

1. Guideline Name: Conflict Resolution Guidelines

2. Rationale or Purpose

These guidelines have been brought together to assist conflict intervention individuals and/or teams.

This action is taken with the realization that:

- Conflict grows out of human contact and cannot be avoided.
- Tension is the reality of living in a church.
- Wherever two or three are gathering in Gods name they are bound to have different ideas about what they should be doing or how they should be doing it.
- Conflict when taken seriously, handled responsibly, and resolved in a healthy manner, can be a great opportunity for spiritual growth.
- Conflict is where God is active, creative and dynamic and where we learn new truths about others and ourselves.
- Majority rules is not necessarily the best way to resolve a conflict.

These Guidelines for Conflict Resolution were approved in 2001 and included in the *Policies and Bylaws* document at that time.

A small working group met in 2007 to consider the revision of these guidelines and came to the following conclusion:

The 2001 guidelines were written for use by the conflict resolution team. No such team exists at present. The Board needs to decide if such a team is to be put in place. If so, then the members of the team should review the existing policy and/or guidelines, for approval by The Board.

In the interim, the existing Guidelines still apply.

3. Policy Statement

Conflicts within BCUC shall be dealt with in a manner consistent with the examples illustrated in this guideline.

4. Scope

Practical Application (Possible Scenarios)

1. The Board receives an unsigned letter from someone.	No action taken.
2. The Board receives a signed letter from someone in the congregation criticizing the Board, person or a committee. See intervention team proposed method of approach	Someone from Executive Committee or intervention team meets with the person or committee involved. If this criticism falls to paid staff, then M&P will meet with the involved parties. A meeting is arranged with letter writer. If the letter writer does not want to meet, the issue may be deemed not to require further action. But the dispute intervention team may opt to deal with the parties individually to some logical conclusion that involves at least a clearing of the air and/or perhaps begin the process of healing.

<p>3. Matters of jurisdiction e.g. one committee usurps the role of another committee.</p> <p>The action of an individual paralyzes a committee. Dissension within the committee as to the direction the committee may be going or the action it may be taking.</p> <p>Personality conflicts</p>	<p>Follow the guidelines as set out in the "Intervention team proposed method at approach.</p> <p>If this fails, the matter goes to The Board.</p> <p>If this fails, the matter goes to a congregational meeting.</p>
<p>4. A committee isn't dealing with the general routine (matters related to their own area of concerns), which may be critical to the achievement or objectives of the congregation.</p> <p>A committee isn't dealing with its mandate or terms of reference as set out in the Terms of Reference Manual</p>	<p>Someone on the Executive Committee will call on the Planning and Evaluation Committee to review the committee objectives, policies, and procedures and recommend alternatives as required.</p> <p>If this fails the matter goes to the Board.</p> <p>If this fails the matter goes to a congregational meeting.</p>

5. Procedures

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

THE MODEL FROM JESUS (Matthew 18:15-17)

If another member at the church sins against you, go and point out the fault when the two of you are alone. If the member listens to you, you have regained that one.

But if you are not listened to, take one or two others along with you, so that every word can be confirmed by the evidence of two or three witnesses. If the member refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church.

But if the offender refuses to listen to the church, let such a one be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector.

BELLS CORNERS UNITED CHURCH'S MODEL

If both parties can deal with their conflict openly, the result is almost always positive."

"It brings us closer to God's realm where people are acting with integrity, open to give and receive."

INTERVENTION TEAM - PROPOSED METHOD OF APPROACH

1. Make initial contact and assess the action you want to take. Sometimes this step will inform people enough as to their options and they may deal with the issue themselves.
2. If further action is requested then the conflict intervention team will try to meet with the parties involved (together or individually) to get them to speak the truth as they see it. Keep them in discussion until they say what they really mean. (Until we speak on a truthful basis, how can the other person react with honesty.)

3. The intervention team then has the parties meet repeating Step 2 (if they have not already met). Try to encourage people to step down from their idea about what is right and look more deeply at how they came to take this position.

"When people are in conflict they often say they have felt they have not been heard." They have to hear one another to recognize their common humanity. "All of us bear the face of God". "If you can touch the face of God in one another then the issue becomes secondary to our humanity. Then the issue isn't as divisive as you thought it was".

6. Roles/Responsibilities

Responsibility for the review and maintenance of this policy is the responsibility of the Conflict Resolution Team, or in the absence of such a team, the Church Board.

7. Definitions

DIFFERENT LEVELS OF CONFLICT

1. Problems to solve
2. Disagreement
3. Contest
4. Fight/Flight
5. Intractable situations

8. References

Matthew 18:15-17

9. Approval authority: Church Board

10. Approved: March 1996
Revised: October 2008