

CENTRAL PHILIPPINE UNIVERSITY, ILOILO CITY

CASE STUDIES OF TWO BAPTIST CHURCHES IN CONFLICT

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by

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## Chapter 1

### Introduction.

#### i. Background of the Problem.

I started to work as a pastor in 1985 in a local church that was still recovering from a conflict situation. Membership then, had thinned down to more than 50%. The atmosphere of superficiality and distrust could still be felt. Indeed, it was a sad picture. A deep concern started to grow in my heart, hoping that the church's conflict situation will not be duplicated in other churches.

But I soon realized that I was wrong. Although no formal survey was conducted, the reality could no longer be denied that many churches under the Convention of Philippine Baptist Churches, Inc. had already been experiencing and suffering the pains of separation. And it could be possible that the number has already exceeded the dozen figure. The somewhat humorous cliché that says that "Baptist churches multiply by division", is gradually becoming a nightmare to many CPBC churches that has experienced division because of conflict.

Out of this general observation, I came up to the conclusion that as long as there are people, conflict situations are inevitable. Understanding the dynamics involved in conflict situation, then, for the benefit of the local churches has become my growing concern. This is the reason why I have selected this problem.

## ii. Scope of the Problem.

Through the years, a lot of local churches under the umbrella of the Convention of Philippine Baptist Churches, Inc. had experienced conflict. Interventions were not wanting. But most often, it ended in split congregations and broken relationships.

To study all of these churches would be an impossible task. But the lessons that could be learned from those who have experienced it would be invaluable. It is in this regard that I have zeroed in on two CPBC churches that have experienced conflict as case studies.

The following are some of the questions that this paper will seek to answer:

What are the factors that contributed to the conflict situation?

What approaches of intervention had been made?

Why was the conflict not resolved?

What is the role of the Pastor towards a conflict situation?

What guidelines should he observed as to the right pastoral approach to be used?

What kind of relationship should the Pastor have towards the people involved in conflict?

## iii. Importance of the Problem.

The pastor, unless he is directly involved, is often the first person to be approached whenever there is a conflict among members in the church. How he approaches the given

situation will be a crucial matter that would either make or break not only the church but also his own pastoral ministry.

However, pastors are at a loss as to what to do when they are called to minister or much more, when they are in the midst of a conflict situation. Of course, this does not mean that they have not done anything about the situation on hand. But lack of available materials on this important pastoral concern especially in the context of the Filipino situation in general and in the context of the Convention of Philippine Baptist Churches, Inc., in particular, makes situations more difficult if not impossible to face and manage. It is therefore my intention that many churches and pastors facing conflict situations will be able to benefit from my research, conclusions and recommendations.