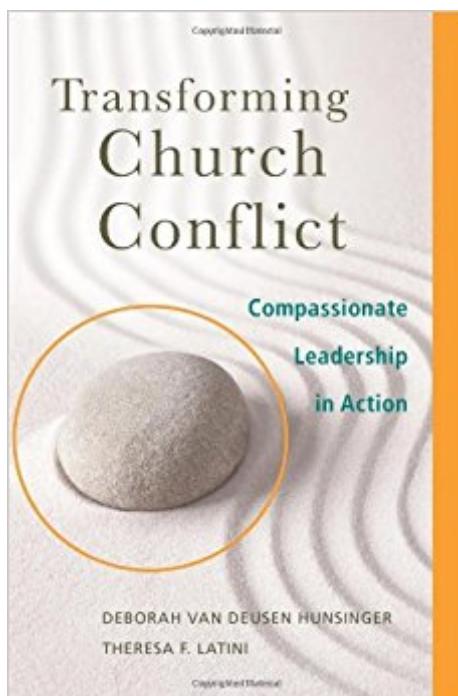


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# Transforming Church Conflict: Compassionate Leadership In Action



## **Synopsis**

With many pastors facing burnout and congregations suffering from internal divisions, there is a need for Christian resources that present concrete problem-solving techniques for handling conflict in the church. This book offers practical skills and strategies that the authors have learned through years of studying nonviolent communication (NVC) as described in Marshall Rosenberg's book, *Nonviolent Communication: A Language of Life*, and as developed by numerous NVC trainers all over the world. Using real-world case studies and examples, Hunsinger and Latini helpfully guide pastors and lay leaders through effective and compassionate ways to deal with discord. These strategies include differentiating observations from evaluations, experiencing and expressing feelings, identifying and connecting with needs, and making requests rather than demands. By learning the basic skills of compassionate communication, church leaders can be empowered to transform, rather than merely manage, church conflict

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

Deborah van Deusen Hunsinger is the Charlotte W. Newcombe Professor of Pastoral Theology at Princeton Theological Seminary. An ordained minister in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), she is the author or editor of several books, including *Pray without Ceasing: Revitalizing Pastoral Care*. Theresa F. Latini is the George Weinman Chair of Pastoral Theology and Ministry at Luther Seminary and Parish Associate at Lake Nokomis Presbyterian Church in Minneapolis. An ordained minister in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), she is the author of *The Church and the Crisis of*

## Community: A Practical Theology of Small-Group Ministry.

This is a very thoughtful book which describes how church folks can gain the skill of non-violent communication. In an age in which so many, including those within religious groups, communicate in aggressive and violent ways, this book has the potential to help church councils to work together in ways that builds community and uplifts the individuals who part of it. Indeed, those who yearn to bring about justice and peace in our world must first learn to show love and caring toward those within our faith communities.

I am using the helpful exercises in this book. I believe that one can transform conflict using the principles described. Very useful book and comprehensible as well!

Another great text for the study of conflict in the church.

Useful, not a pleasure read though.

All communities over time will experience conflicts. Churches too. It is not about whether conflicts will occur or not. It is a question of when. Knowing this fact of life, perhaps, since conflicts are going to happen anyway, why not learn how to positively deal with it? Rather than let conflicts deform and destroy relationships, why not use them as opportunities to transform people and the Church community? This calls for compassionate leadership. Based on their experience and knowledge of "Non-Violent Communications," developed by Marshall Rosenberg, the authors learn of eight ways in which NVC can be used to transform Church conflicts. Below is my paraphrase. 1) From Criticisms to Opportunities for Greater Understanding; 2) From Disengagement to Dialogue; 3) From Hurting to Healing; 4) From Dismissive to Meaningful Expressing of Oneself; 5) From Nonchalance to Compassion for People; 6) From Anger to Healthy Application of Such Emotions; 7) From a Distant Observer to a Mediating Brother; 8) From Indifference to Authenticity. The core approach in the entire book is based on the NVC model: Observation; Feeling; Need; Request. These four need to be cognitively understood and internalized. Approach conflict with a desire to learn about others and ourselves. Address meaningless violence with meaningful reconciliation. Through honesty and compassion, boldness and creative communications, we can experience more hope and joy as conflicts are transformed into opportunities for growing in greater understanding. The three broad strokes of the book can be summarized as: 1) Identifying feelings in "concrete, practical, and

## accessible terms

I have worked in congregations for many year. In this time, boy howdy, have I seen conflict! My greatest hope lies in Nonviolent Communication, also known as Compassionate Communication. Such hope is summarized in this book. The authors write, "We have become convinced that nonviolent or compassionate communication is the best singe resource available for learning the complex interpersonal and pastoral leadership skills needed by today's church." They go on to say, "Compassionate communication helps us maintain our inner clarity and sense of direction in the midst of challenging situations in which we have significant personal investment." I love the hope and vision this book offers as they offer practical ideas on how to make the most of the transformational possibility inherent in conflict. I recommend this book to you.

This review, by Dr. Nicholson, has been provided courtesy of Desert Bible Institute [...]Deborah Van Deusen Hunsinger and Theresa F. Latini address an important issue in their book Transforming Church Conflict. They look at what it means to work with people and to deal with the predictable conflict that comes about on a daily basis. This book has a great number of useful points that readers should consider. For instance, church leaders should always attempt to transform conflict into something useful rather than transfer it onto someone else. Additionally, I agree with their position that we should try to understand another person's position before attempting to correct the problem. They explain how to do this all with great sensitivity and compassion. That said, I think that this would be an excellent book for leaders of a women's group, provided they weren't operating in a church. The book seems to rely heavily on modern psychotherapy principles (not to be confused with true psychological principles). There then seems to be a smattering of spiritualism, Eastern philosophy, and emerging church approaches that make this book suspect at best. While there is certainly the occasional verse thrown in giving the book a Christian feel, most of these references seem to be more thematic than illustrative in nature. Additionally, some of the examples seem to be, if not out of context, slanted to prove the point the authors are trying to make in that section of the book. In the end, the book comes across as well-meaning and gentle-spirited, but its theology, and therefore its basis, seems either convoluted or manipulated. The writers are clearly literate and well-educated women that have an honest and heart-felt concern for the women around them, but this book needs a little less C.G. Jung and Siddhartha and a lot more C.S. Lewis and Saul of Tarsus. In a world where the popular theory is to just "coexist", this book is a solid example of social "tolerance" and

compromise; but then again, we saw what Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego thought about compromise.Trent Nicholson, Ph.D., D.Min.Desert Bible Institute, PresidentDr. Nicholson reviews academic, Christian living, and fiction books for a variety of publishers in an array of formats. He is never paid for any of his reviews. He writes these strictly as a courtesy to his students at Desert Bible Institute and for any other readers that might find his insights valuable. For more reviews or information, visit Dr. Nicholson’s blog at [drtnicholson.wordpress.com](http://drtnicholson.wordpress.com).

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