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VOICE

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Conflict and Conciliation

— Les Lofquist —

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



It is always a painful exercise for me to look in the mirror at the following passages:

But now you yourselves are to put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth. (Colossians 3:8)

Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. (Ephesians 4:31)

These are painful words, because they describe my life outside of Christ. I am a man conditioned from childhood to respond with attitudes and actions described in the verses above. Words like anger and bitterness and wrath would appropriately depict the internal struggles I have faced since growing up in a large and rather feisty family.

Left to my own devices, I would be surrounded by conflict of my own making.

But now another conflict is waged internally. It is described with these words:

For the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit

what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with each other. (Galatians 5:17)

Ever since I came to faith in Christ as my Savior after High School graduation, the Holy Spirit has begun a radical change of my character from within. Thank God, He now resides within and my unregenerate, bitter soul has been cleansed. And as I yield to His control, all the anger subsides.

*Instead of conflict,
our lives at home and
in church should be
marked by conciliation
and peace and unity.*

In fact, the fight I now am determined to wage is called the “good fight” and the “good fight of faith” (1 Timothy 1:18; 6:12; 2 Timothy 4:7). There is great conflict in genuine Christianity. But conflict which God considers good is that conflict waged against the principle of sin within (in our flesh) and without (in the world).

Unfortunately, our churches and Christian families often involve con-

flict of the wrong type, the conflict of which I am so ashamed to describe about my life before Christ. Yet, those passages cited above from the books of Colossians and Ephesians were written to churches and individual believers who needed to stop the wrong kinds conflict in their lives. This verse describes all too many churches and Christians:

You lust and do not have; so you commit murder. And you are envious and cannot obtain; so you fight and quarrel. (James 4:2)

Instead of conflict, our lives at home and in church should be marked by conciliation and peace and unity. That is clearly taught all throughout the New Testament. And that is what should be characteristic of healthy IFCA International churches.

Let’s devote ourselves to lives which reflect conciliation, not conflict. Let’s be known as peacemakers in church, at work, and in our families. For if we promote peace, we are called “blessed” by our Lord Jesus (Matthew 5:9). And that sounds much better than the tragic results of anger and bitterness and wrath.

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LES LOFQUIST'S ITINERARY

MARCH 2007

- 4 MI Regional Youth Purity Rally, Georgetown Bible Church
- 11 am Midwest Bible Church, Chicago, IL
pm Marion Hills Bible Church, Darien, IL
- 12 Northern IL Regional, Westchester (IL) Bible Church
- 22-23 Dixie, & Cumberland Regionals, Piedmont Baptist College
- 23 Piedmont Baptist College Chapel, Winston Salem, NC
- 25-27 Calvary Bible Church Conference, Narragansett, RI
- 26 Visit Navy Chaplains Tim Demy, Bert Moore at Naval Station
- 27 Pastors Luncheon, Narragansett, RI

APRIL 2007

- 1 am Calvary Bible Church, Hanover, PA
pm New Hope Bible Church, Seven Valleys, PA
- 6 IFCA Good Friday Service, Alton Bible Church, Lowell, MI
- 13-15 Russian Couples Marriage Retreat, Vancouver, WA
- 16-18 IFCA Young Pastors Conference, Grandville, MI
- 24-25 Biblical Ministries Worldwide Board Meetings, Atlanta, GA
- 29 Westchester (IL) Bible Church



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Conflict and the Book of James

— Dan Fredericks —



I am a coward when it comes to conflict. It's not too strong a word to say that I hate it. However, I've also learned by experience and study of God's word that to avoid conflict for the sake of self-interest and self-preservation is to do damage to my spiritual growth, to harm others around me and to dishonor our Lord. I've learned the necessity of having confidence in the Lord, as opposed to timidity (2 Timothy 1:7).

Point to any time in church history and any given church association, and you will find illustrations of conflict. For example, Acts 15 records one of the first local church "show-downs," over the cultural and preferential differences between the Jews of Jerusalem and the predominately Gentile believers of Antioch. This matter was no sooner resolved than Paul and Barnabas had their falling out over John Mark. Additionally, Paul's letters to the Corinthian church were primarily corrective for a church with conflict.

The book of James, written by the James of Acts 15, our Lord's half

brother and leader of the church in Jerusalem, is arguably the earliest of the New Testament books. It is noted for being the "Proverbs of the New Testament," and what does James address? Trials, temptations, interpersonal and corporate conflicts. Sad, but true, the Christian life and ministry is often fraught with varying levels of conflict, each rooted in spiritual disconnect of one sort or another.

What does James address? Trials, temptations, inter-personal and corporate conflicts.

The beauty of the book of James is that it is simple yet profound, wisdom practically applied with surgical precision. The "rubber meets the road," and the "nail is squarely hit on the head." If James 1:19 alone was consistently applied, many conflicts would never see their birth, much less their conception: "*Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger.*"

Likewise, James 3:13-18 identifies the true source of conflicts, namely a false wisdom that is "*earthly, natural*"

[that is, *unspiritual*] and "*demonic.*" In contrast, the wisdom that every believer should be drawing upon is "*from above, pure, peaceable, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, unwavering and without hypocrisy*" the application of which leads to "*the fruit of righteousness sown in peace by those who make peace.*" James 4:1-10 drives the point further.

According to James, conflict can come in the form of personal trial and temptation (Chapter 1), self-absorbed ambition (Chapters 2-3) or in the form of interpersonal conflict and corporate struggles for power and control (Chapters 4-5).

How are we to recognize, face and handle conflict biblically? According to James, we need a joyful perspective (1:2), wisdom (1:5; 3:13-18), humility (1:9-11; 4:1-10), self-control (3:1-12), hearts that are compliant and obedient to truth in genuine faith (2:14-26), and long-term patience (5:7-11). It results in spiritually enduring maturity (1:4, 12) and leads to future reward (5:7-11).

Conflict is a matter of relationships – relationships among people and people's relationship before God. Believers can certainly be immature in the exercise of their faith, which leads to conflict. Unbelievers (who merely profess belief) can enter a local church and contribute to great conflicts among the relationships of the congregation. I recall recently hearing the

testimony of a heart-broken pastor share the grievous details of one experience that cause him to question the sincerity of faith on the part of those who had so viciously opposed him.

The book of James is a good test of the genuineness of saving faith, the key prerequisite to effective conflict management. Of James 2:14-17, Charles C. Ryrie writes: "can a non-working, dead, spurious faith save a person? James is not saying that we are saved by works, but that a faith that does not produce good works is a dead faith. James was not refuting the Pauline doctrine of justification by true faith, but a perversion of it. Both Paul and James define faith as a living, productive trust in Christ. Genuine faith cannot be 'dead' to morality or barren to works."¹ John MacArthur agrees, and adds, "James is not disputing the importance of faith. Rather, he is opposing the notion that saving faith can be a mere intellectual exercise void of a commitment to active obedience. Just as professed

compassion without action is phony, the kind of faith that is without works is mere empty profession, not genuine saving faith."²

*Within the context of
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Within the context of the book of James, when dealing with conflict, you need to discern the genuine faith of those engulfed in conflict. Ryrie writes of James 2:14-26: "Even in the central passage, the contrast is not between faith and works, but between a dead faith (2:14-20) and a living faith (2:21-26). Dead faith, James emphatically said, cannot save (2:14). It is extremely important to the argument to remember that the question of whether faith can save is confined by the hypothesis that it is to be understood in relationship to a man who says he has faith but produces no works."³

Regarding this issue of conflict, the IFCA International Home Office seeks to provide relevant and biblical sound counsel and resource recommendations to equip the church and church leaders to manage biblically the realities of conflict. We see this as a matter of wise stewardship in the context of church life and personal growth in grace and knowledge.

The Lord has blessed IFCA International with ministries devoted to assisting local church leadership in the issues of managing conflict biblically. These ministries include:

- Bible Related Ministries, founded by Rev. Charles Svoboda and now directed by Rev. David J. Bauer.
- Help Ministries, directed by Rev. Steve Spacek.
- IMI/SOS International, directed by Dr. Rich McCarrell.

- The IFCA International Biblical Conciliation Committee.

These men and ministries stand ready to help strengthen and promote healthy church dynamics in a culture of spiritual peace and applied biblical wisdom.

Many resources are available to local church leaders to equip them to accurately identify and manage conflict biblically. In addition to the IFCA handbook *Biblical Peacemaking*, largely based upon the book, *The Peacemaker* by Ken Sande, this writer also recommends *Been Wronged Lately?* by David W. Garrett. David is a friend of IFCA, has attended our conventions, and will be presenting a seminar at the 2007 Annual Convention in Tulsa, Oklahoma. *Healing the Heart of Your Church* by Dr. Kenneth Quick of Capital Bible Seminary, who has presented his seminar at the 2005 Annual Convention, is helpful. To aid in taking a hard look at your church, *Why Churches Die* by Mac Brunson and Ergun Caner is worth a read, as well. Our aim in IFCA is to stimulate spiritual health in the churches of our fellowship. We hope this issue of the VOICE will contribute to that goal.

ENDNOTES

¹ *The Ryrie Study Bible* notes on James 2:14-17

² *The MacArthur Study Bible* notes on James 2:14-17

³ Charles C. Ryrie, *Biblical Theology of the New Testament*, Emmaus College Press, p.129

Dan Fredericks serves as IFCA International Director of Church and Pastoral Ministries. He may be reached at <dan@ifca.org>

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Conflict, Conflict, Conflict

— Bud Haskell —



Have you heard the statement, “Church ministry would be great if it weren’t for the people?” This is a cynical but accurate assessment of some congregations. Pastors may only think it but never verbalize it.

You will find discord anywhere you find people. Our sin nature creates friction between even the best of friends. Conflict, disharmony, and a difference of opinion can be found in the church, at home, at school, in the workplace, and even in ourselves. Anger, strife, and quarreling are regularly in our lives. These sinful attitudes have been around since the fall of Adam and Eve.

The sin nature in every person causes this problem of conflict. Romans 3:12-18 describes this very well, “They have all turned aside; they have together become unprofitable; there is none who does good, no, not one. Their throat is an open tomb; with their tongues they have practiced deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips; whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness. Their feet are swift to shed blood; destruction and misery are in their ways; and the way of peace they have not known. There is no fear of God before their eyes.”

However, since we cannot eradi-

cate our sinful flesh, and since people are the main ingredient for a local church, we must learn to deal with disagreements among ourselves. Church ministry must include peacemaking, forgiveness, and reconciliation for God’s people to glorify Him.

*You will find discord
anywhere you find people.
Our sin nature creates
friction between even the
best of friends.*

I am challenged by the role of a peacemaker after preaching about Abigail’s attempt to bring peace between David and her husband Nabal in 1 Samuel 25. A peacemaker in any situation is in the biblical position. Pastors should be peacemakers as much as possible. Rom. 12:18 says, “If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men.” This exhortation is to every believer.

Several times in my ministry I had to be a peacemaker. A member of a former church caught me at the door after an evening service. His face was livid, his body filled with anger, and his speech became loud. He did not appreciate my sermon that night or my ministry. He definitely was not happy with me. I had a problem as this man got louder and louder. I stepped outside to find a more private place. I

almost had to drag him out of the doorway. The members of our congregation were embarrassed as they discreetly tried to leave. Their pastor was being verbally attacked by a prominent man of the church and community. We moved to the sidewalk in front of the church, but he would not step aside for a private conversation. I prayed for God’s wisdom to handle this volatile situation. I recalled a Scripture passage I learned as a young man: “A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger” (Proverbs 15:1). I began to lower the volume of my voice. As I attempted to control my emotions and stop my rising anger, I was almost whispering to him in reply. He finally became exasperated because I would not fight with him and left. Proverbs 15:18 adds, “A wrathful man stirs up strife, But he who is slow to anger allays contention.” I admit I have not always responded in this way, but I can testify that it works. Sadly, this man and I never were able to resolve this conflict.

In 2002 the IFCA International Conciliation Committee prepared *The Biblical Peacemaking Handbook*. This edition was printed under terms of a special licensing agreement with Peacemaker Ministries.¹ The Conciliation Committee’s purpose is to provide training, resources, and assistance in preventing and resolving conflicts biblically within the fellowship of IFCA International.

When *The Biblical Peacemaking Handbook* became available, Conciliation Committee member and IFCA

International Director of Church and Pastoral Ministries Dan Fredericks came to the Northern California Regional with the Handbooks. Dan presented the material that day, and it was well received. He outlined how he used it personally, with his family, and in his church. Our Regional purchased a number of Handbooks for our Regional Representative to give to those who desired this important material. We recommend each church teach the Handbook to their congregation and make sure their staff is well versed in its contents. Our Regional Executive Committee recognized the great need for conciliation in our churches.

God impressed upon my heart and mind that Grace Bible Church of Hanford needed to hear about the role of a peacemaker. I taught a series on "Biblical Peacemaking" on Sunday nights (which is dedicated to train the faithful for ministry). We discussed how these concepts ought to be used in our lives. We examined several

examples that were presented. Several people expressed the need to be a peacemaker. They said they are working on the biblical principles.

I have used the Handbook several times in counseling. When a couple comes to me for help because their marriage relationship has deteriorated to the point of contemplating divorce, I lead them through *The Biblical Peacemaking Handbook*. Their first response is to point at the faults of their spouse. But the Handbook takes them to Matthew 7:1-5 "Judge not, that you be not judged. For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you. And why do you look at the speck in your brother's eye, but do not consider the plank in your own eye? Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me remove the speck from your eye'; and look, a plank is in your own eye? Hypocrite! First remove the plank from your own eye, and then you will

see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye." The counselees squirm as God's Word convicts their conscience.

*The counselees squirm
as God's Word convicts
their conscience.*

From a personal standpoint, I find benefit in regular review of *The Biblical Peacemaking Handbook*. This keeps me focused on the Biblical way to respond to conflict that comes into my life. I made bookmarks for the children of our church emphasizing the principles of peacemaking. My wife and I covered much of the same material with our children as they were growing up. But "The 5A Way" by Corelette Sande from *The Young Peacemaker*² has made it easier to memorize. Her rhyming formula given below teaches children how to Biblically confess your sin against someone else.

- 1) ADMIT I'm it. Broke the bond that's tightly fit.
- 2) APOLOGIZE Tell no lies. It's my fault – I recognize.
- 3) ACCEPT gladly kept. A consequence I won't forget.
- 4) ASK you fore we're through. Forgiveness – what I need from you.
- 5) ALTER now this is how: "God, Change my heart. Please do it now!"

You can see how these five steps will teach God's way to confront your own sin. This has been beneficial to me.

Recently, I read Ken Sande's book *The Peacemaker: A Biblical Guide to Resolving Personal Conflict*.³ I quote the Peacemaker's Pledge as an overview of the material. The Manual gives a fuller explanation and Biblical support. The following is "A Commitment to Biblical Conflict Resolution" :

As people reconciled to God by the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, we believe that we are called to respond to conflict in a way that is remarkably different from the way the

UIM

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world deals with conflict.⁴ We also believe that conflict provides opportunities to glorify God, serve other people, and grow to be like Christ.⁵ Therefore, in response to God's love and in reliance on His grace, we commit ourselves to respond to conflict according to the following principles.

Glorify God – Instead of focusing on our own desires or dwelling on what others may do, we will seek to please and honor God—by depending on His wisdom, power, and love; by faithfully obeying His commands; and by seeking to maintain a loving, merciful, and forgiving attitude.⁶

Get The Log Out Of Your Own Eye – Instead of attacking others or dwelling on their wrongs, we will take responsibility for our own contribution to conflicts—confessing our sins, asking God to help us change any attitudes and habits that lead to conflict, and seeking to repair any harm we have caused.⁷

Go And Show Your Brother

His Fault – Instead of pretending that conflict doesn't exist or talking about others behind their back, we will choose to overlook minor offenses, or we will talk directly and graciously with those whose offenses seem too serious to overlook. When a conflict with another Christian cannot be resolved in private, we will ask others in the body of Christ to help us settle the matter in a biblical manner.⁸

Go And Be Reconciled – Instead of accepting premature compromise or allowing relationships to wither, we will actively pursue genuine peace and reconciliation—forgiving others as God, for Christ's sake, has forgiven us, and seeking just and mutually beneficial solutions to our differences.⁹

By God's grace, we will apply these principles as a matter of stewardship, realizing that conflict is an assignment, not an accident. We will remember that success, in God's eyes, is not a matter of specific results but of faithful, dependent obedience. And we will

pray that our service as peacemakers brings praise to our Lord and leads others to know His infinite love.¹⁰

I recommend that you find out more about *The Biblical Peacemaking Handbook* from IFCA International. You and your church will be glad you did. Make sure you are honoring God by becoming a peacemaker.

ENDNOTES

Please consult the Conciliation Committee's section of the IFCA International website at www.ifca.org. For further information about The Peacemaker Ministries see their website at www.peacemaker.net.

2 See IFCA International *The Biblical Peacemaking Handbook*, page 21.

3 *Biblical Peacemaker: A Biblical Guide to Resolving Personal Conflict*. Ken Sande. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1997.

4 Luke 6:27-36; Gal. 5:19-26; Matt. 5:9

5 1 Cor. 10:31-11:1; Rom. 8:28-29; James 1:2-4

6 1 Cor. 10:31; James 4:1-3; Ps. 37:1-6; Phil. 4:2-9; Col. 3:1-4; 1 Pet. 2:12; John 14:15; James 3:17-18; Rom. 12:17-21; Mark 11:25

7 Matt. 7:3-5; 1 Jn. 1:8-9; Prov. 28:13; Col. 3:5-14; Lk. 19:8

8 Matt. 18:15-20; James 5:9; Prov. 19:11; Gal. 6:1-2; Eph. 4:29; 2 Tim. 2:24-26; 1 Cor. 6:1-8

9 Matt. 5:23-24; Matt. 6:12; Eph. 4:1-3, 32; Matt. 7:12; Phil. 2:3-4

10 Matt. 25:14-21; 1 Pet. 2:19; 4:19; Rom. 12:18; John 13:34-35

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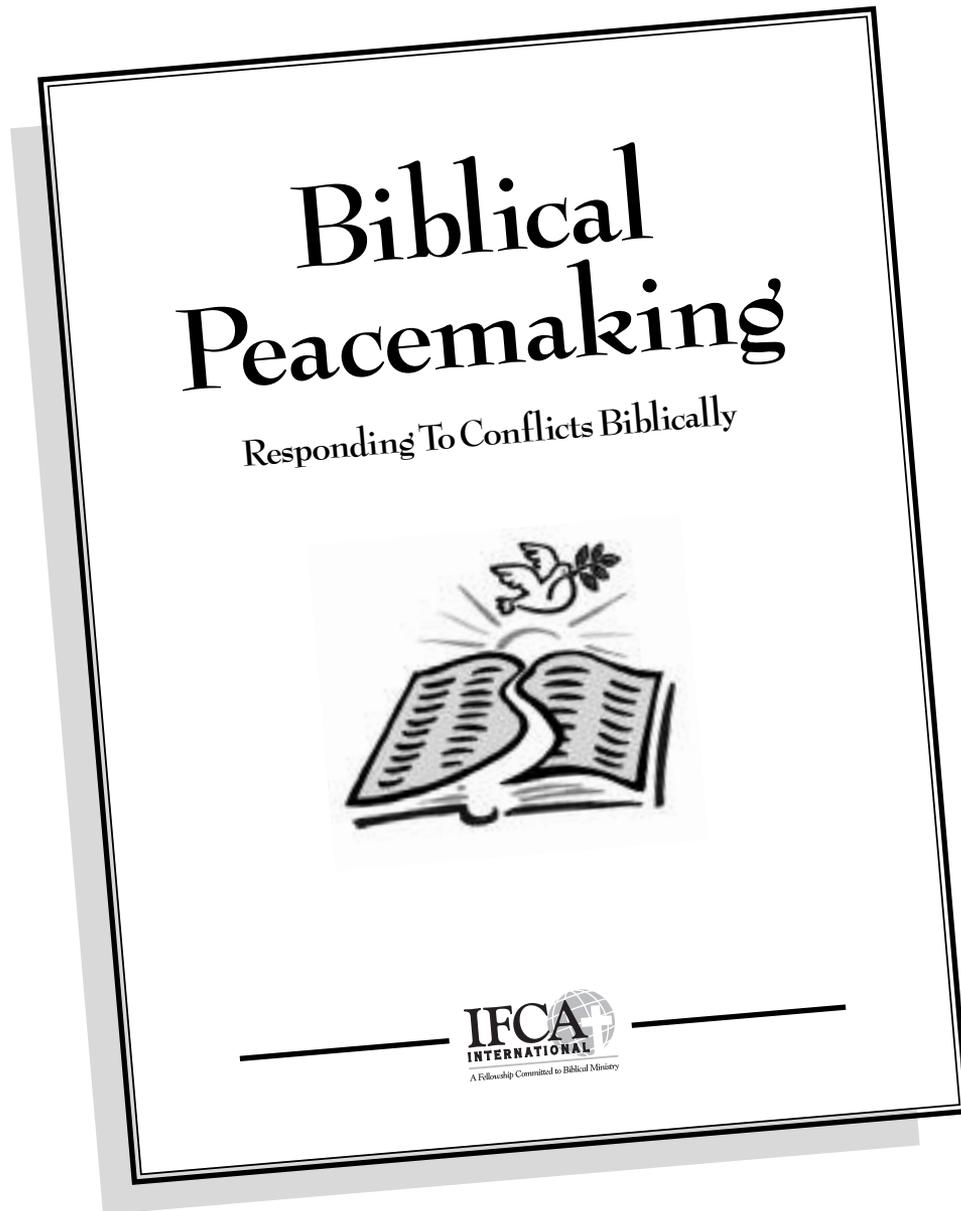
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Bud Haskell is Senior Pastor of Grace Bible Church of Hanford, CA. He may be reached at <budhaskell@sbcglobal.net>

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Biblical Peacemaking: Responding To Conflicts Biblically is available to churches and individuals upon request. Based upon Ken Sande's book, *The Peacemaker*

this workbook has been adapted for use by IFCA International and is available through the IFCA website.

While our primary purpose is to equip others in the area of conciliation, the IFCA Conciliatory Committee is available to counsel and advise in areas of specific church conflict situations. Feel free to contact any of the committee members.

IFCA International Conciliation Website
www.ifca.org (listed under "Services")

IFCA Conciliation Committee

Dr. Ernie Baker, Chairman
Dr. Jerry Back
Rev. Dan Fredericks
Rev. Bud Haskell
Rev. Steve Spacek
Rev. Jim Thompson

Blessed Are the Peacemakers

— Steve Spacek —



Blessed are the peacemakers; for they shall be called the sons of God.” (Matthew 5:9)

Who is not interested in knowing and having peace? As long as there are conflicts there will be a longing for peace and for those who bring peace. One of the delusions of the last days is a false sense of “peace and security” (1 Thessalonians 5:3). The implication is there a false peace as opposed to a true peace. This raises the questions: What are the characteristics of true peacemakers? And what is real peace?

It is helpful to reflect on the setting of the text above - the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5. Here the Lord establishes a standard of living counter to everything the world practices or holds dear. To live by the standards He gives here is to live a life of blessed happiness.

The Sermon on the Mount makes clear that internal changes also bring external changes. When our attitudes and thinking are right, our actions will fall in line. The first four Beatitudes

deal entirely with inner principles, principles of the heart and mind. They are concerned with the way we see ourselves before God. The last four Beatitudes deal with the outward manifestations of the attitudes of the heart: (1) those who in poverty of spirit (5:3) recognize their need of mercy and are led to show mercy to others (5:7); (2) those who mourn over their sin (5:4) are led to purity of heart (5:8);

*The Sermon on the Mount
makes clear that internal
changes also bring
external changes.*

(3) those who are meek (5:5) always seek to make peace (5:9); and (4) those who hunger and thirst for righteousness (5:6) are never unwilling to pay the price of being persecuted for righteousness (5:10). Within this context, we see that the attitudes and actions of “the blessed” are an integral part of the peacemaker.

According to the *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, in classical Greek a “peacemaker” was “an ambassador sent to treat of [for] peace.” The

word “peacemaker” in Matthew 5:9 could be better rendered “peace-worker,” implying not merely making peace between those in conflict, but working peace. What are some characteristics of this peace-worker?

A PEACE-WORKER IS...

One who has made peace with God through Jesus Christ: “For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life” (Romans 5:10).

One who leads others to make peace with God through Jesus Christ—“The word which God sent to the children of Israel, preaching peace through Jesus Christ—He is Lord of all” (Acts 10:36).

One who endeavors to maintain peace with others—“If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men” (Romans 12:18).

There are many misconceptions about what peace really is. Some believe peace is equated to pacifism or maintaining harmony without conflict. Others believe peace is achieved through aggression and conquest. False peace arises from presumptuous confidence (conceit) like the foolish virgins in Matthew 25. Several factors contribute to a false sense of peace such as a misconception of the nature of God, a distortion of righteousness and unright-

teousness, and a focus on love and harmony at the expense of truth. What are the characteristics of true peace? Consider the following thoughts.

PEACE ORIGINATES WITH GOD

God is frequently referred to in the epistles as the “God of peace.” *“Now the God of peace be with you all. Amen”* (Romans 15:33). *“And the God of peace shall be with you”* (Philippians 4:9). The words “peace from (apo) God” occur in the opening greetings in all Paul’s letters, indicating the quality that God can impart. The phrase “God of peace” is suggestive because it points to the absence of conflict in God. 1 Corinthians 14:33 makes this clear: *“God is not a God of confusion, but of peace.”* Peace therefore describes an attitude of God. For believers peace is not an emotion; it is an attitude of the mind that rests in the Truth. Lack of peace is an absence of faith.

PEACE IS A REFLECTION OF THE PURITY OF GOD

God’s peace is through purity. *“But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable”* (James 3:17) – and it cannot be attained at the expense of righteousness. It cannot be divorced from holiness. *“Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord”* (Hebrews 12:14). Biblically speaking, where there is true peace there is righteousness, holiness, and purity.

SIN IS THE ENEMY OF PEACE

Sin separates men from God and causes disharmony. Sin is the enemy of peace: *“the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace, because the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God”* (Romans 8:6-7). *“For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lewdness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness. All these evil things come from within and defile a man”* (Mark 7:21-23).

PEACE CANNOT REIGN WHERE WICKEDNESS REIGNS

Wicked hearts cannot produce a peaceful society. *“‘There is no peace,’ says the Lord, ‘for the wicked’”* (Isaiah 48:22). Even those who appear religious, yet have sinful hearts, announce assurances of peace and proclaim a false peace: *“From prophet to priest, everyone deals falsely. They have treated superficially the brokenness of My dear people, claiming: Peace, peace, when there is no peace”*

(Jeremiah 8:10-11). *“They give assurances of peace when all is war. Are they ashamed when they do these disgusting things? No, not at all—they don’t even blush! Therefore... they will be humbled when they are punished, says the Lord”* (Jeremiah 8:11-12). There cannot be peace without repentance of sin: *“If your brother sins against you, rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive him”* (Luke 17:3).

PEACE IS PART OF THE GOSPEL MESSAGE

The proclamation of the gospel is sharing “the good news of peace.” Those who respond to the gospel find peace with God “through the blood of His cross.” *“You know the message God sent to the people of Israel, telling the good news of peace through Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all”* (Acts 10:36). *“For it pleased the Father that in Him all the fullness should dwell, and by Him to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross”* (Colossians 1:19-20).

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PEACE IS ESTABLISHED THROUGH RECONCILIATION

God places a high priority on reconciliation. Jesus said, *“Therefore if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift”* (Matthew 5:23-24). Jesus said reconciliation precedes worship, giving, service, and sacrifice. The word reconciliation means “to be at peace with.” It is putting things right when things have gone wrong. Just as Jesus took the initiative to reconcile us to God by His death on the Cross so we are to take the initiative to seek reconciliation with those we have offended. As believers, God “has given us the ministry of reconciliation” (2 Corinthians 5:18).

PEACE DOES NOT COME WITHOUT CONFLICT

Jesus said, *“Don’t imagine that I came to bring peace on the earth! No, I came to bring a sword”* (Matthew 10:34). There will be opposition before there is harmony. There will be strife before there is peace. Truth will produce anger before it produces happiness. Righteousness will produce antagonism before it produces harmony. The sword of the Word of Truth will hurt before it heals.

Believers cannot avoid facing truth or avoid facing others with the truth

for the sake of harmony. If someone is in serious error about a part of God’s truth, he cannot have a right, peaceful relationship with others until the error is confronted and corrected. Peacemakers uphold truth and righteousness in love, *“speaking the truth in love”* (Ephesians 4:15).

*The sword of the
Word of Truth will hurt
before it heals.*

PEACE IS CLOSELY LINKED TO RIGHTEOUSNESS

Peace and righteousness go hand-in-hand. There is no peace without righteousness; righteousness produces peace. *“The work of righteousness will be peace, and the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance forever”* (Isaiah 32:17). *“Now the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace”* (James 3:18).

PEACEMAKING IS OUR BLESSING

Those who manifest the characteristics of a true peacemaker, those who are workers of peace *“shall be called the sons of God”* (Matthew 5:9). The Jewish custom was to designate persons in accordance with their behavior: “son of Belial” (1 Samuel 25:17), “sons

of light” (John 12:36), “sons of disobedience” (Ephesians 2:2). The “sons of God” are recognized by their behavior as they reflect the nature of God. It is a blessing to be recognized as a “son of peace” (Luke 10:6).

Those who are peacemakers are blessed as they bless others in their “peace-working!” They have peace with God, lead others to make peace with God through Jesus Christ, endeavor to maintain peace with others, and promote a biblical perspective of true peace.

“Now the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace” (James 3:18).

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Conflict is a Worship Disorder

— Ernie Baker —



The annual congregational meeting is coming and you dread the tension. You have pains in your stomach as you anticipate what the discussion will be. The inner turmoil also results in anxious thoughts and sleepless nights.

Maybe the tension in your life is caused by marriage conflicts. You and your spouse hardly agree on anything. The thought runs through your mind that he or she never meets your needs. He or she just does not understand you. Maybe it escalates into an outward explosion.

Do these scenarios or something like them describe your any of your experiences? I'm sure the answer is yes because they describe life on planet earth. We live in a Genesis 3 world and this is reality. It is obvious that conflict started when mankind rebelled against God's design and "worshiped and served the creation rather than the Creator" (Romans 1:25). Praise God that through the process of sanctification believers in Christ can become worshipers of the Creator instead of the creation!

HUMAN BEINGS ARE WORSHIPERS

I would like to propose that conflicts come from a disorder of the soul—a worship disorder as Romans 1:25 states. In Paul's "fruit of the flesh" list of verses 29-30 this misplaced worship produces "strife... malice... gossips... slanderers..."

*"I am the king of
my life and others
are to serve me" instead
of loving God and
loving others.*

unloving...and the unmerciful." God's intention was that our desires were to be focused on Him and others. At the Fall these desires turned toward self and mankind was infected with narcissism. We now want what we want and are willing to fight to get it. We may just want "peace and quiet" or have "life under control" but are willing to disturb the peace to get it. This describes the strange kinks and twists of the human soul.

To continue building our understanding that we are worshipers let's

look at Romans 11:36. In this verse, as part of doxology of praise to the Lord for His incredible plan of salvation, Paul states why we are on the planet. He says that everything is "from Him, through Him, and to Him." Life was meant to revolve around God. If everyone lived with their life revolving around God and others, there would be no conflict. Another way of saying this would be, if everyone lived worshiping God and loving others there would be no conflict.

According to this verse He is the originator, the Creator ("from Him"). He is also the sustainer ("through Him"). And everything is to be the goal ("to Him"). In Colossians 3:11 Paul adds that "Christ is all." Other verses that present this focus are 1 Corinthians 8:6 (which states clearly "we exist for Him"), Colossians 1:16 and of course the abundantly clear 1 Corinthians 10:31. Life was meant to be theocentric and our desires focused on Him and others. He is to be the King and my life is to revolve around Him and His desires not around me and my desires. Again, at the Fall the focus became "I am the king of my life and others are to serve me" instead of loving God and loving others. The problem is that everyone has this "my kingdom" mentality and conflicts reveal "kingdoms in conflict." The walls of castles clash together.

ALL ARE RELIGIOUS

Another line of reasoning that reveals that all are worshipers is exploring why all people are religious. Typically when I ask a class what it means when we say a man does his work religiously I get these type answers. *“He is devoted to his work. He is zealous, passionate, and puts energy into it. He is willing to sacrifice time and money for it and finds some type of satisfaction in it.”* There are many other characteristics also.

Now think about conflicts as a worship disorder. I have seen a lot of people zealous for a cause at congregational meetings! I propose that they were being religious. They were worshiping, but most of the time their focus was not the true and living God. Why are individuals willing to put so much effort into getting their own way at a meeting? Why are they willing to sacrifice time to gain support for their cause? Why do they show so much zeal? The answer: they are functioning as a worshiper, but the god they are serving is the god of their own desires. They are focusing on self instead of loving and serving God and loving and serving others.

DISCERNING THE HEART

During conflicts, how can we figure out what we are really serving and living for? Psalm 18:1-4 can provide some guidance. It is a truism that pressure (like conflicts) reveals character. What a person turns to when feeling the heat of life reveals a lot about what they think it takes to make life work. It reveals what a person is really living for and loving. Let’s call this their “functional god.”

David was facing intense heat in relationships in Psalm 18. He described it as “torrents of ungodliness” in verse 4. Have you ever felt that way during a congregational meeting? Instead of turning to his own desires to keep life under control, David turned to worship of the LORD.

Among other things, David wrote that the LORD is His “rock,” “fortress,” and “horn of my salvation” (verse 2). As he tried to deal with life (especially conflict in relationships) he turned as a worshiper to the proper

source, the living God with whom he has a living relationship, and the LORD sustained and delivered him.

I would like to suggest that people turn to other “rocks” and “fortresses” during conflict. Individuals blow their own horns of salvation and what they turn to reveals their functioning gods instead of the true and living God. Let’s think what the metaphors of Psalm 18 represent.

*The next time you hear
an outburst of anger,
think to yourself that
you are hearing the
contents of the heart.*

A rock would symbolize security and even the comfort that comes from feeling secure. During conflict this can come out in subtle ways, like manipulating conversations or relationships to get what you want so you can feel secure. It could also mean to be demanding control because that’s when you feel most secure.

The term “fortress” also can reveal functional gods. A fortress is someplace where you retreat when you are under attack. During conflict humans have many escapes. They can hide in silence and hope the conflict will go away. Humans are also good at making food and entertainment fortresses when there are tensions in life. Really anything can become a fortress. The question is what are they really loving, serving and wanting during conflict? Answering these questions can get to the roots of what is really producing the bad fruit of conflict in a church or home.

The phrase “horn of my salvation” is also revealing. The horn David blew when feeling pressure in relationships was the greatness of his God! However, many people “toot their own horn” during conflict. This way to approach conflict is in direct violation of Philippians 2:4 which states, “do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the

interests of others.” The horn may also represent a cavalry-to-the-rescue mentality, where they take control of the situation (this is the idol). Their abrupt speech becomes the means of letting people know, “I’m in charge.”

Study David’s metaphors and ask what each represents and then question how humans turn to others things instead of the LORD. This would be helpful to do during conflict. It would help discern what is really fueling the fire of conflict in the congregation or the home. The answers reveal the functional gods being worshiped during conflict.

LEARNING FROM A TEA BAG

Proverbs 4:23 states that we should guard our heart because out of it flow the issues of life. In other words, we live out of our hearts. Matthew 12:34 states, “the mouth speaks out of that which fills the heart.” Under pressure, the heart comes out. That’s how a tea bag works. Under heat the contents of the tea bag are revealed and they seep out into the surroundings. The next time you hear an outburst of anger, think to yourself that you are hearing the contents of the heart. You are really hearing an expression of worship. Most humans look for a way to blame their environment for their responses to conflict. *“It’s the pastor’s fault.”* Or, *“I wouldn’t be this way if my father loved me more.”* Or, *“if my wife loved me more I wouldn’t be so depressed.”* Remember that biblically it starts with your heart, and life just reveals what is already inside.

CONCLUDING APPLICATIONS

Conflict is about much more than what is happening on the surface. You need to think deeper. It seems to me that churches have focused on external behavior for so long that we have forgotten that God’s Word also addresses the “thoughts and intentions of the heart” (Hebrews 4:12). If we are going to truly help our churches break free from patterns of conflict we must help people realize they are worshipers and they are worshiping their own gods. This is idolatry and they must repent!

Realizing that conflict reveals a worship disorder will help you realize the depth of depravity in the soul and spur you on to love the Lord your God with all your heart when you repent of these false gods (like loving comfort, control, pleasure). The path to resolving conflicts is by teaching people to love and serve what they were created to love and serve-God and others.

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Counseling Marital Conflicts

— Jim Thompson —



While doing hospital visitation, I overheard a conversation in an elevator between three nurses. One of the nurses was getting married and she was talking about her excitement in getting married. She made the comment, “I am not going to move everything I own to the house, just in case this doesn’t work.” It occurred to me, she was not planning for the marriage to succeed. In fact, quite the contrary, she was planning for the marriage to fail.

This seems to be the attitude of many today. We have prenuptial agreements and contingency plans in case of marital failures, and all of this is to make it easier to end the marriage. In his classic book, *Communication: Key to Your Marriage*, H. Norman Wright states: “That once permanent bastion of security and ‘til death do us part’ commitment has become for too many an impermanent gamble lasting ‘til divorce seems convenient.”¹

Marriage counseling tends to be, for the most part, an exercise in futility.

Most couples have made up their minds before they even begin the counseling process. Most counselors/pastors find this attitude frustrating and tend to give up on the couple. Perhaps a counselor/pastor would never say he gives up, but in reality, he does not try as hard or put the effort into seeing the marriage reconciled. If marriage is as sacred as the Bible says it is (and it is), then we who are involved in marital counseling should never give up, knowing that God can mend any relationship. As a counselor/pastor, we need to get couples to understand the T.R.U.T.H. concerning marriage.

*Most couples have
made up their minds
before they even begin
the counseling process.*

Timing is extremely important to reconciling a marriage. Most couples wait too long before they recognize they have a problem. In some cases, by the time counseling is sought, lawyers have already been contacted and divorce papers have been filed. If you see a warning light on the dash of

your car, you would not ignore it; you would seek to find the cause. Some couples see the warning light, but choose to ignore it until it is too late and residual damage has been done. It is imperative to recognize a problem in the marriage early so help, if necessary, can be sought and the marriage can be salvaged. I remember counseling with a particular couple in my church. I was meeting with the man alone to get his “take” on things. After about the fourth meeting, he informed me that the court hearing was in two months. He had already filed for divorce. We need to communicate to couples the need to talk to a pastor and/or a counselor early, when the warning light first appears.

Responsibilities within a marriage are important to understand. One responsibility is that each spouse must know his/her own function within the marriage. There are two extremes. The man is the master of his home and makes all decisions, regardless of what his wife thinks. The other extreme is that the man can’t make any decisions and his wife is left “running” the home. Both of these are unbiblical. While the Bible does command the man to be the head of his home, he is also required to love his wife as Christ loves the Church (Eph. 4:25). This means he is to make deci-

sions based upon the welfare of his wife and family, not just what is good for him. The wife in turn is to submit to her husband as unto the Lord (Eph. 4:22), knowing that her husband has her welfare in mind. Although it is not always easy to fulfill these God-given roles, we must remind the couple that they have a responsibility to honor God in their marriage. As a counselor/pastor, we must teach these responsibilities to our couples. They must understand that being the head and submitting work hand-in-hand. They work in conjunction with each, and are not separate functions.

Another responsibility we find in the marriage is in the area of communication. A lot of conflicts are primarily due to poor communication skills. The reality is, most couples have not learned how to communicate properly. There is a cycle of communication important for every couple to learn. It begins with one doing the talking while the other is listening. For the

cycle to be complete there must be a response from the hearer. Then and only then will communication have taken place. It is wise to teach our couples to listen and to learn to ask the right questions of their spouse. By asking questions, it is demonstrated that what was said has actually been what was heard. This tends to add clarification and in most cases, defuses an otherwise argumentative situation.

An unselfish attitude on the part of each one in the relationship will prevent major conflicts in the marriage. Our society, for the most part, is self-centered and self-serving. If what I am doing does not benefit me then it is not worth doing.² Couples who are selfish tend to be the couples who require more attention. I would have to say that in my twenty-four years experience as pastor, this has been the number one problem I have faced while counseling couples. Sure, there have been communication problems, children problems, money problems and the list goes on. But the one com-

mon denominator in all of them is a selfish attitude. Both spouses have to have their own way, or it is the highway. There is little if any compromise. But this is one time when compromise is good. No one likes to lose an argument, because losing appears to be a sign of weakness. So then stubbornness sets in. It is the role of the counselor/pastor to recognize when one or the other is being selfish. He must be able to distinguish between genuine need and a selfish need. I remember with one couple, I initially thought the woman was being unusually mean and non-supportive of her husband, but after several counseling sessions, it became apparent that the man was putting demands upon his wife that were unwarranted. When she would not meet those demands, he accused her of not caring and having no concern for his welfare. He was being selfish and was causing undue stress in the marriage. Once this was dealt with, the conflicts in the marriage became far and few between.

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Trust is another big issue in marriage. The attitude of our culture seems to be a lack of trust among people. With all the heads of church and religious organizations falling into sin, people become fearful of putting their trust in anyone. This has found its way into our marriages. Many marriages have ended due to a lack of trust. The attitude that he/she is “out to get me”

If the goal is to glorify Christ in the marriage, and both are living holy, pure lives, then there is no conflict that can not be resolved.

seems to be prevalent. I remember one couple where the wife thought everything the husband did was to “get even” or to “hurt her.” She had zero trust in this man. It did not matter what he did, whether standing on the other side of the room talking to someone else and assuming they were talking about her, or being late coming home from work and thinking he had made a secret rendezvous with another woman. This lack of trust often

comes from one’s upbringing. Many couples have no example to follow from their childhood. Their parents did not provide security to help them develop trust and in most cases, their parents were divorced and they were shuffled from one home to another. This plays a major role in the development of trust. As a counselor/pastor, it is imperative we help our struggling couples develop trust in each other.³

Holiness is the key to solving most, if not all problems in the marriage. None of the above is possible without the practice of personal holiness by each spouse. When the counselor/pastor first meets with a couple, their personal relationship with Jesus Christ should be examined immediately. Without the power of the Holy Spirit, most efforts will be done in the flesh and nothing good can come from the flesh. The Conciliation Committee of IFCA International has developed an excellent handbook on how to respond to conflicts Biblically. In this handbook, the section entitled “Understanding Conflict and Our Responses to It” addresses the source of every conflict, which is the heart. The same is true in the marriage. The reason why more Christians are getting divorces is reflected in the condition of the heart. In the marriage ceremony, we establish the fact that marriage is a sacred institute established by our Lord and is therefore not to be entered into lightly but soberly. If the goal is to glorify Christ in the marriage, and both are living holy, pure

lives, then there is no conflict that can not be resolved.⁴

Marital conflicts can be resolved. A counselor/pastor should never give up on any couple. After all, Christ never gives up on us. But he should remember to help the struggling couple to learn the T.R.U.T.H. Timing, Responsibilities, Unselfishness, Trust and Holiness must be understood to make a marriage honorable to our Lord. It is the role of the counselor/pastor to assist our couples to know this T.R.U.T.H. May God be glorified in our marriages!

END NOTES

1 Wright, Norman H., *Communication: Key to Your Marriage*, G/L Publications, 1974

2 We are seeing this selfish attitude played out in our churches by the way we worship. Hedonism, the need to have pleasure, has played a major role in formulating worship services, and if it does not satisfy, then it must be wrong. There is no wonder this attitude has found its way into our marriages, it permeates all we do in many of our churches.

3 Developing this trust must begin with a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. It is understood that if trust is an issue within a marriage, it is due to a poor understanding of their relationship with Christ. The counselor/pastor must begin with Christ and move forward to discuss the marriage.

4 See 1 Peter 1:13-16

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Helping Your Pastor Resolve Conflict

— David W. Garrett —



Perhaps you are concerned about the presence of conflict in your church. Maybe you noticed two friends aren't speaking over a controversial business deal. Or perhaps you learned about a fight between a homeowner and contractor in your church, which has led to nasty litigation in court. Or, maybe you heard that a family who attended your church for years is no longer there without any apparent reason except gossip about a fight with another family.

There might be a battle for control raging in your church. One group of individuals has lined up against another for command of your church's agenda. Or possibly, an elder offended someone in your church and the offended person has threatened to leave unless the elder resigns.

Maybe you yourself are engaged in a dispute. For example, you might be on the verge of losing a promotion in a Christian organization due to company politics with others. Possibly your spouse ran off with a friend with

whom you went to Bible study. Maybe you received a smaller inheritance from your elderly parents due to inappropriate influence from your "Christian" sibling. Perhaps you received some bad advice from a Christian professional. Or lastly, maybe a temporary loan you made to a needy family in your church isn't getting repaid.

At its worst conflict can lead to lawsuits. However, handled properly conflict can lead to Christian growth and blessing.

The fact you are concerned about interpersonal conflict in your church says a lot about you. You have a heart for relationships. You have recognized that just as God values our relationship with Him, He also values our relationships with each other.

What can you do about these concerns? This article is designed to show you how to help your pastor set up a Conflict Resolution Team so your church can effectively manage conflict.

At its worst conflict can lead to lawsuits. However, handled properly conflict can lead to Christian growth and blessing. Fortunately, biblical concepts of conflict resolution are helpful in any situation where our Christian unity, testimony, or genuine fellowship is jeopardized. More importantly, establishing a Conflict Resolution Team will itself act as a preemptive strike on conflict. Just the process of setting it up may change the mindset at your church. That's where you come in.

TALK TO YOUR PASTOR

Your pastor already knows that from time to time, there is conflict in your church. He can feel it as can you. However, it might help to show him some of the recent statistics so you won't feel alone. Did you know that over 8 million lawsuits are filed by Christians each year in the United States? Or, that over 52,000 people leave their churches each month? Did you know the rate of divorce is not substantially different among believers than non-believers? Finally, over 1500 pastors leave the ministry each month due in part to contention within their churches. Statistically, your church is probably not any different. Isn't conflict just another consequence of a fallen world? We shouldn't be surprised by it. Interpersonal conflict and its resolution

are abundantly discussed in the Bible. Indeed, the Bible gives very specific procedural directions for dealing with it.

Why wait for conflict to start? What help is it to buy a fire extinguisher after a fire? Urge your pastor to let you help him start the process of implementing a Bible based conflict resolution process in your church. Churches have processes for evangelizing, discipling, baptizing, marrying, and burying fellow church members but do they have a process for resolving their disputes? Churches point sinners to reconciliation with God but do they point them to reconciliation with each other? In Matthew 22:34-40, Jesus said the first commandment is to love "vertically." But do churches remember the second commandment, which is to love "horizontally"? We need to remove the impediments to loving each other.

Your pastor is busy. Very few professions can match the demanding days pastors put in. Exhaustion and burn-out are not uncommon. Tell your pastor you will do the footwork, he will get the credit, and your church will benefit. Just think of the peace of mind you can offer your pastor if you help him establish a team of trained volunteers within your church to whom he can refer interpersonal conflict. Jesus didn't instruct us to "tell the pastor" in Matthew 18. He told us to "tell the church." That means the *ekklesia* or the body. In other words, "lay people." That's us. And "telling the church" means reaching out to our fellow believers to help us reconcile with each other while in conflict. The emphasis of Matthew 18:15-18 is towards reconciliation, not merely shame or church discipline. Setting up an independent process will free the pastor and his staff to come in afterwards for counseling and restoration, if necessary. It will save your pastor time and shift the burden where it belongs. One final note. Don't use the word, "Program." This is a resource for your pastor, not a program.

GET APPROVAL FROM STAFF AND ELDERS

Assuming you get the go ahead from the pastor, the next step is the church staff and the elders. Jesus created the church. We need to work within

it. Therefore, we need to consult our leaders. We want them to "buy" into the process so it will work. The objective is to change church culture for the long haul and make the process self-perpetuating not just be another trendy "flash in the pan program."

Why wait for conflict to start? What help is it to buy a fire extinguisher after a fire?

Ask your pastor if you can present your idea to the church staff first. Very likely, they will be the ones helping you to administrate the team. You will probably discover they like the idea because they often hear of conflict in the church first. They will be the ones to take calls from someone who "tells it to the church." Give your church staff something they can do about it. Explain how the process works. They will have ideas about who might be good candidates for the Conflict Resolution Team.

Next, you will want to present the idea to the elders / church board, asking the pastor to bring it up for approval. You should provide a summary in writing for their review and show them this article. Be prepared. Boards are often on the lookout for preemptive ways to head off trouble. They may want you to explain the idea in person. And always remember that the team functions under the authority of the church's leadership.

ASK FOR POSSIBLE CANDIDATES FOR THE TEAM

Depending on your pastor's experience at your church he may have an excellent idea about who might be possible candidates for the Conflict Resolution Team. Pastors usually know the strengths, weaknesses, and gifts of those in their congregation. He may come up with a dozen or more names right away. Get a church registry when he has a moment and ask

him to check the names he suggests. If your church has 50-100 members ask for 6 names. If it has 300 members ask for a dozen. You get the idea. Because conciliation groups are assigned in panels of three, it might be best to ask for names in increments of three. Not everyone will sign up. You can always ask for more names later.

Make sure the suggested names have varied backgrounds, experiences, and spiritual gifts. Part of the wisdom of God in conceiving the church body is in its strength of diversity. However, all candidates must have the minimum quality of wisdom according to Paul in 1 Corinthians 6. You are looking for candidates with wisdom and a heart for relationships.

With your pastor's permission, initiate contact with these individuals. Say something like, "The pastor thought you might be a good candidate for our new Conflict Resolution Team." You could use email to each one, followed by snail mail, followed by a personal phone call for best results.

INVITE THE CANDIDATES TO AN INTRODUCTORY PRESENTATION

So your candidates won't feel pressured, invite them to an introductory presentation without obligation. At the meeting, explain the problem that conflict is creating in the church at large. Show them statistics. Ask your candidates about their experiences with conflict among believers. Introduce them to several passages about these concepts from Scripture. For example, cite Matthew 18, 1 Corinthians 6, Jacob and Esau in Genesis 33, Joseph and his brothers, David and Saul.

Next, provide an overview of the biblical process and how it will be administrated in your church. There are resources from the IFCA International Conciliation Committee. Also, I founded a ministry named for 1 Corinthians 6 (ICORVI Ministries at www.icorvi.org) and we have extensive materials you can draw on. In addition, your pastor and church leaders may have provided guidelines you must respect. Spend time especially

considering the objective of conflict resolution, namely, reconciliation between disputing fellow believers. Review Matthew 5 and John 17 together. Consider developing a computer projected presentation. Allow for a question and answer time.

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From this introductory group your best candidates will emerge. If you don't get enough, ask for more names and try it again.

INTERVIEW YOUR TEAM MEMBERS

After you have a list of candidates who want to proceed, the next step is to interview them individually (or as married couples). You may want to meet them over coffee or lunch. Get to know them personally one by one. Conflict resolution is highly relational. As a group you want to set an example of outstanding fellowship to others in your church. Start right away. You should try to ascertain in an appropriate way an individual candidate's background, life experiences, spiritual experiences, and spiritual gifts if possible. Follow any procedures your church might have with respect to screening volunteers as well. A written application kept on file is probably a good idea.

CONDUCT BASIC TRAINING

Once you have your candidates prepared and interviewed it is time for training. You should ask your pastor to help you with this step and / or you can recruit a qualified training consultant to assist you. Again, IFCA International Conciliation Committee has resources along with ICORVI Ministries for church based lay conciliation. You want training that will help you learn how to solve your own church's problems internally.

PUBLICIZE THIS RESOURCE IN YOUR CHURCH

When training is complete its time to publicize your team. You could make a short presentation before the whole church body. You could list a phone number or email address in the church bulletin or mailers. You could also offer a small group or Sunday School and/or Bible study on the subject. Anything which raises awareness about the problem of conflict in the church and the biblical remedy is helpful. Don't forget to re-publicize it from time to time or people will forget.

PRACTICE, PRACTICE, PRACTICE

You should plan on meeting with your team periodically. At this time you could practice your skills on hypothetical situations, conduct additional training, exchange reading lists, pray, discuss problems, and generally increase the group's quality of fellowship and friendship.

REPLICATE

In anticipation of interchurch conflict, that is, conflict between believers attending different churches you may want to consider encouraging other churches to start their own teams. Joint conciliation panels can be assembled from teams at several participating churches, if necessary. By replicating in that way, you will serve the larger body of Christ and fulfill Christ's prayer in John 17, "that they may be one, Father."

ENDNOTES

Please note that the format and principles outlined herein are not intended to exclude competent legal advice nor are they intended to be the practice of law. YOU SHOULD FEEL FREE TO CONTACT YOUR OWN LAWYER AT ANY TIME FOR ADVICE AND INSTRUCT OTHERS WITH WHOM YOU HAVE CONTACT ABOUT SUCH MATTERS TO DO LIKEWISE. Instead, the format and principles set forth above represent the author's religious beliefs / biblical convictions about the process of conflict resolution between disputing individuals or organizations that also share similar religious beliefs.

David Garrett is a Christian attorney who lives in Muskegon, MI and for years attended an IFCA church. He has been admitted to practice law in four states. He grew weary of litigation between Christians, so he began ICORVI Ministries (naming it after 1 Corinthians 6 as a constant reminder that Christians should not take other Christians to court). He will present a seminar at the 2007 IFCA International Annual Convention in Tulsa. You may reach him at <davidgarrett@icorvi.org>

Why a Youth Regional?

— Travis Huseby —

IFCA NATIONAL YOUTH REPRESENTATIVE



There's been a change at the IFCA Youth Convention from emphasizing competition to emphasizing ministry training. The IFCA Youth Committee understands it takes a while for this change in emphasis to occur at the Regional and church levels. Therefore, I want to share what can happen when an IFCA Youth Regional facilitates this change in concept.

I have long, first hand experience with the Wisconsin Youth Regional. For over fifty years our Regional Youth event has been called "Round-up." Each year at Round-up we bring in a speaker. Over the years, Round-up has grown to be a weekend event that starts on Thursday evening and runs through Saturday afternoon. Depending on the year, we also bring in a college drama group or guest musician. We strive for this conference to be an event every youth group in our Regional would benefit from, even if they are not involved in Ministry Training Areas or don't plan to attend the National Youth Convention. (For more information on what the Wisconsin IFCA Youth Round-up looks like and accomplishes, visit <www.ifcamce.org> and click on the link to "Round-up.")

When hosting a Youth Regional, it is crucial to have a place for the students to be encouraged and equipped for service in their local churches. Regional events also become the avenue through which students participate in a MTA (Ministry Training Area) at the National Youth Convention. This is why it is crucial for every Regional host an effective Youth Regional.

When hosting a Youth Regional, it is crucial to have a place for the students to be encouraged and equipped for service in their local churches.

There are two necessary elements to make the Youth Regional congruent with the focus and purpose of our National Youth Convention. *Three adults are needed to help judge in each area of Ministry Training* (Preaching, Bible Story Teaching, Drama, Puppetry, Vocal Music, Instrumental Music, Worship Leading.) This is a daunting task at first, but once you are up and rolling, maintaining this is much easier. The beauty of MTAs at a Regional event is for adults from our IFCA churches to have a structured place to mentor (equip and encourage)

teens to continue using their gifts in the local church, helping them grow as well. This is GREAT ministry! The other helpful event at a Youth Regional is Bible Quizzing. For this you will need quiz teams throughout the year, with adults as judges and quiz masters.

A Youth Regional is "technically complete" if the above two elements are in place. However there are other ministries that can take place at a Youth Regional, similar to our National Youth Convention, such as: a dynamic speaker to have general sessions teaching God's word; area youth pastors leading breakout sessions; a drama team to encourage and challenge the students; a person or group to lead worship in song. If a Youth Regional is going to be more than just MTA's and Bible Quizzing you might want to think about also renting out a gym and doing some kind of sports activities.

The focus of a Youth Regional is to be much like the National Youth Convention, only on a smaller scale. If you are interested in encouraging and equipping students for service by enhancing your current Regional Youth event or beginning an IFCA Youth Regional, contact me at <travisyp@gmail.com>.

Travis Huseby is Youth Pastor at Wausau (WI) Bible Church. He also is IFCA National Youth Representative.

Reports from Iraq

Following are email reports from two of your chaplains regarding ministry in the war zone. The events happened nearly a year ago, but describe the challenges and opportunities your military chaplains face in such circumstances. Warren Dane, Director of Chaplaincy

Snapshot of Chaplain Ministry in the War on Terror

By LTCDR Alan Garner, CHC, USNR

The following email message from your Navy chaplain who served with the Marines in Iraq vividly describes the ministry challenges your deployed chaplains experience.

Please pray for us, as this week has been a tragic one. Two days ago two Marines were victims of an improvised explosive device (IED). One was instantly killed. The other died in front of me as I stood in the operating room of our Shock/Surgical Trauma unit. Our surgeons fought valiantly for his life, but to no avail.

I tried my best to offer comfort to his Commanding Officer, whose tears were staining his rugged face. I told him that I would pray for him. He replied, "I'm okay, but pray for my men." Spoken like a true Marine commander. I watched from a distance as their chaplain gathered that warrior band together to pray. It was a moving scene.

I went back to the operating room to pray with the surgical team. They take every death very personally – because they fight for life.

That was two days ago. Today one of our security patrols was hit by an IED. Two Marines were wounded. One was flown out due to the severity of his injuries. He may not survive. Please pray for him this Sunday [our IFCA

prayer network was notified and many prayed] – that God might spare his life. Pray also for me and my unit. I would hate to have to do a memorial service just before we return to the States.

God bless and thanks for your prayer support.

Chaplain Alan Garner

Good News from Kirkuk, Iraq

By Chaplain (Captain) Jason Peters, USAF

Captain Jon and I recently decided to start meeting every Friday evening for discipleship, and I asked him if it was okay for Will, a 23 year-old Navigator friend, to join us. He said "Sure," and so Will, Jon and I met on Friday evening for dinner and discussion. We spent about 45 minutes discussing the importance of Scripture in our lives and then, just a few feet from us, the Giant Voice speaker started into the shrill siren it launches whenever we are being attacked.

Will had a look of panic come across his face immediately, because he was the Senior Controller on duty that night at the KRAB Command Post. The problem was that he was all the way across base and we were told to take immediate shelter. "Alarm Red, Alarm Red" the voice on the Giant Voice said, and Will knew it was supposed to be his voice making the announcement. He decided to try to call the Command Post, but couldn't get through on either line—a bad sign when there is only one controller there! So, he grabbed my radio and headed out the door leaving Jon and I in his wake. Well, there are definitely worse places to "Shelter in Place"

than in the Chow Hall. Jon and I continued our discussion and it quickly turned to spiritual things again.

Jon said that he felt like as he was reading Scripture, he was missing something, something like the "big picture." He was essentially begging for me to help him make a defining moment in his spiritual journey! We talked about how faith is a matter of the heart, and that no matter what words we say, or what prayers we pray, God knows our hearts. We looked at a couple of other Scriptures, starting with one of my favorites, Romans 4:4, 5. It was especially exciting to discuss how "wages" are due to one who works, and how they should not be misconstrued as a "gift" with Jon. Jon is our Group Comptroller and obviously the concept of "earned wages" is easily understood. As the verse continues, it clearly indicates that a relationship with God is never "earned," it is simply a gift from God! It is based solely on "grace" and the peace that results from that performance release is phenomenal!

Jon recognized that he had never trusted in Christ with all his being, to put his faith in God and confess his sins, taking the road paved by Christ. It seems that God had been whispering Jon's name for years, from his childhood, but he wondered if he had ever been born spiritually. I told him I'd be happy to pray with him, and so, in the FOB Warrior Dining Facility, under "Alarm Black" conditions, Jon prayed and trusted Christ as Savior!

Minutes later Jon and I were excitedly sharing the news with CMSgt Rick one of our dear brothers here and he reminded Jon to take the words of 1 John 5:13 to heart: "I write these

things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God that you may know that you have eternal life.” The next Sunday, Jon beamed from ear to ear as I announced to the congregation in our tent chapel that we had a new brother in our Christian family!

The ministry just gets better and better!

Jason E Peters, Chaplain,
 Captain, USAF
 506 AEG, Kirkuk Regional Air
 Base, Iraq

Please continue to remember in prayer your chaplains in Iraq & Afghanistan: CH (CPT) Ken Bolin, CH (1LT) Thi Truong, CH (MAJ) Oscar Arauco, CH (LTC) Will Laigaie, CH (CPT) Sam Bowersock, CH (CPT) Mat Kreider, & CH (MAJ) Joe Riley.

We Welcome These Men to our Fellowship

NEW MEMBERS

Mr. Harvey Badman
 2798 S. Country Club Rd. - Lot 40,
 Warsaw, IN 46580

Mr. Trevor De'Linares
 Flat No: BB-1,
 Jain Tower-2 Bal Mandhir
 School Road Kota (JN)
 Kota Rajasthan , INDIA 324002,

Rev. Jamil Ghanayem
 25 Delrey Ave.
 Catonsville, MD 21228

Mr. Jared Jenkins,
 11427 Weldon St.
 Seffner, FL 33584-4354

Dr. Daniel Peters
 1036 Magazine Rd.
 Green Lane, PA 18054

Pastor Chittibabu Racharla
 National Baptist Church
 Aurangabad, Kovvur. Mandal
 W.G. Dist A.P., INDIA

Rev. Russell Small
 5 Round Hill Rd.
 Williamsport, PA 17701

Mr. George (Phil) St. Germain III
 1610 W. 18th St.
 Sedalia, MO 65301

Mr. Andrew Wild
 5907 Reiger Ave.
 Dallas, TX 75214

CHURCHES

Little Church of Hope
 60650 E. Hwy 60
 Salome, AZ 85348

Oakland Mills Community
 Church
 1530 Oakland Mills Rd.
 Mt. Pleasant, IA 52641-8291

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Fellowship News



The Heart of America Regional (Kansas City area) gathered at Sherwood Bible Church for their annual Regional Christmas Banquet. Dr. Charles Ryrie was the guest speaker and he spoke on the lineage of David. Pictured here with Dr. Ryrie is Regional President, Dr. Damian Efta (L) and Host Pastor Dr. Leonard Hale.

Indiana Regional met recently at Heritage Bible Church in Remington, IN (a recent church plant of Midwest Church Extension). Dan Nave was the host pastor. Speaker was Dr. Gary Gilley, Senior pastor of Southern View Chapel, Springfield, IL. He spoke on the Emergent Church movement and informed us of its dangers.



Dacula First Baptist Church of Dacula, GA convened an ordination council for James Walsh. James and his wife, Sarah, are graduates of Appalachian Bible College. Pictured with them are members of the ordination council Mark Chandler, Jerry Smith, Dave Mooney, Dan Carfrey, Rob Heijermans, and Stanley Miller. This church is one of two IFCA member churches in Georgia.



IFCA member Bob Allen of Pacific NW Regional traveled to the Democratic Republic of Congo and to Burundi to teach our African brothers theology and inductive Bible study methods. He went as the West African Director of ITEM (International Training and Equipping Ministry). He is pictured here with pastors and wives at the Goma, Congo conference. We praise the Lord for these brothers.

**OPERATION PARTNERSHIP
CHRISTMAS IN RUSSIA**
Every Russian child attending the Immanuel's Child Services received a Bible, gifts, and a signed star. SGA extends heartfelt appreciation to all the IFCA church members who helped generously to make this tremendous ministry possible.



On Russian Christmas Day, January 7, 2007, over 500 children and parents attended the standing room only Immanuel's Child Outreach Service at the Volgodonsk house of prayer in southern Russia. This was repeated over and over throughout 12 time zones and in 9 countries. Through the Slavic Gospel Association, IFCA church members greatly helped in making it all possible.

Home Office Update

For 57 years IFCA International was headquartered in the Chicago area, first in Cicero then in Westchester. The 1986 Convention delegates voted to move the IFCA Home Office to Grandville, Michigan (a suburb of Grand Rapids) and in the fall of 1987 the move took place.

These facilities have been greatly used by God to help serve the needs of our Fellowship. But we need to do some improvements and that started last year.

For last year's IFCA Sunday, we received offerings to purchase a new front yard sign. We are so grateful for that tremendous improvement! For IFCA International Sunday 2007 we received offerings for a new roof. The roof was originally constructed twenty years ago. Today, the roof valleys are down to the tar paper and sections of the shingles have totally disintegrated. The roof **MUST** be replaced this summer.

Please consider helping us by taking a special love offering for the roof and other physical improvements on the Home Office building. Also, if you are able, consider volunteering to send a roofing crew to re-roof our building and help us save the labor costs. Coordinate the efforts through Tom Olson, IFCA International Director of Finance and Operations. You may reach him at 800-347-1840 or at olson@ifca.org.



This is the IFCA International Home Office at 3520 Fairlanes Avenue, Grandville, Michigan. This has been our home for almost 20 years.



This is the new sign welcoming visitors as they drive into the IFCA International Home Office. The money to purchase this sign was provided by the offerings from last year's IFCA Sunday 2006. Thank you to everyone who gave!



The original roof must be replaced this summer. Can you help with a gift? Can you help with volunteer labor?

Lewis & Roth Publishers

full page B&W ad

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GPC to correct spelling of founder

☞ DEATH OF HIS SAINTS ☞



ROBERT G. MCCORMACK

Robert G. McCormack went home to be with his Lord and Savior on October 23, 2006. Bob was saved during his college years at Cicero Bible Church under the ministry of Dr. William McCarrell. After getting married, he and his wife Judy began attending Westchester Bible Church and soon got involved with the high school youth group.

Bob served over 30 years as the Superintendent of the High School Sunday School Department and Director of the High School Youth Group at Westchester Bible Church. His concern and love impacted the lives of many of the teens, some of which went on to serve in the ministry. He joined IFCA in 1982.

During this time he brought his youth group to the IFCA Youth Convention, attending every Youth Convention for 25 years. He was also appointed to the National Youth Committee where he served as the only lay person on the Committee during his tenure there.

After taking an early retirement from Sears, Bob took on the Westchester Bible Church as his full time job. He spent every day Monday through Friday, taking care of every thing from cleaning to repairing to gardening. On Sundays he appointed himself the church welcoming committee, greeting everyone and welcoming all new comers with a hand shake and warm smile. Bob was a humble man with a servant's heart and was loved by all who knew him. Bob is survived by his wife, Judy.



ROBERT F. REPKE SR.

Robert F. Repke Sr., 88, of Sautee-Nacoochee, GA went to be with the Lord on December 11, 2006, following a brief illness. Born June 15, 1918 in Winnetka, Ill., to the late Henry Repke and Collette Happ Repke, he was a veteran of the U.S. Navy, having served during World War II. He also was a pilot and worked for the USDA. He graduated from Grand Rapids School of Bible and Music in 1962. In 1972 he joined IFCA International and served as Secretary/Treasurer for the Florida SW Sectional and helped with the convention held in 1992 in Florida. Bob was a minister and a missionary to Rhodesia, Africa for 15 years. He formed Missionaries For Christ International in Illinois. He founded a church in Harvard, IL. He had lived in North Georgia for the past six years. He is survived by his wife, Rhoda, a son, four daughters, 17 grandchildren, a brother and a sister.

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2007 IFCA CHURCH EXTENSION CONFERENCE

June 23-25, 2007

Calvary Bible Church, Tulsa, OK

Sponsored by: IFCA Church Extension Council

Get Further Information at www.ifca.org

IFCA Youth Convention 2007

JUNE 25- 30, 2007 BAPTIST BIBLE COLLEGE SPRINGFIELD, MO

Theme: "Seek Those Things Which are Above"

SPEAKER: NELSON MILES, PRESIDENT FRONTIER SCHOOL OF THE BIBLE

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IFCA International Annual 2007 Convention Registration

Marriott Tulsa Southern Hills, Tulsa, Oklahoma
June 25 - 29, 2007

Begins with registration, 1-5 pm, Monday, June 25 • Ends at 12 noon, Friday, June 29

Send form and your payment in full to IFCA, PO Box 810, Grandville, MI 49468-0810

Name _____
(LAST) (FIRST) (TITLE)

Name _____
(LAST) (FIRST) (TITLE)

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____ Phone _____

____ Please check if this is your first IFCA Convention that you have attended.

Child Registration Infant-age 12 (Children 13 and older should attend the IFCA Youth Convention or pay the adult registration fee.)

Name _____ Age _____ Name _____ Age _____

Name _____ Age _____ Name _____ Age _____

REGISTRATION & MEALS

Adult Registration Fees

Weekly Registration (5 days)

Number of Adults _____ x \$72 \$ _____
 (after May 31st \$82)

OR

Daily Registration (per day per adult)

Number of Adults _____ x \$26 \$ _____

Child Registration

(infant - age 12) _____ x \$35 \$ _____
 (after May 31st \$45)

Weekly Meal Tickets (includes Ladies Luncheon)

Guests staying in the hotel

Number of Adults _____ x \$89 \$ _____
 Children (ages 4-11) _____ x \$59 \$ _____

Guests not staying in the hotel

Number of Adults _____ x \$109 \$ _____
 Children (ages 4-11) _____ x \$69 \$ _____

Ladies Luncheon Ticket only ___ x \$15 \$ _____

Total Amount Due \$ _____

IMPORTANT NOTE

*You must call 1-866-242-5060 and request the IFCA INTERNATIONAL GROUP RATE to make room reservations for the convention. **This form is for IFCA Convention Registration and Meals only.** Thank you.*

2007 IFCA INTERNATIONAL ANNUAL CONVENTION INFORMATION

LOCATION

Marriott Tulsa Southern Hills
1902 E. 71st Street
Tulsa, OK 74136
Phone 1-866-242-5060 to make reservations,
request the IFCA INTERNATIONAL GROUP RATE.
Begins with registration, 1-5 pm, Monday, June 25
Ends at 12 noon, Friday, June 29

HOTELS

The Marriott Tulsa Southern Hills is prepared to meet all the room needs of individuals and families attending the 2007 IFCA Adult Convention. Each of their guest rooms is appointed with amenities for your comfort and convenience. Every room features a hair dryer, iron & ironing board, in room coffee maker, internet access and voice mail. Indoor pool, whirlpool, sauna, jogging trail, and fitness center.

The room rate is \$79.00 single or double per night plus tax currently at 13.517%. This group rate will be available Thursday, June 21, 2007 through Saturday, June 30, 2007 based on availability. You will need to call 1-866-242-5060 to book your room and you will need an individual credit card to guarantee the reservation. When calling the 1-866-242-5060 you must request the IFCA INTERNATIONAL GROUP RATE. The hotel is holding a block of rooms for our convention through, May 31, 2007. After that cut-off date, the hotel will release the unreserved rooms for general sales. Plan to make reservations early to avoid the higher rates or the room block being full.

Check-in time is 4:00 pm and check-out time is noon.

MEALS

The package includes four dinners and three lunches inclusive. The Meal Plan begins with dinner on Monday, June 25, and ends with dinner, on Thursday, June 28, 2007. No breakfast provided.

Pricing: Weekly Meal Ticket for those who are guests staying in the hotel, adults \$89.00 and children ages 4 - 12, \$59.00. Children 3 and under, may eat off their parents plate for free.

For those who are not guests staying in the Marriott Tulsa Southern Hills, the weekly meal ticket is adult \$109.00 and children ages 4 - 12, \$69.00

WOMEN CONFERENCE

Our 2007 Conference speakers are: Mary Murphy, Pat Gregory and Marcia Hornok. We will have further information in the March/April VOICE magazine. All women who pre-register will be sent additional information regarding the details of the Women's Conference

CHILD CARE

Details available at www.ifca.org (click on *Annual Convention*)

YOUTH CONVENTION

IFCA Youth Convention 2007
June 25 – 30, 2007 – Baptist Bible College, Springfield, MO
(just 3 hours from the Adult Convention)

Theme: "Seek Those Things Which are Above"
Speaker: Nelson Miles, President of Frontier School of the Bible

We have lowered the price this year to \$250 for Early Bird Registration (Before May 1st) \$265 for Adults (Before May 1st)
Regular Registration by June 1st: \$265 Students, \$285 Adults
After June 1st Registration is: \$280 Students, \$300 Adults

If you are interested in being a counselor, please visit the website www.ifcayouth.com for the required forms, additional information and the registration form. Convention cost for counselors is \$50

TRANSPORTATION

Marriott Tulsa Southern Hills provides a free shuttle to and from the Tulsa International Airport.

PARKING

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POLICY ON FACILITY USE

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ad
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