

Proposal for Conflict Resolution Process

Prepared by the Elders Service Team

“Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everybody. If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.” Romans 12: 17-18

At the formation of the ICOC Eldership Committee back in 2007, the delegates gave the charge to the committee of coming up with an approach to help deal with conflicts between individuals, and at times church leadership. The involvement of the Eldership Committee would only be as a last resort after other attempts, as listed below, have been exhausted. The reason for our involvement would be due to situations that remain unresolved over a period of time and as a result are leading to disunity in our family of churches and discredit to the cause of Christ.

Those from the committee that would be involved in disputes would be trained in basic conflict resolution methods and be clear on biblical objectives. We would only be involved at the request of one or both of the parties that are in conflict and our respect for the authority of the local leadership of the church(es) involved would be observed. That being said, we feel obligated to prompt individuals, and at times church leadership, toward reconciliation if situations continue to be unresolved and are hurting the cause of Christ.

In the case of mediation between opposing sides, efforts would be made to bring about an agreement or reconciliation that is in line with scriptural guidelines. In the case of arbitration, both sides would need to agree to allow an arbitrator from the Eldership Committee (or someone else that both sides agree on) to suggest or impose (binding) steps to be taken by both sides to bring about unity in the dispute.

Before any involvement by the Eldership Committee we would ask that the following steps be taken:

1. **Local Leadership Level** – with respect to the leadership of the local church, several attempts should be made to bring about reconciliation in line with the biblical process as found in Matthew 5:23-24 and 18:15-17
2. **Geographic Family Leadership** – among our family of churches each geographic region has leadership that can take a more objective position in matters of conflict. Preliminary meetings with the geographic leaders may be necessary before the parties in dispute are brought together to clarify issues.
3. **Appeal for Mediation** – if the two previous attempts have failed then one or both parties in dispute can appeal to the Eldership Committee using the conflict resolution worksheet.
4. **Eldership Committee Involvement** – upon receiving the information, the eldership committee will meet to discuss the next steps and possible meetings needed to help resolve the conflict.

We as a committee believe that disunity is best resolved on a local level, if not a regional level, without outside influence. However, the Eldership Committee wishes to ***“make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.” (Eph. 4:3)***, by assisting in situations that continue to cause division and discouragement.