

***Peacemaking and Sharing the Good News:
the “odd couple” or a match made in heaven?***
by Rick Love

[I will be writing a number of blogs on Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) about Peacemaking in the next number of weeks. These FAQs are part of the Peacemaking Seminar put on by Peace Catalyst International.]

I was talking about Peace Catalyst International (PCI) at a meeting recently, when a woman exclaimed, “But if people don’t come to Christ, everything else is worthless!” Really? Worthless? Since there are literally millions of Christians like her in the world, I feel compelled to write.

What is the relationship between peacemaking and sharing the good news? Is peacemaking and bearing witness to Christ’s love an “odd couple?” Or is it a match made in heaven?

We use two terms in Peace Catalyst to help define the relationship between peacemaking and respectful witness: “**Multidimensional reconciliation**” and “**Biblical Holism**.” Multidimensional reconciliation means that reconciliation is comprehensive. We call people to peace with God and neighbor. Biblical holism means that the physical and spiritual dimensions of life are integrated. The good news is “holistic” -- about both personal reconciliation and social transformation. We share the gospel of peace and pursue the peace of God. Ideally peacemaking and sharing the good news are integrated.

In practice however, peacemaking and sharing the good news can be an “odd couple.” They don’t always go together. There are times when someone is reconciled to God but fails to reconcile with his or her neighbor. People like this need further teaching and encouragement to “obey all that Jesus commanded.” This is one reason Peace Catalyst has a Peacemaking seminar! There are far too many “professing” followers of Christ who do not make peace with their neighbors, much less their enemies.

There are other instances when making peace between neighbors enables us to effectively bear witness to Jesus. People are drawn to the goodness of the gospel when they see our lights shine in this way. They want to know about the good news of God’s reconciling love in Christ. And they decide to follow Jesus.

Sometimes, however, people rejoice in the peace made between them and their neighbors, but do not want to reconcile with God. In this case, the good deed of peacemaking still finds favor with God. As Jesus said, “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God” (Matt 5:9). In other words, God’s children work for peace. They are known as peacemakers. Then a few verses later Jesus says, “Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven (Matthew 5:16). The good deed of peacemaking glorifies God.

That, my friend, is not worthless!