

Peace Breakers, Peace Fakers or Peace Makers

A few years ago our church was sensitized by the ongoing conflicts in our congregation. After some prayer we entered a time of seeking solutions. A friend of the church recommended we research Ken Sande's Peace Making Material. After attending a seminar, we launched an all church series on conflict. It proved to be a Godsend to our congregation that gave us handles to resolve issues. During this month's pastors' ZOOM meetings, I would like to develop insights gleaned during that time.

To begin with there appears to be three broad approaches to conflict. Ken Sande says we can be Peace Breakers, Peace Fakers or Peace Makers. Those come into play with our two natural responses of either fight or flight. The Peace Making material points the fight or flight natural inclinations both leads to complete separation or death if you will. The next couple of months I will be developing what Ken Sande says is a Peace Maker mentality.

Everyone needs a positive example. At our church plant there was a marvelous example lived before me. All the following folks have passed to glory, but their stories are powerful. Our church, in the infant stage, was only 40 folks. Jim and Sue were new to our community. Moving from Indiana they began farming in northern Wisconsin. Being short of funds Jim asked Cam if he would loan his truck for harvest. Cam, always the gracious one, loaned his newly overhauled truck and I sat back with a smile thinking this is the body of Christ in action. However, a time later, the truck got stuck in the field and the hired hand threw a log chain over the axle and in the process pulled off the oil line. Ten miles later the truck came to a screeching halt with a locked up gas engine. Fearing a church squabble, I sat the two farmers down and Cam agreed to forgive completely the thousands of dollars engine overhaul loss. Jim in return promised if he prospered he would repay, but made no guarantees.

I thought it was a marvelous example of Peace Making. But we failed to bring the gals into the equation. Cam's wife was very disappointed because she was hoping for a kitchen remodel, and she needed one. Jim's wife was put out! "You promised what...?" was her response. Wow, now we had gals deeply estranged and what were we to do? Some weeks later Jim's wife Sue came down with a nasty flu bug that laid her up for a couple of weeks. To my delight, Cam's wife took to the family, several times, her world renowned chicken soup. That, my friends, is going the second mile.



Peace Making is not for the faint of heart. I suspect it is only by the mighty working of the Holy Spirit that churches survive and thrive. To be honest the closer we are to "others" the more grace of God we need. Celebrating peace victories in your life and congregation are a platform to further victories of Peace Making.

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