A Journey:
BECOMING FAITHFUL IN CONFLICT

2019 IMPACT REPORT
Dear Friends,

I am so grateful for each of you, who exceeded last year’s $35,000 matching challenge and have faithfully offered your prayers, insight, expertise, hospitality, and countless other gifts in 2019. Your gifts have provided more than 500 Christians with over 9,000 hours of transformative, reconciling conflict engagement, a deep form of discipleship.

We often use the word “hope” to refer to the things we don’t really believe can happen. We hope for God’s will “on earth as it is in heaven,” for an end to the destruction caused by polarization and contempt, for a bright witness that draws back rising generations to the Church. For almost ten years, you, The Colossian Forum community, have worked alongside us faithfully to develop a revolutionary idea: A way through conflict toward discipleship and witness.

When I witness our gatherings, I see that hope in practice. I see the Holy Spirit leading people to change their postures toward each other. I see people from opposite ends of the political spectrum listening to and challenging each other. I see Christian hope in action, happening right now. In 2020, we are dramatically growing the availability of The Colossian Way by introducing online facilitator training, an online bookstore for our curriculum, and our newest small-group topic: Political Talk. Through these initiatives, the impact of our shared vision for conflict-adept Christian communities will continue to deepen.

Whether you are a faithful donor who has empowered others through your giving, a member of a Colossian Way small group, or a newcomer to The Colossian Forum, I invite you to take a look at how The Colossian Forum can accompany you and your church on your journey to deeper discipleship through conflict.

Peace of Christ,

Michael Gulker
“I didn't want to be part of any conversation because my anxiety would jump sky-high….” When Cindy’s church entered tense discussions around issues of sexuality, “[The Colossian Way] created a core of people in our church who knew we could get through it and offer a less-anxious presence. In our congregation-wide meetings, leadership made space for members to speak honestly, and deep beliefs and feelings were shared. It was hard work, and very painful at times, but no one has left the congregation since we entered this process…Whether or not I am okay comes from God, not other people,” she reflected. “That [certainty] develops over time if you let it.”

Transformation: From Anxious to Advocate. Cindy has witnessed the transforming power of conflict spread from her personal spiritual growth, to her relationships, and through her church.

After college, Nick felt disconnected from his church due to conflict. “I had all these questions, and I never felt comfortable confronting these issues, other than confronting them on my own. I was to one end of the spectrum, and the rest of [my church] was at the other end…The Colossian Way is learning the habits of talking to people in the church…now, I feel fully wrapped and embraced by my church.”

Transformation: From Disillusioned to Discipleship Leader. Now, Nick serves his congregation as a deacon, regularly leads Colossian Way groups, and ministers to people experiencing homelessness.

“I had never learned how to discuss difficult subjects with friends…I was moved to recognize my methods of communication that were hurtful, angry, and destructive. Because we spent time in looking inward, and this was done in community, I came away with a humbled yet strengthened spirit toward my involvement in conflict.”

Transformation: From Repentant to Reconciler. Dan broke free from legalism and found healing for broken relationships. Now, he helps people at his church do the same.

“Using The Colossian Way small group materials is helping our church members work through difficult topics with grace and truth and be faithful witnesses in a complex society.”

Transformation: From Pressured to Equipped. Mike is on the frontlines of conflict engagement, using The Colossian Way to guide his diverse congregation through division.

“Growing up in the Church…we didn’t talk about race or ethnicity, [or] LGBT issues. We didn’t talk about politics a whole lot… Wouldn't it be incredible if the Church became known as a place where conflict was done really well? I think that with The Colossian Way, we absolutely could be.”

Transformation: From Silent to Solution-Seeker. Elissa is using The Colossian Way to help her church embrace and model faithful conflict engagement.

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CONTRIBUTIONS
Since almost half our annual budget comes from our generous donors, we could not undertake this important work without your faithfulness!

GRANTS
Support from foundations funds just over half of our programming and operations. Did you know foundations look at our number of donors as a testimony to the value of The Colossian Forum’s mission when they make funding decisions? This means your gifts of trust and support directly provide (in the case of contributions) or influence (in the case of grants) almost 100% of our annual funding.

FEES FOR SERVICE AND RESOURCE SALES
What we charge our partners for curricula, training, consultation, and event registration only covers 3% of our annual costs. We serve churches, schools, and denominations, which, like us, have limited budgets and serve families and communities like yours. Similar to many non-profits, we have chosen not to pass along the high costs of developing and distributing unparalleled resources. Thus, we depend on donors, not only for financial support, but for gifts of time, expertise, advice, and prayer. Our work only continues because people like you believe it is important for your Christian communities to engage hard questions faithfully and to cultivate discipleship in the midst of conflict.

THE IMPACT OF YOUR INVESTMENT
Your gifts support every aspect of our work, from the hospitality we provide at training, to developing new curricula, to our efforts to spread hope amid conflict. Here’s how the resources and initiatives you fund work together to equip leaders and transform communities:

We invest the bulk of our funds—72%—in three main initiatives: 1) Providing top-notch resources to Christian churches, schools, and organizations; 2) Hosting Colossian Way trainings that equip leaders to do the hard work of discipleship; and 3) Developing new resources, like our Political Talk small-group series.

In addition to supporting our day-to-day activities, our Operations funding (15%) provides expert evaluation to ensure we produce sustainable offerings according to good stewardship practices. For example, did you know that The Colossian Forum is accredited by the Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability?

We invest 13% of our funds back into sustaining our work into the future, including grant writing, maintaining our secure online giving platform, and other Development initiatives.

Finally, of our total Programming expenses, we spend 14% helping introduce Christians to the transforming power of conflict through our communication initiatives. How did you find out about The Colossian Forum? Whether you stumbled across our blog in a Google search, attended a workshop at your church, or heard a story of healed relationships on social media, we’re glad you’re here.

**TRAININGS**
- 278 LEADERS

**SMALL GROUPS**
- 864 PARTICIPANTS

**SEMINARS & EVENTS**
- 8,345 ATTENDEES

**SPIRITUAL FORMATION**
- 24,638 HOURS

*Data for 2017-2019.
HELP YOUR CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY ENGAGE CONFLICTS FAITHFULLY.

Give the gift of hope to a Christian community fractured by conflict today.

To donate securely, scan this code, or text "TALK" to +1 (616) 227-3482.

The Colossian Way equips Christians to experience the transforming power of conflict. An innovative method based upon traditional Christian practices, The Colossian Way helps Christians practice loving each other and God while engaging difficult problems.

Set in an intimate worship context, each small group session follows a five-phase structure that creates space for the Holy Spirit and an authentic formation experience.

ColossianForum.org