PATTERNS IN CHRISTIAN GROUPS

Divided by Conflict	Bound Together by Conflict
1. Conflict and disagreement are viewed as wrong, sinful, dangerous, a sign of not caring, and something to avoid at all costs.	1. Conflict is viewed as inevitable, an opportunity to learn more, and as evidence of involvement and concern.
2. People spiritualise conflict. They equate their own view with God's will, call others to get right with God, and say that prayer is all that is needed to sort things out. Anyone with a different view is liable to be demonised.	2. People draw from spiritual resources. They exercise disciplines of listening, confession and prayer. They test views against the scriptures and tradition. They expect God to speak through each person.
3. Issues and people get blurred. Relationships suffer when people disagree on issues. Those who disagree are treated coldly and disrespectfully. People don't disagree with those they like or respect.	3. Issues and people are kept separate. Relationships are maintained even when people disagree on issues. Those with whom they disagree are treated with respect.
4. Leaders discourage expression of differences and ignore problems. Instead they plead for peace and harmony.	4. Leaders invite disagreement and welcome different views. They want all perspectives to be heard. They too can disagree with others.
5. Indirect communication flourishes. People talk about others, but not with them.	5. Direct communication is maintained, and clarification is sought when differences arise.
6. People hoard up hurts and offences, and do not seek reconciliation early on.	6. People keep short accounts with one another, and address hurts and offences as they arise, not allowing them to fester.
7. In the stress of conflict, a few vocal people are heard, intimidating the majority.	7. In the stress of conflict many voices are heard, and people are energised by debate.
8. Individuals react defensively or explosively to the views of others. Others' views are attacked without proper reflection.	8. Individuals interact thoughtfully with the views of others, and make a response only after making an effort to understand others.
9. Discussion focuses on positions and people get stuck on their own solution.	9. Discussion focuses on the process and the problem and only later on possible solutions.
10. Timing is uneven. People delay a decision as long as possible and then rush to take a final vote.	10. Timing is steady. People foresee issues, plan procedures, examine options without rushing, then prepare proposals for a final decision.
11. There is a low tolerance of uncertainty, and people want issues over and done with.	11. People are willing to move calmly through the inevitable periods of uncertainty as all options are considered.
12. People repress inner conflicts caused by past experiences and continually project them into the current conflict.	12. People are consciously aware of their own past hurts or unresolved conflicts and take responsibility not to project these in the current situation.