

## Being Equally Yoked

D. Wayne Myrick • Conflict Management

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Ever since the beginnings of our company, we have faced the dilemma of being equally yoked in our business (developing church facilities, working with employees, architects, contractors and owners). Like most people, we first learned the importance of this biblical concept by not following it. There are probably many churches that have also experienced the problem of not partnering with those of like mind and purpose.

Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? 2 Cor 6:14

Being equally yoked is not just a matter of linking to those who claim to be believers; it goes deeper than that when we consider what is at stake in developing our churches correctly.

Several years ago I was introduced to Peacemaker Ministries in Billings, Montana. Peacemaker Ministries is a ministry that helps resolve the conflicts that we face every day and offers a biblical approach to "Handling Conflict God's Way." As a business owner in the design and construction business, we faced conflict every day. I was excited to find out how I could turn conflict into an opportunity to glorify God, serve others and grow to be like Christ. Biblical peacemaking also gave us a way to ensure that we are being equally yoked with others-making sure that we all agreed to resolve conflict the same way before we agreed to be yoked together working on a project.

We started the process by first having all our employees take the Peacemaker study course on a daily basis and become familiar with the systematic approach to dealing with conflict. We also started using the biblical principles for dealing with conflict as a regular devotional topic at our developmental meetings.

We also began to make it known to our potential clients, architects, engineers and subcontractors that our contracts required that all dispute resolution would be handled through the Institute for Christian Conciliation (ICC). The ICC is a division of Peacemaker Ministries that handles formal mediation and arbitration for Christians through certified mediators and arbitrators. You would think that churches would jump on this idea-most do-but we have had some that didn't.

You may also ask, "Why do all this? Isn't the church already equipped to deal with this?" The answer is that they may know about it, but it usually hasn't become a part of their church culture.

One of the most exciting things about this process is that the education part has eliminated many conflicts before they even begin. It appears that when we

emphasize these biblical commands, people just conduct themselves better. I know it has made a substantial difference in my life.

Understanding that the first priority in any situation is to glorify God is a real conflict stopper. When both people are on the same page with this, then it is just not as likely that you will have the kind of conflict that is hurtful and deeply rooted in personal issues. This helps eliminate the personal conflict issues, leaving those issues that are more material to be solved much more easily.

In the last three years since starting to use the Peacemaker Ministries materials, we have not experienced any disputes that have progressed past our project manager level. This not only good in itself, but frees it up valuable time for being more productive in our work and lives everyday. You only have so much energy to spend.

At the lowest level, peacemaking is just a good way to live. Each of us can decide how we want to live, but I can tell you from experience, being a peacemaker is a lot better.

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God. Matt 5:9  
How to be a peacemaker:

Glorify God - 1 Cor 10:31 "So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God."

Get the Log Out of Your Eye - Matt 7:3-5 "Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? How can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' when all the time there is a plank in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye.

Go and Show Your Brother His Faults - Matt 18:15-17 "If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over. But if he will not listen, take one or two others along, so that 'every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.' If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, treat him as you would a pagan or a tax collector."

Go and Be Reconciled - Matt 5:24 "First go and be reconciled to your brother; then come and offer your gift." Eph 4:32 "Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you."

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To sum it up: We should expect conflict in our lives, because we live in a fallen world. But the best way you can know that you're equally yoked to those you deal with-both in business and personal relationships-is to agree on how you will deal with conflict.

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