

Handout 4-A

A CHURCH CONFLICT ROLEPLAY

Background

A new pastor has made a number of changes at the church, including rearranging furniture and revamping the order of worship and church website. When the pastor was appointed, he or she was assured that the congregation wanted to grow and would support new ideas. Now the pastor is coming to a meeting to share a proposal to launch a new praise service and move the traditional service from 11:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. to accommodate the new service. As the meeting begins, each person demands to “have their say” first. The pastor launches into the proposal, but each person interrupts along the way.

Role Descriptions

Person 1

This is a long-time member whose family helped to grow the church in its early days. The mother played organ in the church for years, but the new pastor wants to have the instrument removed from the sanctuary. This person constantly holds the former pastor up as a role model and compares the current pastor, always unfavorably. He or she says at every meeting, “I don’t see what’s wrong with the way things are!”

Person 2

This person is fed up with all the changes and disruptions caused by the new pastor. One of the biggest financial givers in the congregation, he or she is attending the meeting to deliver the message: “If there are any more changes, I will withhold giving until things are returned to the way they were before.” He or she has no interest in hearing a proposal for anything else new and is ready to write the district superintendent to request a change of pastor.

Pastor

The pastor is unaware of the anxiety and unhappiness in the congregation and thinks he or she is doing exactly what the congregation asks and expects. He or she is passionate and excited about the new service and bursting with ideas for ways the church can change and improve. The pastor dismisses disagreement or argument as people simply are not yet understanding how good the ideas are.