



## **Eight Strategies for Managing Conflict**

In her book *Getting to Amen: Eight Strategies for Managing Conflict in the African American Church*, Lora-Ellen McKinney summarizes key strategies for managing conflict in what she calls “The 8 P’s.”

- **Prayer** – When the pain that causes rifts is in God’s house, the first step on the path to healing must be prayer.
- **Preaching** – As the platform from which most parishioners get their information, the sermon can either be a tool for healing or it can contribute to divisiveness in the church.
- **Parishioner Awareness** – Church members have a considerable amount of misinformation that contributes to church-related conflicts. Providing correct information, which entails using lay leaders and church officers as ambassadors of detailed and helpful communication, can play key roles in healthy conflict resolution.
- **Perspectives on Problems** – Church conflict results from the different perspectives held by the very human members of God’s house. For conflict to be resolved, church members must explore ways to move beyond frozen stances in order to establish common goals.
- **Practical Solutions** – Once common goals are identified, practical solutions are more easily adopted and implemented.
- **Programs and Premises** – Long-term structures can be put in place through the creation of policies designed by all parties and through programs (ministries) based on those policies.
- **Pastoral Management** – Excellent church management leads by example. If the pastor sets a conflict-free example and a well-organized model, the church is more likely to follow his or her lead.
- **Promises** – Promises look toward the future and help churches make plans to maintain their conflict-free structures by coordinating ministries with other local, national, and international church groups that share the goals of strengthening the Afri-Christian diaspora.

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