

CHURCH CONFLICT: A SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Conflict-Related Titles

[Making Peace with Conflict: Practical Skills for Conflict Transformation](#)

edited by **Carolyn Schrock-Shenk and Lawrence Ressler**, Herald Press, 1999.
An excellent primer on conflict in different settings including the church, written mainly by Mennonite mediators and practitioners, and aimed at a church readership.

[Mediation and Facilitation Training Manual \(4th edition\)](#)

edited by **Carolyn Schrock-Shenk**, Mennonite Conciliation Service, 2000.
This is much more than a training manual, incorporating many articles from the outstanding MCS journal, *Conciliation Quarterly*. It has become something of a mediator's "bible".

[Conflict Transformation and Restorative Justice Manual \(5th edition\)](#), edited by **Michelle**

Armster & Lorraine Amstutz, MCC Office for Justice and Peacebuilding, 2008.
The new edition of the above, now incorporating chapters on peacework and restorative justice.

[How to Learn Through Conflict: A Handbook for Leaders in Local Churches](#) by **Colin**

Patterson, Grove Books, 2003. A great introduction for church leaders and members.

[Journeying through Conflict: Handling Tensions in Church Relationships](#) by **Vivienne Lassetter**

and Ernie Whalley, Baptist Union, 2004. A simple but useful introduction.

[The Journey Toward Reconciliation](#) by **John Paul Lederach**, Herald Press, 1999.

A highly readable and inspiring book by a leading mediator and trainer, incorporating stories from his experience, and some of his reflections on conflict in the church.

[The Little Book of Conflict Transformation](#) by **John Paul Lederach**, Good Books, 2003

A short introduction to conflict transformation from one of those who helped coin the term.

[Let's Talk: Communication Skills and Conflict Transformation](#)

by **Barry Bartel**, Faith and Life Press, 1999.

An excellent workbook for use in groups, with plenty of practical exercises and great cartoons!

[Moving Your Church Through Conflict](#) by **Speed Leas**, Alban Institute, 1985.

Leas comes from a management consultant background, and is probably the best known church consultant on conflict in the USA. Although dated, this booklet is still worth reading.

[Transforming Conflict in Your Church: A Practical Guide](#)

edited by **Marlin Thomas**, Herald Press, 2002

An excellent introduction to transforming the church's approach to and experience of conflict.

[Managing Church Conflict](#) by **Hugh Halverstadt**, Westminster/JKP, 1991.

Halverstadt uses a complex diagrammatic model, but he integrates from different disciplines.

While some of his approaches and conclusions may be questionable, he is worth reading.

[Conflict: Understanding, Managing and Growing Through Conflict](#) by **Joyce Huggett**, Eagle,

1998. (OOP)¹ A useful introduction to inter-personal conflict, by a popular British author.

[At Cross Purposes: Handling Conflict in the Church](#)

by **Martin Eggleton and David Trafford**, Foundry Press, 2000. (OOP)

A short but deep introductory book by two British ministers, which includes a useful style profile.

[Helping People Forgive](#) by **David Augsburger**, Westminster, 1996.

A challenging and profound exploration of forgiveness – Augsburger's third book on the subject.

[The New Freedom of Forgiveness](#), by **David Augsburger**, Moody, 2000

Now in its third edition, a very readable book on forgiveness.

[Recovering the Sacred Center: Church Renewal from the Inside Out](#)

by **Howard Friend**, Judson Press, 1998.

A profound exploration of handling change, growth and renewal in the church.

[Transforming Conflict: Conflict Transformation Amongst Church Leaders With Different Theological Stances](#), by **Eolene Boyd-MacMillan and Sara Savage**, FCL, 2008.

Report on a research project with senior leaders of different theological persuasions.

¹ OOP = Out of print

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Group Facilitation and Process

[How to Make Meetings Work](#) by **Michael Doyle and David Straus**, Jove Books, 1976

A ground-breaking book on making meetings work: highly practical.

[The Skilled Facilitator](#), by **Roger Schwarz**, Jossey-Bass, 2002 (revised edition)

One of the best books written on facilitation, and useful for those working with groups.

[The Wisdom of Crowds: Why the Many Are Smarter Than the Few](#), by **James Surowiecki**, Abacus, 2005

The subtitle summarises the message. A helpful take on drawing wisdom from a group.

[Meetings that Work](#), by **Catherine Widdicombe**, Lutterworth Press, 2000

A British book offering very helpful and thorough insights into making meetings work.

Family Systems Theory and Leadership

[Extraordinary Relationships: A New Way of Thinking about Human Interactions](#), by **Roberta Gilbert**, Chronimed, 1992.

Probably the best single introduction to family systems theory. The book encourages readers to look at the patterns of interaction in our families of origin, to improve our relationships.

[How Your Church Family Works: Understanding Congregations as Emotional Systems](#) by **Peter Steinke**, Alban Institute, 1993.

A useful introduction to family systems theory (or Bowen Theory) as applied to the church: helpful in understanding the emotional dynamics within a congregation.

[Healthy Congregations: A Systems Approach](#) by **Peter Steinke**, Alban Institute, 1996

Steinke's second book, applying family systems theory to the congregation, which focuses on the critical that role leaders play within the church.

[A Failure of Nerve: Leadership in the Age of the Quick Fix](#), by **Edwin Friedman**, Seabury Books, 2007

Published posthumously, this offers Friedman's challenges to today's leaders.

[Generation to Generation: Family Process in Church and Synagogue](#) by **Edwin Friedman**, Guildford Press, 1985

A seminal but heavy book applying family systems theory to the church.

[Never Call Them Jerks: Healthy Responses to Difficult Behaviour](#) by **Arthur Paul Boers**, Alban Institute, 2000

An excellent and readable book from a Mennonite pastor that invites church leaders to a mature approach in dealing with people labelled "difficult" or worse!

[Creating a Healthier Church: Family Systems Theory, Leadership and Congregational Life](#) by **Ronald Richardson**, Fortress Press, 1996

A helpful introduction to family systems theory for church leaders.

[Becoming a Healthier Pastor: Family Systems Theory and the Pastor's Own Family](#) by **Ronald Richardson**, Fortress Press, 2005

An important application of family systems theory to the church leader's own family.

Multiple Staff Ministries, by **Kenneth Mitchell**, Westminster Press, 1988. (OOP)

Useful for understanding intra-staff conflict in churches applying insights drawn from family systems theory. Highlights the importance of uncovering roles, rules and rituals.

[The Equipping Pastor: A Systems Approach to Congregational Leadership](#) by **Paul Stevens and Phil Collins**, Alban Institute, 1993

A practical application of a systemic approach to church leadership.

[The Hidden Lives of Congregations: Discerning Church Dynamics](#) by **Israel Galindo**, Alban Institute, 2004

A recent application of family systems theory in helping to understand church dynamics.

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Leadership

[*Creative Church Leadership*](#) ed. by **John Adair and John Nelson**, Canterbury Press, 2004

An interesting selection of articles, with the best by women authors. Somewhat Anglican in focus.

[A Theology of Church Leadership in *Focus on Leadership: Papers, Commentary and Reflection on a Seminar Launching the Foundation for Church Leadership*](#) by **Steven Croft**, Foundation for Church Leadership, 2005

A helpful and concise theological exposition drawing widely on current leadership writing.

[*Leadership Without Easy Answers*](#) by **Ronald Heifetz**, Belknap Press, 1994

Not a book on church leadership, but one that church leaders have found helpful.

[*How to Become a Creative Church Leader: A Modern Handbook*](#) ed. by **John Nelson**, Canterbury Press, 2008. Contains some very helpful chapters, although a bit of a mixed bag overall.

[*In The Name of Jesus: Reflections on Christian Leadership*](#) by **Henri Nouwen**, Darton, Longman and Todd, 1989. A short but outstanding book on leadership.

[*Leading the Congregation: Caring for Yourself While Serving the People*](#) by **Norman Shawchuck and Roger Heuser**, Abingdon Press, 1993

A mature and wide-ranging look at congregational life and leadership.

[*Future Leader*](#) by **Viv Thomas**, Paternoster Press, 1999

A short readable and challenging book on leadership.

[*Relational Leadership: A Biblical Model for Leadership Service*](#) by **Walter Wright**, Paternoster Press, 2000. A comprehensive book that draws from the best of current leadership writing.

Mediation

[*Church Disputes Mediation*](#), by **James Behrens**, Gracewing, 2003

A review, by a British barrister, of mediation in a church context, based on his doctoral research.

[*The Promise of Mediation: The Transformative Approach to Conflict*](#), by **Robert Baruch Bush and Joseph Folger**, Jossey-Bass, 2004 (2nd ed.)

Explores the transformative potential of mediation and critiques the field: well worth reading.

[*Getting to Yes: Negotiating Agreement Without Giving In*](#), by **Roger Fisher, William Ury and Bruce Patton**, Penguin, 1991 (2nd ed.)

The best-selling book on win-win negotiation using interest-based collaboration.

[*When Talk Works: Profiles of Mediators*](#), ed. **Deborah Kolb**, Jossey-Bass, 1994.

Interview-based profiles illustrating the wide range of mediation practice.

[*The Mediation Process: Practical Strategies for Resolving Conflict*](#), by **Christopher Moore**, Jossey-Bass, 1996 (2nd ed.)

Presents an in-depth, step-by-step account of how the mediation process works.

[*Mediation in Context*](#), edited by **Marian Liebmann**, Jessica Kingsley, 2000

A helpful review of mediation in the UK – although no mention of mediation in the church.

Cross-Cultural Conflict

[*Conflict Mediation Across Cultures: Pathways and Patterns*](#), **David Augsburger**, Westminster/JKP, 1992. An inspiring look at cross-cultural dimensions of conflict, packed with great stories.

[*Cross-cultural Conflict: Building Relationships for Effective Ministry*](#), by **Duane Elmer**, IVP, 1993

[*Helping Resolve Conflict*](#), by **I. M. Friedmann**, Herald Press, 1990. (OOP)

A short but very engaging introduction to cross-cultural conflict with important lessons for all.

[*Working with Conflict: Skills and Strategies for Action*](#), ed. by **Simon Fisher et al**, Zed Books / Responding to Conflict, 2000

A rich resource book for people working in areas affected by violent conflict.

[*Foreign to Familiar: A Guide to Understanding Hot- and Cold-Climate Cultures*](#), by **Sarah Lanier**, McDougal Publishing, 2000. Short, helpful and accessible.

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Theology For Conflict Transformation

Short articles and booklets

- “Peacemaking: The Virtue of the Church”, chapter 4 of [Christian Existence Today](#), pps 89-97, by **Stanley Hauerwas** (Baker Books, 1988)
- [Explaining Church Discipline](#), 64 pps, by **Stuart Murray** (Sovereign World, 1995). (OOP). Available from www.anabaptistnetwork.com
- “Discipleship and Imitation of Jesus/The Suffering Servant: The Mimesis of New Creation” by **Willard M Swartley**, in [Violence Renounced: René Girard, Biblical Studies, and Peacemaking](#), ed. Willard M. Swartley (Pandora Press U.S., 2000)
- “Binding and Loosing”, in [The Royal Priesthood: Essays Ecclesiological and Ecumenical](#), pps 323-358, by **John Howard Yoder** (Eerdmans, 1994)

Books

- [Nonviolent Story: Narrative Conflict Resolution in the Gospel of Mark](#), by **Robert R Beck** (Orbis Books, 1996) (OOP) An original look at Mark’s Gospel as a non-violent story.
- [The Peaceable Kingdom: A Primer in Christian Ethics](#), by **Stanley Hauerwas** (Notre Dame, 1983) A ground-breaking book on ethics arguing for non-violent discipleship.
- [The Moral Vision of the New Testament: Community, Cross, New Creation; A Contemporary Introduction to New Testament Ethics](#), by **Richard B Hays** (HarperCollins, 1996) A brilliant theological work, offering a profound insight into reading the New Testament, and applying this to contemporary ethical challenges.
- [Scripture and Discernment: Decision Making in the Church](#), by **Luke T Johnson** (Abingdon, 1996) An outstanding theological book on decision-making, looking particularly at Acts.
- [Embodying Forgiveness: A Theological Analysis](#), by **L Gregory Jones** (Eerdmans, 1995) The leading theological work on forgiveness in recent years.
- [A Culture of Peace: God’s Vision for the Church](#), by **Alan Kreider, Eleanor Kreider and Paulus Widjaja** (Good Books, 2005) An inspiring book on the church as a culture of peace – a must-read!
- [Social Holiness: A Way of Living for God’s Nation](#), by **Alan Kreider** (Wipf and Stock, 2008) A very readable look at Jesus and the call to a non-violent discipleship.
- [Just Peacemaking: Transforming Initiatives for Justice and Peace](#) by **Glen H Stassen**, (Westminster/John Knox Press, 1992) A Biblical look at the call to peacemaking and seeking justice.
- [Covenant of Peace: The Missing Peace in New Testament Theology and Ethics](#), **Willard M Swartley** (Eerdmans, 2006) A definitive work on the theology of peace in the New Testament.
- [The Love of Enemy and Nonretaliation in the New Testament](#), ed. **Willard M Swartley** (Westminster/John Knox Press, 1992) (OOP) A collection of biblical essays on enemy love and non-violence.
- [Exclusion and Embrace: A Theological Exploration of Identity, Otherness and Reconciliation](#), by **Miroslav Volf** (Abingdon, 1996) Challenging insights into reconciliation from a leading theologian.
- [Engaging the Powers: Discernment and Resistance in a World of Domination](#), by **Walter Wink** (Augsburg Fortress, 1992) The best of Wink’s series of books on “the powers”.
- [Body Politics: Five Practices of the Christian Community Before the Watching World](#), by **John Howard Yoder** (Herald Press, 2001) A short but outstanding theological exploration that covers conflict and decision-making.
- [The Politics of Jesus: Vicit Agnus Noster](#), by **John Howard Yoder** (Eerdmans, 2nd ed, 1994). A second edition of Yoder’s ground breaking book on the non-violent politics of Jesus.