

Peacemaking: Harmony or Reconciliation?

CMC sponsored symposium

Additional Questions from the Audience,

Answers provided by Rev. Angie Piau

1. Churches often jump to “peace” before naming/lamenting about it, often seems more face-saving without solving the real issue? How do we process realistically?

To address a real, face-losing issue in a Chinese church takes a lot of wisdom, courage, and movement of the Spirit, and when members are ready. It takes one person courage to speak up and name it and ask for a resolution. This person also needs to be careful that addressing the issue is about problem-solving and creating a pathway forward, rather than just to tear down and point out someone was wrong. I would prepare my heart first, and then carefully assess whether the other parties are ready and in the space to address. If the other party is not ready, it can actually do more damage to raise the issue and create further division and harm.

2. How to ensure that Pastor and Deacons have enough spiritual fellowship time and good results? If the pastor is not asking for it, should deacons ask for it?

Deacons and any lay members are welcome to ask for more spiritual fellowship.

3. 多种语言文化背景下的教会里，如果能有效的沟通？ How can we communicate effectively in a church with multiple languages and cultures?

In a church with multiple languages, care must be taken not to downplay any one language or culture over the other. Extending respect to the “minority” language can go a long way to maintaining good communication. Angie speaking: In my church, we have a tradition that if one person speaks English, the entire meeting will then be held in English. If on the occasion that a brother or sister needs to switch to Chinese, care is taken that translation is provided if necessary. As a native English speaker, I always respect that my brothers and sisters are making the effort to speak in English. I can understand quite a lot of Chinese too, so when they switch, I am comfortable to let them switch, but will ask for clarification if there’s something I don’t understand.

Related to culture, we cannot avoid the cultural influence we bring, but as we work together cross-culturally, it’s a challenge and opportunity for us to find the way that is Christ-centered and Christ-glorifying.