

Constructive Conflict

All conflict is not destructive and divisive; in fact, a certain amount of conflict is necessary to any creative process where progress is desired. Anthony H. Richmond comments, "Only in a completely static society can conflict be completely eliminated,"²

Certainly the objective is not to maintain a static atmosphere within a working team. It should be a dynamic atmosphere created by the coming together of creative, energetic, spirit-filled individuals. Prov. 27:17 says, "As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another." Charles Bridges observes, "So the collision of different minds whets each the edge of the other."³ It is helpful here to remember the words of wisdom from Eccles. 10:10, "If the axe is dull, and its edge unsharpened, more strength is needed..." So when minds are dulled by the lack of interaction, it could be said that it takes a greater effort to accomplish anything of positive value.

If there is an atmosphere wherein opposing ideas and opinions can be aired without sanctions, the results can be very positive. This "think tank" approach can lead to new productive ventures that would have been lost if freedom of expression was not permitted. This

²Roger Bellows, Creative Leadership (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1959), p. 155.

³Charles Bridges, An Exposition of the Book of Proverbs (Marshallton, Delaware: Foundation for Religious Education, 1847), pp. 513, 514.