

Peace Notes



Thanking God for His Faithfulness and Provision

As we began the year, we planned to make a major effort to build the program of the ministry by making Conflict to Peace a more well-known resource in the community. The plan has been to get out and introduce (or re-introduce) local pastors and their staffs to the peacemaking services that we offer, and options that we can provide when their churches, church members, or employees are faced with conflict. In the past few months, our new CEO, Mary Lyons, has sent packages introducing Conflict to Peace to churches in the area, and the team, including Ron Zabel, Mary Lyons, and Eric Assur, have made several church visits. The Lord has been blessing these efforts, and we are now seeing a considerable increase in the number of referrals that we are receiving, and we plan to continue making regular church visits. If you know of a pastor, or a church, that you believe would benefit from an introduction to Conflict to Peace and its peacemaking services, please let us know (if you can also provide an introduction to the pastor, that would be helpful also)!

Training in Christian Conciliation Coming to Virginia

We are very excited to let our conciliators, as well as others who are interested in being trained in Christian conciliation, know that Ambassadors of Reconciliation will be offering training, during the week of September 23 – 28, in Williamsburg, VA (see www.aorhope.org/conf2019). The four-day basic course, which includes a two-day course on Coaching People Through Conflict, as well as two days on Mediating People Through Conflict, will start on September 23rd (Virginia Continuing Mediation Education (CME) credit has been applied

for). Either of these two-day courses also may be taken separately. For those who have previously taken the basic course, there will be a three-day course, Advanced Coaching and Mediation, beginning on September 24th (for which 20 hours of Virginia CME credit has been approved), as well as Reconciling Husbands and Wives, and Teaching a Reconciliation Seminar, which promise to be excellent training. There will also be several great workshops offered on September 27th and 28th, as well as many opportunities to fellowship with peacemakers from around the country!

Gender-Balanced Conciliation in Family Cases

At Conflict to Peace, we believe it is essential to have gender balance when working with families whether the conflict involves marriage, children, eldercare decisions, estate planning or addressing probate matters within a family. In an effort to achieve this balance in the mediation, we assign a team of one male conciliator and one female conciliator to work with families.

The two-person model for conciliation, gender aside, is a good approach to any mediation because two skilled mediators can bring better focus and experience to the table and as one of our conciliator's shares, "we sharpen each other and we mentor each other." Our conciliators share the same Biblical approach and each brings his or her respective faith, experiences and peacemaking skills to bear in helping parties have difficult conversations, restore peace and resolve conflict. Working together strengthens the peacemaking process and makes us better conciliators.

The conciliators serving Conflict to Peace feel strongly that the best team is made up of a male conciliator and a female conciliator working together with the family. At the heart of mediation is a balance of power, sense of fairness, equity and neutrality. These are key ingredients to a successful mediation. The gender-balanced approach is particularly important in family matters where underlying the conflict are usually a variety of emotions attached to the conflict.

We encounter poor communication, no communication or toxic communication. It is very common that the conflict and dysfunctional communication have assumed lead roles as opposed to the substantive issues. Conflict tends to make folks forget that God has provided us with a roadmap in the Bible for resolving our disputes. By making God a party to the conflict and conciliation process, we have witnessed the Holy Spirit move mountains that could not otherwise occur without openness to His leading. Additionally, men and women have different approaches to addressing the breakdown in family communication. Our gender-balanced approach to conciliation, helps both husband and wife feel heard, better understand the other party, and to find better ways to get to the heart of the matter rather than staying bogged down in conflict.

Another reason for gender balance is the sense of fairness and neutrality. When working a husband and wife, if we had two female conciliators, the husband may feel disadvantaged or *vice versa*. Even when the reality is that the conciliators are impartial, the mere perception by one party or the other that there is an imbalance, unfairness or gender bias, can be the kiss of death to having a successful mediation.

Most significantly, by having a male-female conciliator team, we are able to use our unique gifts God bestowed on each of us as a man or as a woman to help families. Genesis

1:27 reads "So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them." Other conciliators with our organization shared the following. "God created us differently in our thinking, in our emotional responses, and in our psychological responses to conflict. And, we need a male-female team to balance these differences." "A man and woman team provides a much fuller spectrum of listening, reflecting and responding productively to what the parties are sharing."

Addition of New Conciliators

Because we are deeply committed to this gender-balanced approach to Christian Conciliation, Conflict to Peace has been searching for some time for additional biblically grounded men, with a heart for peacemaking, to serve on our conciliation teams. We are happy to announce that we have now added three additional men to our team! Welcome to Ron Williams, Eric Newton, and Ken Tucker!

Opportunity to Help

We will continue to be trusting in God's faithfulness and provision as we strengthen and grow this ministry. If you agree with our vision to fulfill Christ's call to be peacemakers, please prayerfully consider how you may be an instrument of His provision. Let us know how you are led to help us, whether it be through prayer support, introducing our ministry to others, referrals, administrative assistance, or a gift. If you are led to bless us with a generous gift today, you may do so through this link:

<http://www.conflicttopeace.org/support.html>

May you be blessed with the opportunity for refreshment this Summer.