

Conflict Management and Transformation

DAI Online Course

Fall 2020

Course Description

Conflict is a normal part of our lives. It happens in families, churches, ministries, organizations and communities. In our increasingly multi-cultural context cultural differences, coupled with our natural tendency to "do it my way" make conflict inevitable. This means the ability to understand and respond wisely to conflict becomes a compelling priority in our work, ministry, and communities.

Most cross-cultural conflicts are rarely intentional. They occur because underlying cultural values and corresponding rules are not understood. What is surprising is not that we have so many conflicts but rather that given everyone's unique cultural centeredness, there are not more conflicts. Each culture has an intricate network of values that support the rules people use to handle conflict, so that an understanding of these differences is far more complex than one first supposes.

As Christian leaders we are called upon to seek to bring reconciliation wherever it is needed. This sometimes involves managing conflict we are personally involved in, as well as helping friends and colleagues who are in conflict with others.

The causes of conflict can be simple or complex. Whatever their complexity, we need to maintain a positive view of conflict as well as recognizing that these situations are redeemable and can form a good platform for positive change. We should approach conflict, therefore, not as a bad thing, but as an opportunity for learning and growth.

This course is intended to clarify issues in interpersonal, church, ministry, organizational and cross-cultural conflicts. It is designed to provide insights on the different ways people and cultures handle conflict, to evaluate these insights with the Scriptures, and to provide practical guidelines for:

- Understanding conflicts and their causes
- Helping us and others live more harmoniously with our differences
- Developing a positive strategy for dealing with conflict
- Living out the gospel of Jesus Christ effectively and ministering the nurturing grace of God

Learning Objectives

By the end of this course you should be able to:

- Describe God's design for relationships
- Explain why dealing with conflict is an important skill for Christian leaders
- Analyze the causes and impact of conflicts illustrated in the Bible
- Identify your conflict style in different settings
- Describe how your leadership style informs the way you and others approach conflict
- Compare the various ways that people and cultures handle conflict
- Differentiate between Conflict Management, Conflict Resolution and Conflict Transformation and identify which approach is best for dealing with conflict in the long-term

- Describe how conflict can escalate and how we can de-escalate it
- Describe and demonstrate how to use a mediation process effectively
- Evaluate attitudes toward conflict and apply methods that lead to effective conflict transformation

Course Schedule and Topics

Classes will be held online using Zoom technology. The course begins on Thursday evening September 17 and ends on November 19. Each of the 10 Thursday evenings classes will begin at 5:30pm Mountain Time. Each class will be about two hours in length for a total of 20 hours of instruction.

Topics include:

- Biblical Perspectives on Conflict
- Understanding Conflict
- Approaches to Handling Conflict
- Confession and Forgiveness
- Moving from Conflict Management and Resolution to Conflict Transformation
- Managing Personal Conflict
- Mediation: Helping Others Transform Conflict

This course is taught in an interactive style with significant opportunity for “large group” discussions as well as smaller group discussions in “breakout groups”.

Certification and Costs

Students can take this course in one of two ways:

- **DAI Certificate of Participation.** To achieve this Certificate students need to attend 8 of the 10 sessions and complete a minimal amount of homework needed to actively participate in the class.
 - The cost of the course at the DAI Certificate level is CAN\$75 (plus GST). Depending on exchange rates this is equivalent to about US\$60.
- **Certificate in Ministry and Organizational Leadership (CMOL)** This course is one of the required courses to complete to earn a CMOL from Tyndale Intercultural Ministries Centre at Tyndale University in Toronto. The cost of this course at the Certificate level is CAN\$150 (plus GST) or about US\$115 depending on exchange rates. This helps to cover the additional costs of our academic partners and the work of grading assignments and interacting with Certificate students.

Completing the course at the CMOL level requires additional work as outline below.

Assignment 1 – Due October 22, 2020

Read the book **Reconcile: Conflict Transformation for Ordinary Christians** by John Paul Lederach (Herald Press, Harrisonburg, 2014). This book is available on Amazon in Canada and the USA or at many Christian bookstores.

After reading the book write a book review of about 5 pages following the outline below.

- Include the title, publisher, year of publication
- Begin with a brief introduction to the book (one paragraph of 3-5 sentences)
- Explain the author's purpose. In other words – why do you think the authors wrote the book? What were they trying to accomplish?
- What are the main themes of the book? A theme refers to the underlying message or messages of the book. Themes tend to be closely related to the purpose of the book and you will find the themes woven into each chapter. They are often not overtly stated, but as you read through the book you will discover a common message in almost every chapter that underlies the details.
- What are the important conclusions of the book?
- Analyze and evaluate the book. Did you think the authors achieved their purpose? What are the strengths and weaknesses of the book? Do you agree with their arguments and conclusions and why or why not? Did the book change your mind on the topic?
- Conclusion – In no more than 3-5 sentences conclude your review and tell me why or why you would not recommend the book to others.

Assignment 2 – Due December 1, 2020

Identify a conflict situation in your church, ministry, workplace or community.

- **Describe the conflict.** Include how it began, who is involved (please do not use real names), what each person/party says are the primary issues and what each person/party wants in order to resolve the conflict.
- **Describe any power and relational dynamics that impact the conflict.**
- **Describe the impact it is having on the church, ministry, organization or relationships in the community.**
- **Using what you have learned in the course, how would you address the issues and see the conflict transformed?** Give reasons for your answer and present a clear, step-by-step strategy. If you see several different options for transforming the conflict, suggest those options and tell us why you chose the option you did.

This assignment should be no longer than 8 pages.

All assignments should be emailed to Karl Mueller at kmueller@daintl.org.

Facilitation Team

Ashok Ghimire is involved in ministry to students, professionals, businesspersons, immigrants and refugees from various cultures and religions. He has more than 31 years of cross-cultural ministry and professional experience in civil and environmental engineering, marketing, administration, management and socio-religious programs in Asia and USA. Since 2012 his primary focus has been sharing Christ's love among international students and scholars, and immigrant communities in the USA. He has lived cross-culturally for more than 28 years. Ashok speaks 5 languages fluently. He is pursuing PhD in 'International Development' at William Carey International University (WCIU) in Pasadena, California.

Lorinda Lee is a DAI Certified Facilitator who has worked in leadership roles in Human Resources for almost 20 years, and is currently the Senior Director of Human Resources at Humber River Hospital in Toronto, Ontario. Lorinda is a graduate of Brock University, York University, Tyndale University College and Seminary and recently received her PhD in Applied Management and Decision Science from Walden University. Lorinda has extensive ministry experience in her local church and in various community organizations. She is involved at a leadership level in a number of not-for-profit organizations and ministries in Canada.

Karl Mueller is the Canadian Director of DAI and the Senior Consultant for Diaspora Ministry in North America. He has served in leadership with Youth With A Mission, the North American Baptist Conference and Visionledd. Karl has also been the President of a Canadian Bible College and a missions/justice pastor in two mega-churches in the USA. He serves on the Board of Directors of several Christian organizations. Karl is a graduate of the University of Alberta and the School of Intercultural Studies at Fuller Theological Seminary (Missiology/Leadership Development).

Other DAI Certified Facilitators may join the facilitation team.