

Agreeing and Disagreeing In Love

Commitments for Unity Congregations in Times of Agreement & Disagreement

Adapted by Gary Simmons with permission, Lombard Mennonite Peace Center

*"Endeavoring to maintain the unity of Spirit in the bond of Peace" (Eph. 4:3),
as both individual members and as a spiritual community, we pledge that we shall:*

In Thought...

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| Accept conflict | 1. Acknowledge that conflict is a normal part of life in the church. |
| Affirm Truth | 2. Endeavor to see conflict as symptomatic of what's missing in our intention to create authentic community. Peacemaking is creating a pathway to God. |
| Commit to prayer | 3. Examine where we are coming from and release our need to be right. Acknowledge all parties have needs and pray for win/win solutions (no prayers for my success or for the other to change). |

In Action...

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| Go to the other | 4. Go directly to those with whom we disagree; avoid behind-the-back criticism. Refrain from engaging in "parking lot" conversations. |
| In the spirit of humility | 5. Go in gentleness, patience, and humility. Own our part in the conflict instead of blaming others and acting as if the others are responsible for how we are. |
| Be quick to listen | 6. Listen carefully, summarize, and check out what is heard before responding. Seek as much to understand as to be understood. |
| Be slow to judge | 7. Suspend judgments, end enrolling others in our position, discard threats, and act in a non-defensive and non-reactive way. |
| Be willing to negotiate | 8. Work through the disagreement constructively. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identify issues, interests, and the needs of both (rather than take positions).• Generate a variety of options for meeting both parties' needs (rather than defending one's own way). |

- Evaluate options by how they meet the needs and satisfy the interests of all sides (not just one side's values).
- Collaborate in working out a joint solution (so both sides gain, both grow and win).
- Cooperate with the emerging agreement (accept the possible, not demand your ideal).
- Reward each other for each step forward, toward agreement (celebrate mutuality).

In Life...

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| Be steadfast in love | 9. Be firm in our commitment to seek a mutual solution; be steadfast in acting out of Principle (do the right thing); be hard on issues and soft on people. |
| Be open to peacemaking | 10. Be open to accept skilled help. If we cannot reach agreement among ourselves, we will use those with gifts and training in peacemaking. |
| Trust the community | 11. Trust the wisdom of the community and if we cannot reach agreement or experience reconciliation, we will turn the decision over to the congregation or seek assistance from the Ministry for Peacemaking. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• In one-to-one or small group disputes, this may mean allowing others to arbitrate.• In congregational disputes, this may mean implementing constitutional decision-making processes (membership vote) when peacemaking assistance is unable to facilitate reconciliation. |
| Be the expression of Christ | 12. Be committed to peacemaking and the demonstration of Principle, rather than resort to courts of law. |