

PEPPERDINE UNIVERSITY
School of Law



YOU ARE NOT ALONE

Straus Institute Church Leaders Program

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

YOU are NOT alone.

Heartbreaking details often fill my conversations with fellow elders and church leaders. Stories of tragedy, apathy, struggle or repeated attempts to ‘restart’ relationships pour from the hearts of sincere men and women who are at a loss as to how to handle such situations.

You would find many of these stories hard to believe if I were able to share. But, of course, I cannot. Conversations with church leaders are absolutely confidential. This confidentiality is necessary for truth to emerge and healing to take place.



Many church members are well-versed in the biblical qualifications of church leadership. Few, however, are aware of the day-to-day involvement of their congregation’s leaders in problem-solving efforts, and even the most experienced leaders among us will admit they didn’t realize how persistently they would be dealing with conflict.

These conflicts come in the form of difficult moments of all kinds between members; between staff and even between elders.

No matter the source, every conflict represents an opportunity. Healthy churches are not defined by the absence of conflict. Conflict exists in every church.

It is the ability to reconcile these challenges that will define your eldership!

Still, many church leaders are uncertain as to how to address conflict – some ignore the matter; others dictate a ‘solution’; still others plead for peace; and some call out for help.

God is at work in your congregation’s conflicts. Do not be constrained by a lack of providential imagination when healing or pruning opportunities present themselves.



My role and work is to listen and discuss your concerns as a peer, working in harmony with church leaders who have chosen to seek positive change.

There is no single right path, but your church's problems are likely not unique and my participation and collaboration with your church's leadership may help create an experience that brings your church's relationships and practices more closely into alignment with your vision.

You should not expect that a call or meeting with me will solve all of your problems. But I may help you discover what is possible when God opens our eyes to the nature of conflict and equips us with the will and means to reconcile with Him and one another.

Not doing so is a recipe for continuing dissatisfaction, erosion of leadership and worse. Sometimes these troubles are obvious—unavoidable, even. Other times, unattended frustrations begin to bubble up in phrases like, “there's got to be more,” or, “things were better in the past,” or, “the world has changed.”

Some church leaders not surprisingly become depressed by the constant struggle. Indeed, my own interactions with church leaders who face these trials might be truly debilitating were it not for one thing: I am blessed to see the Holy Spirit tangibly at work.

Increasingly, I am asked to ‘come alongside’ church leaderships that have chosen to overcome relational or cultural inertia and are reaching out to a fellow Christian for help.

There is no stigma in addressing conflict – it is, in fact, scripturally encouraged. It is a glorifying witness before a world that needs and desires reconciliation. It is peacemaking!

You are not alone. Whatever might be holding you back from dealing with congregational challenges, I do hope you will give me a call or send me an email. We'll both be blessed.

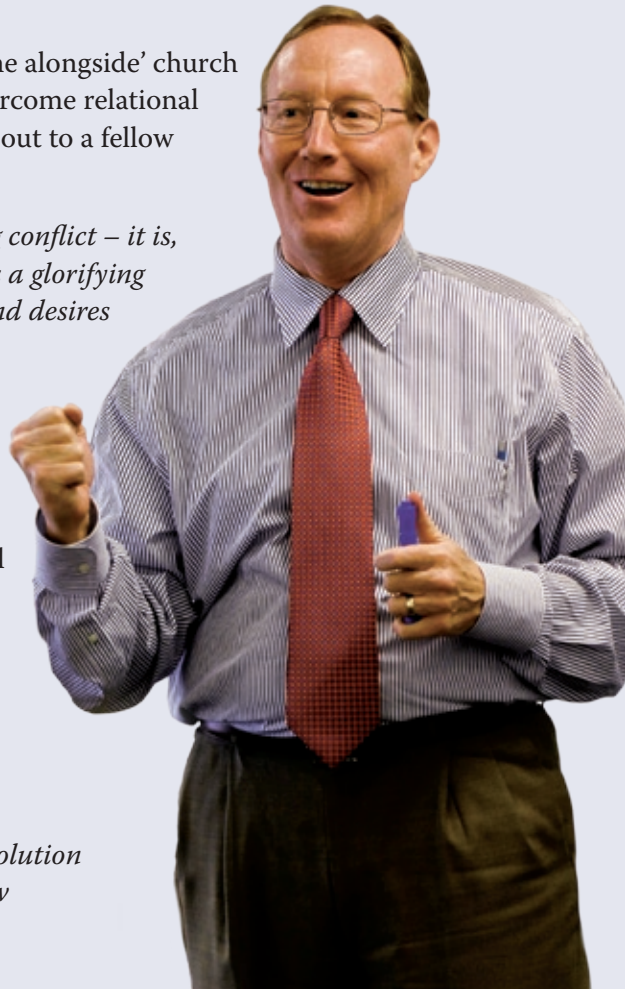
Sincerely,

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