

## Appendix B

### Guide for Peace Making Processes

There are times in the life of every group when people disagree with each other and some level of conflict arises. However, Jesus was quite clear in his instructions to his disciples regarding these situations. For example:

Matthew 5:9

“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God”.

Matthew 5:21-24

<sup>21</sup> “You have heard that it was said to those of ancient times, ‘You shall not murder’; and ‘whoever murders shall be liable to judgment.’ <sup>22</sup> But I say to you that if you are angry with a brother or sister, you will be liable to judgment; and if you insult a brother or sister, you will be liable to the council; and if you say, ‘You fool,’ you will be liable to the hell of fire. <sup>23</sup> So when you are offering your gift at the altar, if you remember that your brother or sister has something against you, <sup>24</sup> leave your gift there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother or sister, and then come and offer your gift.”

Matthew 18:15-17

<sup>15</sup> “If another member of the church sins against you, go and point out the fault when the two of you are alone. If the member listens to you, you have regained that one. <sup>16</sup> But if you are not listened to, take one or two others along with you, so that every word may be confirmed by the evidence of two or three witnesses. <sup>17</sup> If the member refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if the offender refuses to listen even to the church, let such a one be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector.”

In each example, Jesus calls for his disciples to be pro-active, to initiate the making of peace, even in situations where peace does not exist at

that point in time and even in situations where the absence of peace was not of their making.

In seeking to be fully committed disciples of Jesus Christ, the members of the church agree to undertake the following process to bring about peace with each other in times when conflict or disagreement arises.

## **1. Pray About Whether Or Not To Act**

- Sometimes conflict or disagreement arises due to a difference of philosophy, priorities, theology or personality. At these times, stop and pray about whether the other person or group's behaviour is actually **sin** or just something that annoys you. While annoying behaviour is often quite unpleasant, it is usually not grounds for confrontation.
- Sometimes we can be hurt or offended by a fellow believer and act out of that hurt or offense, imputing motives, behaviours and attitudes that the person involved may not actually have or hold. Such emotions often lead to acts of revenge instead of acts of restoration.
- So, the first step should always be to pray. Ask God to search your heart, test your thoughts, and see if there is anything in your desires that would fail to honour him before you decide to proceed to the next step in the process (Psalm 139:23-24)

## **2. Go and Talk to the Person Involved**

- Our church values face-to-face communication. Wherever humanly possible, communications involving issues of disagreement or conflict are to be personal; that is, face to face. At least 55% of the total impact of a message comes from non-verbal cues, mostly the facial expressions. It is therefore imperative that those non-verbal cues be available to both parties in the process. If face-to-face communication isn't an option, then a telephone conversation is the next most appropriate method, followed by a formal written communication. Email should be avoided, as it has been consistently proven inappropriate for such matters.

- When preparing to meet with the person, have a reconciliatory attitude, with the aim of making peace. This is the attitude that Jesus' disciples are to have towards one another.
- When making the appointment to meet with the person involved, clearly state the reason for the meeting, so that they are not confused about the purpose, and can come prepared to answer any questions you might ask. Also clearly state that it is your intention to make peace with them and to reconcile any differences.
- Agree to meet in a mutually comfortable setting. Proper consideration of the venue will enhance the ease of communication and the opportunity for each person to be heard and understood.
- It is hoped that the vast majority of differences can be handled in this way. However, there are times when meeting with someone face-to-face does not produce an appropriate or satisfactory outcome. There are also other times, particularly where some level of abuse has occurred, or perhaps between members of the opposite sex and/or where there is a distinct power differential, where such private meetings are inappropriate. In these cases, go back to Step 1 before considering moving on to Step 3.

### **3. Go and Talk to the Person Involved with Another Trusted Person**

- Please be prayerful in your consideration as to whom you should take with you to this next level of meeting. The aim is not to "gang up" on the person. Remember, the aim is peace and reconciliation. Take someone with you who has proven to be wise and can act as an independent intermediary, hearing both sides of the story without bias (as much as that is practical and possible) and can help bring both of you to peace and reconciliation.
- In most cases, a member of the Ministry Leadership Team is appropriate for issues that are not simply inter-personal, but involve

groups and/or ministries within the Church family.

- The foundational principles for arranging such a meeting are the same as for Step 2.
- Again, it is hoped that a large percentage of situations that could not be resolved through Step 2 can be resolved through this process. We do recognise, however, that there will be a small number of situations where peace cannot be reached through either Step 2 or Step 3.

#### **4. Refer the Situation to the Ministry Leadership Team**

- Once again, revisit Step 1 before proceeding to this step.
- If you still wish to move to this step, prepare a written submission for the Ministry Leadership Team, outlining the nature of the disagreement or conflict and the steps that you have taken to bring about peace to this point.
- Give the submission to the Church Secretary, who will bring it before the next MLT meeting. You will probably need to exercise patience, as the MLT only meets monthly. They may also decide to carry it over to the next meeting, to give each member time to prayerfully consider the situation and seek God's wisdom and guidance before proposing any action.
- Once the MLT has decided what the next course of action will be, they will respond to you in writing, although that correspondence would normally be delivered by hand by at least one MLT member so that face-to-face communication regarding the contents of the response can be explained and questions asked and answered.
- Once again, it is hoped that almost all situations where peace could not be reached without the MLT's intentional involvement will find peace here. However, if, after the MLT's response, there is still no prospect for peace and reconciliation, there is still one more step that can be taken.

## **5. Refer the Situation to the Church Membership**

- Once again, revisit Step1 before proceeding to this step.
- If, after much prayer and very careful consideration, you still wish to move to this step, you can ask that the matter be listed on the agenda for the next Church Meeting. This must be by way of an explicit motion to which you can speak (e.g. "I move that ..."). If you have difficulty expressing yourself in a formal meeting, you can ask that an 'advocate' be appointed to explain the matter on your behalf.
- Such motions must be provided in writing to the Church Secretary at least ten(10) days in advance of the Church Meeting so that the motion can appear on the agenda and the membership will be prepared for the discussion.
- Discussion during the meeting will be limited to the issue to which the motion refers. As with all motions before the meeting, the length of discussion is at the discretion of the Chairperson, including the time permitted for each person to speak and the number of times any one person may speak to the issue. It is the Chairperson's responsibility to all members present to ensure that matters are dealt with in a decent and orderly manner, as required by Scripture.
- It may be that the Church Meeting decides to deal with the motion at the following Church Meeting (i.e. in three (3) months time). This time delay would be so that members would have adequate time to pray about, search God's Word, reflect upon and in other ways investigate the matter being raised, before they have to vote on it.

## **6. What if the Issue Involves Serious Sin?**

- If the matter involves a serious moral failure, sinful behaviour, or illegal activity, threatening the unity of the church or the safety of people, then it must be taken directly to the Senior Pastor or one of the elders immediately. They will keep the matter confidential (as much as is possible and/or legal) and advise you regarding the way forward.
- Cases of suspected abuse (sexual, physical, emotional etc.), particularly where children are involved, should be reported directly and immediately to the churches Child Protection Officer, Senior Pastor and/or leadership. At the time of the release of this document, the Senior Pastor is the designated CPO.

“Peacemakers who sow in peace raise a harvest of righteousness.”

(James 3:18)