

# Reconciled.

Your 10-Minute Tour Around the World of Peacemaking

a communication of Peacemaker Ministries  
August | 2010

"...we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation." - Romans 5:11

## Sharing the Gospel through Peacemaking

### *An Encouraging "Field Report" from One Peacemaking Team*

A husband and wife are struggling in their marriage. Maybe to you or me, things might not look good... from the outside, we might ask, "Can things really change?"

A church peacemaking team recently encountered just such a situation and saw God do a miracle through his gospel. We often say that the gospel is at the heart of biblical peacemaking: that is, because we've been forgiven our sins (and our conflicts!) through the death of Jesus Christ, we can forgive one another—we can be reconciled to one another. As a pastor and member of the peacemaking team at St. Peter's Episcopal Church in Lake Mary, FL, Rev. Charlie Holt was recently helping a married couple in conflict. As Charlie worked with them, he encouraged the man and his wife to reflect on the example of Christ in Philippians 2. There the Apostle Paul appeals to believers to look not only to their own interests, but to the interests of others as well. Paul encourages believers to do so because of the encouragement and love that is theirs through Christ.

But for Charlie and this couple, there was one problem: when she was asked if she had any "encouragement from being united with Christ," the wife confessed she really didn't understand what it meant to be united with Christ. While she had attended church for many years, she had never actually received the grace and forgiveness of her sins through the death of Jesus.

So what do you think that peacemaking team member did? Right then and there, Pastor Charlie gently shared the good news of forgiveness

with her, and she received Jesus Christ as her Lord and Savior right in the middle of a peacemaking session! That very day her name was written in the Lamb's Book of Life.

As you might expect, the marital conflict was not resolved instantaneously. But after several mediation sessions, reconciliation came to that marriage. And more important, that couple now has a whole new foundation in Christ from which to respond to the hurts and offenses that are a part of every marriage.

*How many marriages are struggling in your church right now? How many people need to hear the gospel—either for the very first time, or applied once again to the pain of conflict in the most seasoned believer? In either case, peacemaking teams have the unique privilege of pointing people without hope in the midst of conflict back to the only*

lasting source of hope: Jesus Christ.

That is the joy and privilege of serving on a peacemaking team: bringing the gospel to believers, unbelievers and a watching world.

*For more information on forming a peacemaking team at your church, visit:*

[www.peacemaker.net/teams](http://www.peacemaker.net/teams)



Jerry Wall  
Director, Team Support

FEATURE  
ARTICLE

Peacemaking is ultimately about applying the gospel in everyday human relationships, showing how the forgiveness and reconciliation found in Christ make a tangible difference in our lives today.



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# Daring to Teach Peace in Central Asia

Stories of teaching peacemaking aren't usually characterized by intrigue, code words and daring car escapes. But this last spring, Anne's\* time in Central Asia sometimes felt more like a spy movie than a Sunday school class.

Anne was part of a team of three on its second trip to Central Asia to teach peacemaking. Their first trip was to a neighboring country in 2006 and the results of that trip are still "percolating" as word spreads about the impact of their teaching. Their itinerary included teaching peacemaking at two conferences (one local and one for church leaders from around the country), leading a marriage retreat, and spending several days encouraging and counseling church leaders.

Anne describes the church in this country as young but vibrant. Most believers—even church leaders—are in their 20s and 30s, and most are first-generation believers following years of communist Soviet rule. It is a ripe field where the gospel is like a breath of fresh air; and the church, though small in numbers, is great in faith and growing in impact.

The government requires churches to be registered and their pastors to be licensed. Churches meeting these requirements can still experience harassment and imprisonment, so believers are very cautious. Because of the likelihood that authorities were monitoring their emails, Anne sent home cryptic emails with praises and prayer requests like, "Cannot thank you enough for your talking to Father. He is managing things beautifully" and "You can ask Father for us that travel will be safe for all."

In one such email, she wrote, "We had unexpected visitors again. Father handled it very well." It turns out the "unexpected visitors" were police vehicles approaching



photo by babasteve flickr.com/people/babasteve

the compound where 90 church leaders had gathered from around the country. It was the beginning of the third and final day of the peacemaking seminar. As the worship was wrapping up and teaching was about to begin, they received a phone call from one of the "lookouts" that police cars were approaching the compound. Without delay, they began to execute a well-organized evacuation plan and all 90 people were evacuated through different exits in just four minutes! Just like that, the conference was over, without the important concluding teaching on forgiveness, and without saying "goodbye."

She later said about the experience, "I never felt fear. Our concern was that our presence would put the local people at risk." Anne is also trusting God to fill in the blanks for the teaching that was left unfinished; they left Russian translations of several peacemaking resources and in fact learned of nine churches that were already teaching peacemaking from the pulpit the Sunday after the seminar concluded. The organizing pastor and his core group of leaders have also committed to embedding peacemaking principles into their team dynamics. Anne and her team are praying about possible ways to assist these churches in integrating peacemaking within their culture.

What does Anne think is the most important thing her students could learn from her? "Peacemaking is discipleship 101... We've been reconciled to God through Christ and that same ministry has been given to us. We tend to lose that—we get so involved in achieving things that we lose the relationship and trample on each other. It's so important that we who are in ministry together know how to work the peace process. A church in that type of persecution especially needs to know how to do God's business in God's way."

\*Name and other identifying information have been changed to protect Anne as well as the church in the host country, where authorities actively seek to identify and persecute Christians.



# Dog Days and Battling Desires



Photo courtesy of Wes Hohenstein [www.whohenstein.mynycblogs.com](http://www.whohenstein.mynycblogs.com)

It's August ... hot—and for some, hot and humid—the “dog days” of summer. We tend to look to end-of-summer activities like vacations, home improvement projects, or maybe trying to find some water where we can cool off and relax!

These activities come with the anticipation of time with others, pleasure, and an escape from our daily routines and responsibilities. Yet sometimes we experience conflicts even in the midst of good times. The dynamics of relationships bring together many agendas, expectations, wants, and desires that we feel are not being met.

It's interesting to read the opening verse of James 4, where he writes, “What causes fights and quarrels among you?” Here James asks a very practical question and gives an eye-opening answer. Wouldn't most of us start our answer by saying something like, “Well, so-and-so did.”? But James takes us to a place we don't naturally go when we have fights or quarrels. “Don't they come from your desires that battle within you? You want something but don't get it. You kill and covet, but you cannot have what you want. You quarrel and fight.” (emphasis mine)

James doesn't say that our problem is anyone else—he candidly writes that we are so committed to our own desires that we will sacrifice others to meet those desires. As many of you know, at Peacemaker Ministries we are passionate about helping Christians develop biblical life skills for the personal battles within. We carry out our mission as we give Christians the tools to live out the gospel in all of their relationships.

We carry out our mission as we give Christians the tools to live out the gospel in all of their relationships.

Your contributions over the years have had a significant impact in bringing about reconciliation for fellow believers suffering from damaged and broken relationships. There are

Greg Oliphant  
Chief Development Officer



GET INVOLVED

so many wonderful stories and testimonies that it would take a book to share them with you! But if you'd like to read a few, you can find them on our web site ([www.Peacemaker.net/testimonies](http://www.Peacemaker.net/testimonies)).

If you are not currently supporting Peacemaker Ministries, there is a Donate Now button on our home page, where you can become a part of this vibrant, growing ministry that is having an impact for the gospel all over the world. As you know, relational conflict is not just an American problem, and the gospel of Christ is not just an American solution. We lead a global ministry with a network of many thousands of believers. In order for us to serve them well and train many more, we are dependent on donor gifts. Would you prayerfully consider becoming a partner with Peacemaker Ministries?

This newsletter will reach about 20,000 readers. If 10% (which seems like a biblical percentage) of you who are not currently giving to Peacemaker Ministries were to commit to a \$25.00 monthly gift, that would total \$600,000 over the next year, and would be a third of our needed donor support.

Because of the gracious way God has carried us for nearly 30 years, it is fitting for me to close with Paul's declaration at the end of Ephesians 3:

Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen (Eph. 3:20-21 ESV).

## + Training Events

- Sep 14–16 + Reston, VA
  - Sep 16–19 + Reston, VA
  - Oct 2 + Valencia, PA
  - Oct 7–9 + Chatsworth, CA
  - Oct 21–23 + Olive Branch, MS
  - Oct 28 + Kansas City, KS
  - Oct 29–30 + Akron, OH
  - November 4–6 + Vacaville, CA
  - November 11–13 + Hilltown, PA
- For more information and to register visit:  
<http://www.peacemaker.net/events>

## + Connect Online

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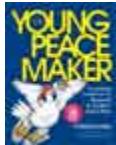
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"...we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation." - Romans 5:11

## Preventing Church Splits Through Deep Relationships

Every church split, by definition, involves people who are alienated in their affections toward one another. The splits occur when this alienation is hardened and seemingly intractable. But the roots of the split extend back to that time when everyone seemed to be getting along (meaning there were no obvious conflicts) but really didn't know one another. That period is the calm before the storm. Introduce an offense, teach something that crosses someone's pet sin or tender spot, and what appeared to be

placid water begins to foam and roil until a major storm approaches the shores of the church.

A church leader's duty is to act while things are calm, to take a preventative step before these conditions for a split are aggravated.

And if we're going to prevent church splits, we must be the kind of people who can take a hit without escalating the battle, who can diffuse issues in a godly way that actually strengthens relationships in the church. And we must be models of what it means to actively, tenaciously, intentionally, and lovingly pursue deep and wide relationships in the body of Christ. At her core, the church is a mass of spiritual relationships—individuals to the Lord and to one another, forming something more than the sum of her parts, forming a body. Lose these relationships and we unravel the church.

Thabiti Anyabwile  
Featured Speaker at the 2010  
Peacemaker Conference



WHAT'S  
NEW?



2010 Peacemaker Conference  
Washington, D.C.

September 16-19

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Prices for the 2010 Peacemaker Conference go up August 14th, so register soon!

[www.peacemakerconference.net](http://www.peacemakerconference.net)

For an electronic copy of this publication (as well as additional information and links), please visit [www.peacemaker.net/reconciled](http://www.peacemaker.net/reconciled)