

Good morning. My name is Kathy Zagel. My husband Bruce is the pastor at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in Hamilton and this is the story of how we came to Hamilton.

As I considered the question "how many loaves have you", it came to me that I have many loaves or in this case gifts that I have been given. But they all come from the most important gift that I have been given: the forgiveness of sins through faith in Jesus Christ. It is the privilege of sharing the gift of forgiveness through Christ with those in conflict that has brought my husband and me to Australia.

Our journey began in 1992 when my we attended a conference and were exposed to the concept of biblical peacemaking. Over the last 18 years biblical peacemaking (BP) has developed into a lifestyle for us personally and professionally.

Let me ask you a question: Do you experience conflict in your lives? BP is a process in which you are given the tools to deal with that conflict biblically. This process was developed by Ken Sande who wrote the book called "The Peacemaker." He was solicitor in the early 1980's and was unhappy when Christians would take one another to court to attempt to resolve conflicts that they were having. The bible tells us in 1 Cor 6 that we are not to take a brother or sister in Christ to court. So he began work on the concept of biblical peacemaking.

Here is a brief overview of the concept of BP. It includes several steps that all begin with the letter "G" and are based on verses from the bible:

1. The first step is to "Glorify God." 1 Cor 10:31 says that whatever we do whether we eat or drink we are to do it all to the glory of God. How often do we think about glorifying God in the midst of a conflict. This is what this scripture verse is asking us to do. What in the word "all" is excluded?"
2. The second step is to "Get the log out of our own eye." Matt 7:5 says that we to take the log out of our own eye before we help our brother take the speck out of his. This is the step that asks us to examine our own hearts in order to understand how we might have contributed to the conflict so that we can confess our sin and be forgiven.
3. The third step is to "Gently restore" and is based on Gal 6:1 that says if anyone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should

restore him in a spirit of gentleness but keep watch lest you also will be tempted. This is a verse that encourages one to hold a brother or sister in Christ accountable for his/her actions.

4. The fourth step is to "Go and be reconciled" and comes from Matt 5:23-24. The verse says if you are offering your gift at the altar and remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift at the altar and go and be reconciled.

We have travelled all over the world teaching biblical peacemaking and sharing the forgiveness of sins with people. Our travel began in Moscow, Russia in November of 2000. My husband was invited to teach a class on the pastoral ministry at a small bible college in downtown Moscow. The last three days of the class, he used *The Peacemaker* as his text and taught on BP. The class included about 20 students who after graduation would be either pastors or lay leaders in their own church or they would be establishing new churches in different parts of Russia. They were very receptive to the concept and one student invited him to come back to Russia again saying "We need this here." He went back three more times to teach BP. I was able to travel with him both on the first and fourth trips.

In 2002, we travelled to Canada to do a seminar on BP and had a class of about 40. For two of the students (the host pastor and a lay person), it was a life-changing event. In January 2003, Bruce travelled to India to train Lutheran pastors and to Ukraine to teach biblical peacemaking in a Presbyterian church. The message of the forgiveness of sins through Jesus Christ continued to be spread around the world.

In February 2004, a group of 5 men and me met together to talk about beginning a Lutheran biblical peacemaking ministry. After much prayer and discussion they decided that the Lord was making it possible for all of them to come together to establish Ambassadors of Reconciliation. The mission statement for the ministry is "living, proclaiming and cultivating lifestyles of reconciliation."

For Bruce and me, it meant leaving the parish ministry and moving to Montana to begin this new ministry. We did that in November 2004 and Ambassadors of Reconciliation began in January 2005. Over the next 4 years, we did many seminars, mediations, training times and church interventions. In May 2009, after being invited by the Lutheran Church of Australia, we came to Sydney to teach and train in about 25 pastors and lay people from Australia in biblical peacemaking. The people were wonderfully receptive to this concept of applying God's word to conflict.

And the trip to Sydney is what brought us back to Australia. After the training ended, we asked about the possibility of coming back over in the future to fill in at churches that might need a temporary pastor. The president of the LCA immediately said that he would love to have us come back in the future. What we didn't realize was that the future would come sooner than we anticipated. Because AoR had financial challenges, Bruce decided to leave AoR. When he made that decision, he emailed the LCA president and said he was available to come and serve a church if needed. The president responded the next day and said I have a place for you. And so, after 7 months of waiting on the Lord while he prepared the way for us, we came to Australia to begin what has been a very gratifying and rewarding journey of sharing the forgiveness of sins with those in conflict.

The theme of this year's WDP is how many loaves have you? As I said in the beginning, I have been blessed with many loaves or gifts but they all originate from the single most important gift that is the forgiveness of sins through faith in Christ. My prayer today is that all would believe that Jesus Christ is the son of God and by believing would have life in his name. John 20:31