

PEACEMAKERS IN TIMES OF CHANGE

The CPC Session recently made a recommendation to the congregation to initiate a process for dismissal from the PCUSA and affiliate with the Evangelical Presbyterian Church (EPC). This proposal comes after 16 months of prayer, discernment and losing hope. Differences in theological direction continue to grow, taking our focus away from God's call for us in ministry and mission. The Peacemaker principles remind us that we are to follow God command to "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind; and, Love your neighbor as yourself." (Luke 10:2). This is especially wise encouragement in the midst of differences. The following offers biblical guidance from our Peacemakers Ministry at CPC.

Disagreements and Changes can lead to:

1. negative feelings and emotions such as disappointment, sadness, bitterness and anger – which can quickly lead to...
2. confrontation and conflict – resulting in...
3. serious damage to or loss of long-standing relationships or close friendships and...
4. even failure of the intended action.

CPC, along with the San Francisco Presbytery, will follow steps contained in the "**Presbytery of San Francisco Policy for Dismissing Churches.**" Through the implementation of this process, it is important that we proceed with loving and gracious hearts, doing everything possible to maintain PEACE and UNITY of purpose.

A Different Response to Conflict

As people reconciled to God by the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, we believe that we are called to respond to disagreements and conflict in a way that is remarkably different from the way the world deals with conflict. We also believe that conflict provides opportunities to glorify God, serve other people, and grow to be like Christ. Therefore, in response to God's love and in reliance on his grace, we commit ourselves to responding to conflict according to Peacemaker principles.

*¹⁹The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; ²⁰idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions ²¹and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God. ²²But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. ²⁴Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires. ²⁵Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. ²⁶Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other. **Galatians 5:19-26***

Glorify God

Instead of focusing on our own desires or dwelling on what others may do, we will rejoice in the Lord and bring him praise by depending on his forgiveness, wisdom, power, and love as we seek to faithfully obey his commands and maintain a loving, merciful, and forgiving attitude.

*¹Do not fret because of evil men or be envious of those who do wrong; ²for like the grass they will soon wither, like green plants they will soon die away. ³Trust in the LORD and do good; dwell in the land and enjoy safe pasture. ⁴Delight yourself in the LORD and he will give you the desires of your heart. ⁵Commit your way to the LORD; trust in him and he will do this: ⁶He will make your righteousness shine like the dawn, the justice of your cause like the noonday sun. **Psalms 37:1-6***

¹⁵"If you love me, you will obey what I command. John 14:15

³¹So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God. 1 Corinthians 10:31

¹⁷But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere. ¹⁸Peacemakers who sow in peace raise a harvest of righteousness. **James 3:17-18**

Love One Another

³⁴"A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. ³⁵By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another." **John 13:34-35**

³²Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you. **Ephesians 4:32**

¹As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. ²Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. ³Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. **Ephesians 4:1-3**

¹⁵Make sure that nobody pays back wrong for wrong, but always try to be kind to each other and to everyone else. **1 Thessalonians 5:15**

Live at Peace with Everyone

¹⁷Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everybody. ¹⁸If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. ¹⁹Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord. ²⁰On the contrary: "If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head." ²¹Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good. **Romans 12:17-21**

²⁹Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. ³⁰And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. ³¹Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. ³²Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you. **Ephesians 4:29-32**

³Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. ⁴Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. **Philippians 2:3-4**

Be peacemakers in times of change.

Excerpts taken from "The Peacemaker's Pledge" – in the book The Peacemaker by Ken Sande
Red Font – Biblical quotes by Jesus Christ

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