

COMMENTS/FINANCES

Resolving conflict in a God-pleasing way

Harold Warp was born in a sod house in Nebraska to an immigrant family from Norway. He was the youngest of 12 children, grew up as a barefooted farmboy herding cattle and was orphaned at age 11. Harold was enthralled by new inventions such as automobiles, tractors, phonographs and the radio. As he grew up, he began inventing new and useful things himself.

Harold Warp noticed that chickens grew faster and laid more eggs in summer and that the sunlight prevented rickets in chickens. He spent three years developing a practical, weatherproof, translucent material that, unlike glass, let in the sun's ultraviolet rays; he called it Flex-O-Glass. It became a mail-order rage among farm families.

I am uncertain if it came as a result of Harold's observations and work or if it is just folklore among farmers in rural Minnesota, but it is said that Flex-O-Glass was able to stop the fighting in the chicken coop. When a chick begins to bleed as a result of fighting, it becomes a "target." On occasion, chickens are mortally wounded in the battle. A "common sense" solution to stop the fighting is said to be to place red-colored glass, or "Flex-O-Glass" over the windows of the chicken coop. The red hue hides the wounds. When the chicks are not able to see blood on another chick because of the Flex-O-Glass, order is restored in the chicken coop and healing takes place.

Like in the chicken coop, there also is conflict in the church. After all, the church is made up of sinners. In Gal. 5:15, the apostle Paul, in fact, wrote to the Christians in Galatia, "If you **bite** and **devour** each other, be careful that you are not destroyed by each other" (ISV).

So, how should we deal *constructively* with conflict in the church? When I heard about Harold Warp, the thought crossed my mind that maybe the solution is to replace all of the windows in our churches with red Flex-O-Glass. Maybe that would resolve the "pecking" and "bleeding" that can take place in a Christian congregation. But, of course, we need something more than red Flex-O-Glass to deal with the conflicts we encounter in the church today. God's Word gives us the guidance we need. There are many places we would turn to for advice in resolving conflict in the church. Here are three biblical approaches, or steps, to

resolving conflict in a God-pleasing manner:

1) CONVERSATION (Matt. 18:15-16; Eph. 4:15)—We need to talk truthfully, face-to-face, with the person with whom we disagree, rather than talking to everyone but that person, as usually happens.

2) CONFESSION (James 5:16)—When we have misunderstood, lost our temper or sinned against another person, we need to be willing to confess our sin and ask for the person's forgiveness.

3) COLLABORATION (Phil. 2:3-4; 1 Cor. 10:24; Matt. 22:39; 1 Cor. 13:4-7; Matt. 7:12)—Genuine Christian reconciliation involves seeking solutions to a conflict that are beneficial to everyone involved. It rejects a win-lose approach to conflict.

The next time conflict raises its ugly head in your congregation, be a peacemaker by encouraging those involved to follow these biblical approaches or steps for resolving the conflict.



Dr. Lane R. Seitz
Minnesota South
District President

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District congregation mission receipts for the period ending July 31, 2011

For the month ending July 31, 2011	
Anticipated amount (8.77% of budget)**)	\$236,790
Actual receipts	\$144,478
Over (under) amount.	(\$92,312)
Year-to-date receipts	
Anticipated amount (55.9% of budget)**)	\$1,509,300
Actual receipts	\$957,913
Over (under) anticipated amount.	(\$551,387)
Use of mission receipts	
50% remitted to Synod (Year-to-Date/YTD)	\$478,957
50% for district operations (YTD)	\$478,956
Total receipts	\$957,913
Mission receipts—compared with last year	
Mission receipts—YTD 2011	\$957,913
Mission receipts—YTD 2010	\$1,383,151
Over (under) last year.	(\$425,238)

**Based on average receipts for the past five years
2011 congregational receipts budgeted at \$2,700,000

MINNESOTA SOUTH DISTRICT LUTHERAN CHURCH EXTENSION FUND

Month of June 2011	
New investments	\$1,093,220
Withdrawals	\$1,885,965
Net increase (decrease)	(\$792,745)
Year-to-date July 1, 2010-June 30, 2011	
New investments	\$16,179,333
Withdrawals	\$12,804,149
Net increase (decrease)	(\$3,375,185)