why not?

Critical Event #4 – Reconciliation

My “Highs” this week were:

My “Lows” this week were:

Something I need to pray for:

**Write down a working definition of
Resolution:**

**Write down a working definition of
Reconciliation:**

The Four G's of Reconciliation:

G _____ God (1 Corinthians 10:31-11:1)

How can conflict give me opportunity to Glorify God?

How can I serve another person through a conflict with them?

What do I struggle with that leads to conflict with others?

G_____ the Log out of Your Own Eye (Matthew 7:3-5)

Do I understand all of the issues involved in this conflict? Material? Personal?

Is this an offense that I can simply overlook?

What is my attitude and how is it affecting this conflict?

What effect is this dispute likely to have on:

My witness for Jesus

My Family

My Friends

My ability to serve the church and community

G_____ Restore (Matthew 18:21-35)

Read Matthew 18:21 -35

How has the other person sinned in this situation?

Is this person's action hurting other people?

If you have to seek outside help to resolve the dispute, are there people who are likely to be trusted and respected by both you and your opponent?

How can you demonstrate gentleness in the conflict instead of aggression?

G_____ and be Reconciled (Matthew 5:24 and Colossians 3:13)

Where do we derive the power to forgive?

Are there consequences to the sin that need to be dealt with?

If so, which ones and how?

Are you having a hard time forgiving the person? Why? Has the person repented? Are your feelings getting in the way?

How can I promote and model forgiveness to others?

WHAT IF I AM THE CAUSE OF THE CONFLICT???

The Seven A's of Confession:

A_____ everyone involved (Luke 19:8)

A_____ if, but, maybe (Psalm 51)

A_____ specifically

Sinful attitudes (James 4:1-3)

Sinful words (Ephesians 4:29)

Sinful actions (Mark 10:42-45)

A_____ the hurt (Luke 15:21)

A_____ the consequences (Numbers 5:5-7)

A_____ the behavior (Ephesians 4:22-32)

A_____ for forgiveness and allow time (Psalm 130:1-4)

WHAT COMFORT IS THERE FOR THOSE WHO INITIATE A PROCESS FOLLOWING THE SEVEN A'S?

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION?

HOW IS CONFESSION A PART OF RECONCILIATION?

LET'S WATCH A VIDEO EXAMPLE OF WHAT WE ARE AFTER: *CONFESSIONS*

IS TECHNOLOGY A HINDRANCE TO RECONCILIATION???

- Let's watch the *Text Message Illustration* together
- Now, Let's consider the following questions:

What was missing?

How does this apply to reconciliation ministry?

How can we as a people technologically connected overcome technology to participate in healthy Biblical reconciliation?

How is technology antithetical to Biblical Reconciliation? How can it be helpful?

What are some current examples of technology hindering reconciliation? Of technology deepening the conflict?

Small Group Time (One Last Time...)

Read 2 Samuel 11 – 12:13

- 1. Who has sinned?**
- 2. Who confronts the sin?**
- 3. What is the result of the confrontation?**
- 4. Does this make you uncomfortable? Why or why not?**

**WITH YOUR ACCOUNTABILITY PARTNER SHARE A
CONFLICT THAT YOU STARTED**

Did you come to a realization for the need for confession? Why or why not?

Did you unknowingly (or knowingly) work through the seven A's of confession?

Did you use technology appropriately or inappropriately?

Work to be done at Home...

Read the following Bible story: Genesis 37-50

What conflicts can you identify?

How were these conflicts handled?

How does God use conflict for the greater glory?

What characters do you relate best to? Which ones do you not?

Over the course of the next week observe the following and share the answers with your accountability partner:

Identify possible conflicts that may be arising in your life

How do they make you feel?

How are you responding? Is it different than you would have prior to this experience? Why or why not?

If you had opportunity to apply the Biblical principles of reconciliation how did you feel doing so?

Important Dates to Remember...

Wednesday, September 16 @ 6:30 PM Initial Gathering
and Pre Event Testing

Wednesday, September 23 @ 6:30 PM Critical Event #1

Wednesday, September 30 @ 6:30 PM Critical Event #2

Wednesday, October 7 @ 6:30 PM Critical Event #3

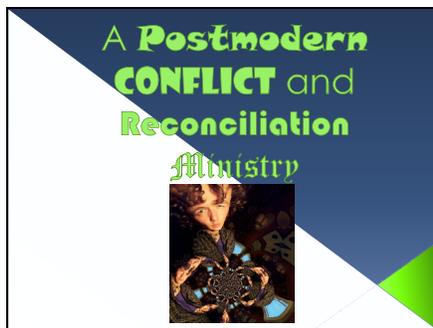
Wednesday, October 14 @6:30 PM Critical Event #4

Wednesday, October 28 @6:30 PM Post Event Testing

(Pre and Post Event Testing can be scheduled with the Pastor at another time if you cannot make either of these testing times)

Appendix M

Slide 1



Slide 2

Introduction of the Postmodern CONFLICT and Reconciliation Ministry

the Postmodern Reconciliation Project. This is a project with you in mind! Over the next week we will learn, explore, and gain knowledge of *Relationships, Reconciliation*. We will discuss how we deal with these things.

Slide 3

Who Am I???

My name is **Jeffrey Eric Skopak** and I will serve as the presenter during this critical event. I am a graduate of Concordia College – Bronxville, NY (with a Bachelor's in 1988) and a graduate of Concordia Theological Seminary (with a Master's of Divinity).



Slide 4

My wife is **Amy Carr Skopak** (of Portville, NY) and we have two children: **Madelyn Sophia (7)** and **JAROD WALTER (12)**. We have two dogs (**Fennineton the Greyhound** and **Chi Chi the Chihuahua**). We have lived in Hastings-on-Hudson - New York, Tom's River - New Jersey, Selawick - Long Island, and now in Tucson - Arizona.




Slide 5

The Reason for the Project...

I served my year of internship at The First Lutheran Church in my capacity as "vicar" I worked with the campus ministry. I have always had a heart for campus ministry.

I was the pastor of St. Matthew's Ev. Lutheran Church in 2000, my congregation continued to serve the campus ministry at College - Bronxville, NY. In 2003 I completed my degree program at Concordia University. This project is the culmination of my ministry. It is the finale - the last part of my ministry.

Slide 6

The Ground Rules...

There are some RULES...and yes, I want you to abide by them. The RULES I am asking you to observe:

- Attendance:** You must attend to ALL FOUR SESSIONS! Your presence at each session is vital to the success of the events and everyone else's success.
- the PRE and POST Testing...** There are two tests of them are long; they are designed to help you learn something about yourself.
- Partner!** You will have a partner, so shall your partner be in the classroom.
- Be on time!** We are doing this together. Be on time!

Slide 7

The Pre and Post Tests:

Three tests will be taken at the beginning and three weeks after the completion of the program. Not too bad!

Learn Attitudes and Actions Survey: This is a short survey. It is very short! 20 statements that you react to on a scale of 1-5 (strongly disagree to strongly agree).

Mode Instrument: 30 A short instrument. You choose the one that you prefer.

Questions will be asked almost every week.

Slide 8

Here's the good news: **YOU DON'T HAVE TO GRADE THEM!** This will be done by two independent graders (**Dr. Jeffrey Jahn** and **Dr. Eileen McDougall**).



Slide 9

The Four Critical Events

RELATIONSHIPS – In the first critical event we will explore **RELATIONSHIPS**. What does the world say about relationships? What kinds do we have, how do we deal with them? What does the Bible have to offer?

In the second critical event we will explore **TECHNOLOGY**. What do we hear, what do we see, what do we do? **body** of knowledge.

Slide 10

CONFLICT – In the third critical event we will explore the wild world of **CONFLICT**. We will define it, explore how it resides in each of us, learn how we deal with it, and understand how others deal with it. We will explore the Bible and explore what it has to say about it.

In the fourth critical event we will explore **RESOLUTION**. How do we resolve? Are they the same or different? What are the different levels of resolution? We will explore the Bible; we will explore the world; we will explore the church; we will explore the classroom; we will explore the home; we will explore the world.

Slide 11



Appendix N

Slide 1



Slide 2



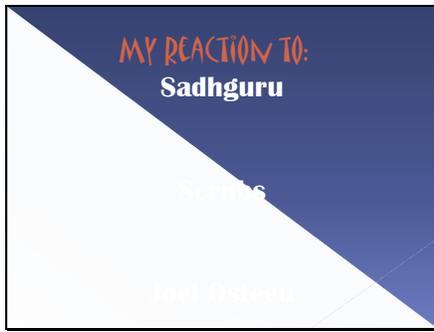
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Slide 4



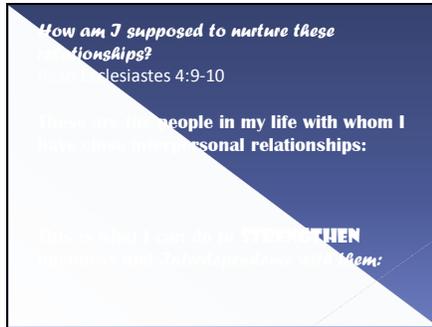
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Slide 6



Slide 7

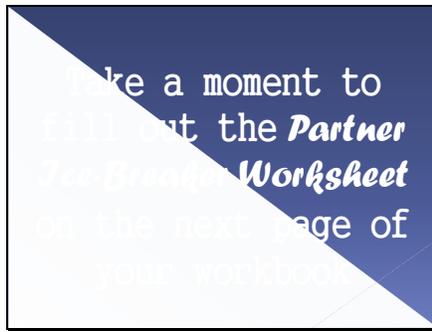
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How am I supposed to nurture these relationships?
Ecclesiastes 4:9-10

These are the people in my life with whom I have close interpersonal relationships:

This is what I can do to STRENGTHEN intimacy and interdependence with them:

Slide 8

A square slide with a dark blue background and a white diagonal line from the top-left to the bottom-right. The text is white and positioned in the white areas.

Take a moment to fill out the *Partner Ice-Breaker Worksheet* on the next page of your workbook.

Slide 9

A square slide with a dark blue background and a white diagonal line from the top-left to the bottom-right. The text is white and positioned in the white areas.

Now Share your answers with your accountability Partner!

After sharing your answers, share at least one hope or expectation you desire from these critical events.

Slide 10

Bible Time: Mark 12:28-34
What does it mean to love God with:
Heart
Minds
Strength
What does it mean to love your neighbor?

Slide 11

Are there people in my life who I don't love in this manner?
What is the reason for withholding love from them?
How can I get in line with God's command?
How can I be the neighbor I've expressed I want to be toward me in the 'new way'?

Slide 12

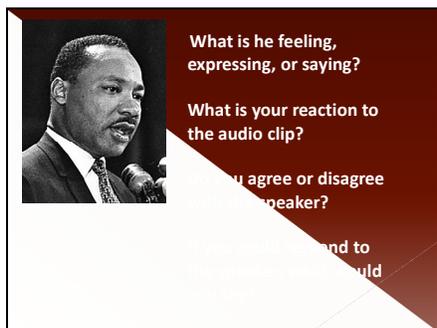
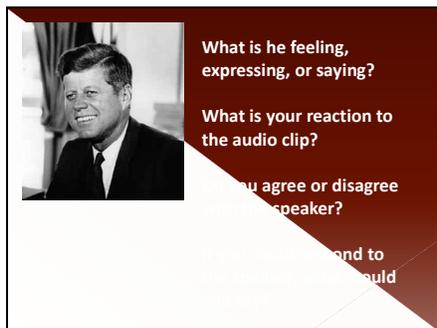
WORK TO BE DONE AT HOME THIS WEEK
Deepen my relationship with my accountability partner by doing the following:
1-Speak at least **once on the phone** about each other's day.
2-Meet face to face at least **once (outside of the critical events)** and **resolve a troubled relationship**.
3-Communicate at least once by text messaging or emailing each other **concerning a biblical question** regarding the Bible.

Slide 13

The Bible Study for the Week:
1 Kings 19:19-21 and 2 Kings 2:1-6

1. What do you think is the significance of Elijah choosing Elisha to follow him?
2. How do you think Elisha prepared to follow Elijah and why do you think he was willing to do so?
3. How do you think Elisha was preparing you?
4. How do you think Elisha was preparing you for mentoring?
5. How do you think Elisha was preparing you to stay behind?
6. How do you think Elisha was preparing you for challenging?
7. How do you think Elisha was preparing you to sustain?

Appendix O





What is he feeling, expressing, or saying?

What is your reaction to the audio clip?

Do you agree or disagree with the speaker?

How would you respond to this situation? How would you respond to this situation?



What is he feeling, expressing, or saying?

What is your reaction to the audio clip?

Do you agree or disagree with the speaker?

How would you respond to this situation? How would you respond to this situation?

THIRD-SIDER EXERCISE

Object: Can you listen to two different perspectives at the same time?

Instructions: Listen to the audio clip. What did the third-sider say?



How can we transform conflict at home, at work, and in the world?

Visual Communication

Look at the following pictures and try to identify what the person/people are feeling

What message do these pictures convey?

What is the message conveyed in the image





Non-Verbal Communication

Watch the following video and consider the non-verbal communication cues that you observe:

What non-verbal cues may you pay attention to with this person's communication?

How do you think these cues affect the communication?



Watch the *second* video and consider the following: how do you understand facial feedback?

A black square placeholder for a video, located in the center of the slide below the text.

Let's Practice: with your accountability partner share a story. The main point of the story is to only focus on your own speaker facial feedback. This is a hard place.

THE TECHNOLOGICAL CHALLENGE

With your accountability partner communicate an original personal story using only text messaging. Write a story that would communicate a story. Answer the following questions concerning your partner's story:

- 1. How did your partner feel concerning the communication?
- 2. How did your partner feel concerning your partner's communication?
- 3. How did your partner feel concerning the communication?

Now share your results with your partner face to face

How did the technology help the communication?

How did the technology hinder the communication?

READ Genesis 18:1-15

Who were the three visitors?

How did they communicate to Abraham?

What was the message? Why?

What was the response? Why?

What was the result in this story?

READ Mark 9:2-13

Who is present in this story?
What is significant that Elijah and
Moses are visibly present?
How does Jesus react the way he does?
What are the main tools did he
use to get down the mountain?
What are the main events that followed.
What are the main things that are being
taught?

**WORK TO BE DONE
AT HOME**

For the course of the next week deepen your
relationship with your accountability partner:
- Call your partner on the phone about your day
- Write a letter to your partner once outside of this class
- Share your relationship with your partner
- Send a message or email to your partner about the Bible

Read Matthew 15:21-28

Identify and contrast the communication styles
of the Canaanite woman
- How is she communicating to Jesus?
- How is Jesus responding to the woman?

Read **John 4:1-26**

Consider the dynamics of communication. What ones Jesus is using?

What communication tools that the woman is using in this conversation?

What is her response to Jesus? Is she transparent or

Going to the balcony: multiple perspectives

Reflect on your conversations this week. Do you have multiple perspectives?

How do you think they feel today how they feel?

Do you talk to them? Do you agree or disagree?

Appendix P

Slide 1



Slide 2



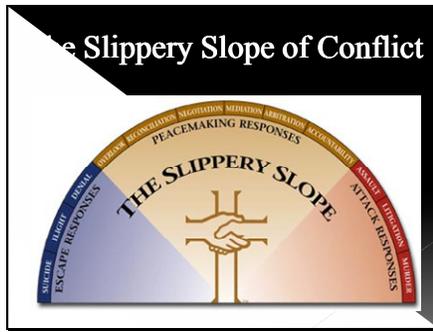
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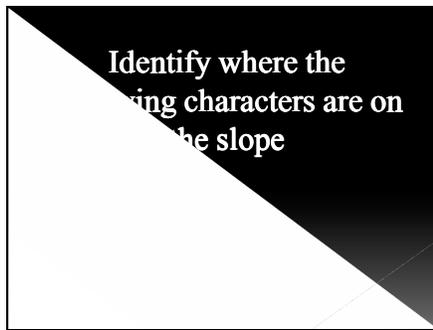
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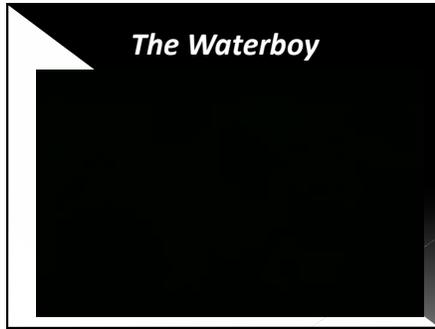
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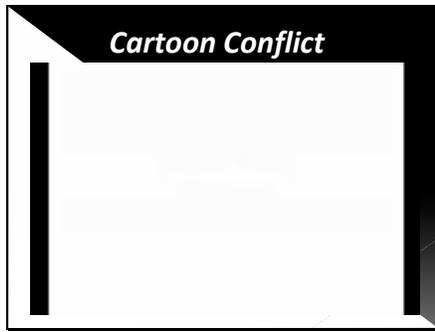
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Slide 7



Slide 8



Slide 9



Slide 10



Slide 11



Slide 12



Slide 13

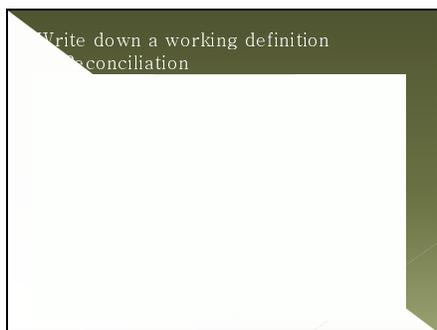
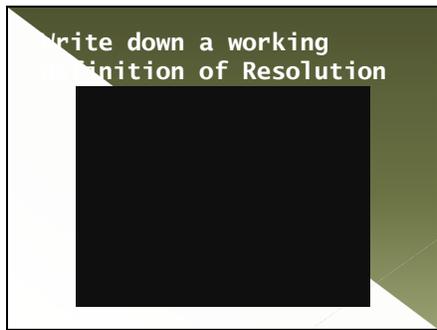
Over the course of the next
week observe the following
and share the answers to the
following questions with
your accountability partner:

upset, angry,
felt that

Slide 14

What assumptions did you make?
How did you respond?
Did you defend yourself,
or your opinions
How did you protect yourself?
What did you predict?

Appendix Q



The Four E's of Reconciliation

1. Enter (1 Corinthians 10:31-11:1)
 Give me opportunity to Glorify
 God through a conflict
 Conflict with

2. the Log out of Your Own Eye (Matthew 7:3-5)
 Understand all of the issues involved in this conflict?
 Personal?
 that I can simply overlook?
 how is it affecting this conflict?
 to have on:

3. Restore (Matthew 18:21-35)
 Matthew 18:21-35
 other person sinned in this situation?
 hurting other people?
 help to resolve the
 who are likely to be trusted
 your opponent?
 the conflict

and be Reconciled (Matthew 5:24 and Colossians

... derive the power to forgive?

... offences to the sin that need to ... which ones and how?

... forgiving the ... repented? Are ... to

WHAT IF I AM THE CAUSE OF THE CONFLICT???

A's of Confession:

... everyone involved (Luke 19:8)

... (Psalm 51)

... (James 4:1-3)

... (Colossians 4:29)

... (10:42-45)

WHAT COMFORT IS THERE FOR ... WHO INITIATE A PROCESS ... THE SEVEN A'S?

BENEFITS OF ... ABSOLUTION?

... OF



**Small Group Time
(One Last Time...)**

Read 1 Samuel 11 – 12:13

What happened?

Who caused the problem?

What was the result of the confrontation?

What can you learn from this story?

**WITH YOUR ACCOUNTABILITY
PARTNER SHARE A CONFLICT THAT
YOU STARTED**

What was your realization for the need for
accountability?

Why not?

How did you (and your partner) work through
the conflict?

Work to be done at Home...

Read the following Bible story:
Matthew 18:21-35

What can you identify?

How were the conflicts handled?

What can you learn for the
future?

Over the course of the next week observe the following and share the answers with your accountability partner:

1. What conflicts that may be arising in your life?

2. How do you feel about them?

3. How do you feel about them? Different than you would expect? Why or why not?

4. How do you feel about them? Different than you would expect? Why or why not?

5. How do you feel about them? Different than you would expect? Why or why not?

6. How do you feel about them? Different than you would expect? Why or why not?

7. How do you feel about them? Different than you would expect? Why or why not?

8. How do you feel about them? Different than you would expect? Why or why not?

9. How do you feel about them? Different than you would expect? Why or why not?

10. How do you feel about them? Different than you would expect? Why or why not?

11. How do you feel about them? Different than you would expect? Why or why not?

12. How do you feel about them? Different than you would expect? Why or why not?

13. How do you feel about them? Different than you would expect? Why or why not?

14. How do you feel about them? Different than you would expect? Why or why not?

15. How do you feel about them? Different than you would expect? Why or why not?

16. How do you feel about them? Different than you would expect? Why or why not?

17. How do you feel about them? Different than you would expect? Why or why not?

18. How do you feel about them? Different than you would expect? Why or why not?

19. How do you feel about them? Different than you would expect? Why or why not?

20. How do you feel about them? Different than you would expect? Why or why not?

Wednesday, October 28
10:00 AM Post Event
Networking

Appendix R

List of Participants

Participant	Age	Group	Partner
A1 (Male)	19	A	A7
A5 (Male)	24	A	B2
A7 (Male)	22	A	A1
A4 (Female)	21	A	A10
A10 (Female)	18	A	A4
A12 (Male)	21	A	A14
A14 (Female)	21	A	A12
B3 (Male)	21	B	B6
B9 (Female)	22	B	B8
B2 (Male)	20	B	A5
B6 (Male)	23	B	B3
B8 (Female)	34	B	B9
B11 (Female)	18	B	B13
B13 (Female)	21	B	B11
A15 (Female)	27	A	A7

Appendix S
Observations, Learnings, and Criticisms of the Project by the Participants

General Affirmations by the Participants

A12-“I like the differentiation between resolution and reconciliation. I always thought the words were interchangeable. Now I realize there is a big difference.”

B6-“This project made me aware of text messaging and how I was using it to deal with my conflicts. I realized how useless my previous attempts to deal with my conflicts were and how technology was only making them worse...not better.”

A4-“The meal created an informal setting. It made it easier to talk to the people that I didn’t know before the class.”

B3-“This reaffirmed my need to use and read non-verbal communication in a more intentional way”

B8-“I liked the conflict mode test and I liked the fact that your conflict mode is not a bad thing; it’s how you deal with conflict.”

B9-It (the class) made me sensitive to how other people deal with conflict and it’s not necessarily how I deal with conflict.”

A7-“I really liked the “highs” and “lows.” It was good to talk about them in my small group. It was a good way to catalog my week with other people.

B2-“I liked how the Bible stories that I always knew were presented in a way I never thought about them before.”

A15-“The material was straight forward and always made its way back to the Scripture.”

B8-“I really liked the prayer requests and prayer time. It connected us to each other’s lives in a meaningful way.”

B13-“This was a huge reminder: mom and dad aren’t around to fix my problems and solve my conflicts. I need to take ownership of my relationships.”

A5-“This has made a huge impact on my life.”

Observations and Criticisms by the Participants

A4-“It could have been longer. We needed more time to go deeper.”

B13-“Each session needed more time.”

B9-“We needed more time for small group sharing and partner time at each event.”

B6-“We needed more time for the prayers and partner sharing. I got more out the small group time than the large group discussions.”

B8-“Maybe we could have had an opportunity to work out real life conflicts. Call it a group project in helping each other in Conflict.”

A1-“It may need to be a part of something that already exists instead of creating something new.”

A12-“I liked having this closing session at your home. Maybe we can do something like this in homes instead of at the church.”

A5-“The workbook wasn’t necessary. But it was helpful.”

Key Learning by Some of the Participants

B6-“Dealing with Technology and conflicts, importance of reconciliation vs. resolution

A5-“The Different modes of Conflict”

B3-“The modes of conflict, the Slippery Slope, and the 7 A’s of Confession”

A4-“Conflict, the importance of relationships with other people, how each relationship is different and unique, and how people deal with conflict differently”

B13-“Reconciliation – I am now talking with my roommate for the 1st time in 4 months”

B9-“Technological communication is what I have and I need to be more sensitive in how I use it”

B8-“All relationships are reflected in the Bible, Scripture gives us parallels, examples, and guidance in our relationships”

Group Suggestions for the Future

1. The meal is critical
2. Hold the events in a home
3. Offer a general Bible study connected to real life issues; there needs to be relevance with new Bible learning
4. Less structure and more interactive
5. Use various forms of media
6. Increase the amount of time for the gatherings (2 hours)
7. Spend at least four weeks on each topic
8. Tuesday or Wednesday nights
9. A workbook is helpful but not necessary
10. Make a provision for extended prayer and prayer requests

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