

II. THE NATURE AND CAUSES OF CONFLICT

Introduction

The word "conflict" is derived from the Latin "conflictus" which means literally, "to strike together." It is further defined as the "competitive or opposing action of incompatibles: antagonistic state or action (as of divergent ideas, interests, or persons)." A second meaning is a "mental struggle resulting from incompatible or opposing needs, drives, wishes, or external or internal demands."¹

The terms "conflict" and "teamwork" appear to be antithetical. For example, when Don Sutton of the Los Angeles Dodgers, engaged in a "slug fest" with his teammate, Steve Garvey, it was big news in the sports world. Great interest was generated because having teammates in conflict was so unlike the usual baseball donnybrook wherein two opponents swing away at each other.

One would think that a ministerial team would be made up of those united in heart and mind to do battle with the forces of evil and not with each other. The purpose of this discussion is to examine the nature and causes of conflict so that harmful division can be avoided.

¹Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary, (Springfield, Mass.: G & C Merriam Co., 1973), p. 237.