

A PROPOSAL FROM STEVE

Agreeing and Disagreeing in Love

Adapted with permission from the Lombard Mennonite Peace Center

We, the members of Unity Church in Albany, commit ourselves to applying the 12 principles of “Agreeing and Disagreeing in Love” to our church business, relationships and interactions. We ask for and welcome support from each other as we learn and grow in our abilities to apply these principles. Our desire is that our ministry will be a demonstration of how the application of spiritual principles can make a positive difference in an environment of diverse people and ideas.

Endeavoring to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace (Eph. 4:3), as both individual members and as a spiritual community, we agree that we shall agree and disagree in love.

IN THOUGHT:

1. **We accept Conflict:** We acknowledge that conflict is a normal part of life in the church.

Romans 14:1-8, 10-12, 17-19, 15:1-7.

2. **We affirm the Truth:** We endeavor to see conflict as symptomatic of what’s missing in our intention to create authentic community.

Peacemaking is creating a pathway to God.

Matthew 5:9.

3. **We commit to Prayer:** We examine where we are coming from and release our need to be right. We acknowledge that all parties have needs and pray for win/win solutions (no prayers for my success or for the other to change). James 5:16.

IN ACTION:

4. **We go to the Other:** We go directly to those with whom we disagree; we avoid behind the back criticism. We refrain from engaging in “parking lot” conversations. Matthew 5:23-24, 18:15-20.

5. **We go in the spirit of Humility:** We go in gentleness, patience, and humility. We own our part in the conflict instead of blaming others and acting as if others are responsible for how we are. Galatians 5:1-5.

6. **We are quick to Listen:** We listen carefully, summarizing and checking out what is heard before responding. We seek as much to understand as to be understood. James 1:19; Proverbs 18:13.

7. **We are slow to Judge:** We suspend judgments, end enrolling others in our position, discard threats, and act in non-defensive and non-reactive ways. Romans 2:1-4; Galatians 5:22-26.

8. **We are willing to Negotiate:** We work through disagreements constructively. Acts 15; Philippians 2:1-11.

---We identify issues, interests, and needs of all (rather than stake positions).

---We generate a variety of options for meeting all party’s needs (rather than defending our own individual way).

---We evaluate options by how they meet the needs and satisfy the interests of all sides (not just one side’s values).

---We collaborate in working out a joint solution (so that each side gains, grows and wins).

---We cooperate with the emerging agreement (accepting the possible, not demanding the ideal).

---We reward ourselves for each step forward, toward agreement and we celebrate mutuality.

IN LIFE:

9. **We are steadfast in Love:** We are firm in our commitment to seek a mutual solution: we are steadfast in acting out of Principle (doing the right thing); we are hard on issues and soft on people. Colossians 3:12-15.

10. **We are open to Peacemaking:** We are open to accept skilled help. If we cannot reach agreement among ourselves, we will use those with gifts and training in peacemaking.

11. **We trust the Community.** We trust the wisdom of the community and if we cannot reach agreement or experience reconciliation, we will turn the decision over to the membership and/or seek assistance from Member Services of Unity Worldwide Ministries. Acts 15.

12. **We seek to be an expression of Christ:** We are committed to peacemaking and the demonstration of Principle rather than resorting to courts of law. Corinthians 6:1-6.