PEACE SOWER TEAMS™

Promoting Peace, Unity and Thriving Relationships

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God gives his people a marvelous promise in James 3:18: ***"Peacemakers who sow in peace reap a harvest of righteousness."***

This "sow to reap" metaphor reminds us that peace and unity among Christians does not grow spontaneously. In order to see a harvest of peace, unity and godly relationships, leaders are called to diligently sow and nurture the seeds of gospel-based relational principles.

As relationships thrive, the weeds of conflict have less room to grow, which clears the way for stronger families, more fruitful ministry and church growth, improved work performance and productivity, and most importantly, a compelling witness as Christians live out the gospel in their families, workplaces and communities.

Peace Sower Teams are designed to support church, ministry and business leaders' efforts to sow and nurture the seeds of peace. These teams are modeled after the ministry teams that Moses established to help him maintain peace within the nation of Israel. Rather than exhaust himself trying to solve every conflict, Moses selected "wise, understanding and experienced men" to resolve differences and promote unity within the community. As his wise father-in-law predicted,
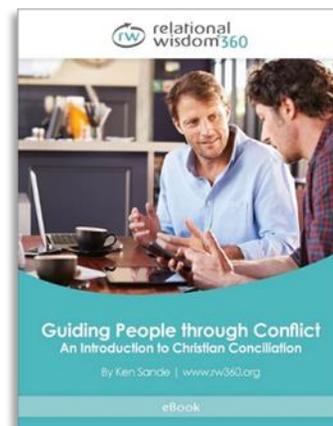
> "So it will be easier for you, and they will bear the burden with you. If you do this, God will direct you, you will be able to endure, and all this people also will go to their place in peace" (Exodus 18:22-23; see also Deut. 1:9-18).

Peace Sower Teams promote this God-honoring harvest of peace and unity by being both "reactive" (reconciling people in conflict) and "proactive" (teaching and coaching people to develop skills that actually prevent conflict). Ideally each team will include members who focus on one or more of three complementary discipleship ministries.

- **RW Presenters** provide in-house training in relational wisdom or "RW" (which is a biblical form of emotional intelligence) and peacemaking through seminars, group studies and Sunday school classes. They also provide regular reminders of these concepts through social media, articles and testimonies. Presenters are also equipped to open doors for sharing the gospel by using RW360's "values-based" resources to make introductory presentations in businesses, nonprofits, schools and other secular settings in their communities (see Using RW for Witnessing and Evangelism).

- **RW Coaches** provide **RW skills coaching** (assisting individuals to accelerate the development of key relational skills in order to "get upstream of conflict") and **conflict coaching** (assisting individuals to apply RW and peacemaking principles to resolve existing conflicts). A key goal of this ministry is to strengthen relational skills and reduce the need for prolonged counseling when relationships fail.

- **RW Conciliators** mediate conflicts between people who are unable to resolve conflicts on their own. The conciliation process may involve **conflict coaching** (advising an individual how to resolve a dispute personally and privately), **mediation** (meeting with both parties to improve understanding and negotiate an agreement) or **arbitration** (listening to both sides and rendering a binding decision). The biblical basis and practical applications of these processes are described in a free 70-page ebooklet, Guiding People Through Conflict.

BENEFITS

Peacemaker Ministries piloted a similar "peacemaking team" concept during Ken Sande's tenure as president, which led to the establishment of over 200 church-based teams. These teams typically included five members and averaged 23 training events, 28 coached individuals and 6 mediations every year. This level of activity involved approximately 180-240 hours of volunteer ministry per year. This type of discipleship ministry can trigger multiple benefits, including:

- Relationships are strengthened, and conflict is reduced, resulting in a more compelling Christian witness and improved church growth (see Using RW for Witnessing and Evangelism).

- As people learn how to deal with relational tensions more effectively, they are less likely to leave their church, ministry or business because of unresolved conflict.

- Married couples are enabled to address relational tensions before they escalate to the point of requiring extensive pastoral counseling or resulting in divorce.

- Pastors can be spared from many hours of stressful counseling and conflict resolution, which allows them to devote more time to their preaching ministry (as Moses did, see Exod. 18:20) and to nurturing their own families, which makes pastoral burnout less likely (see Strike the Shepherd).

- Churches can save over $10,000 *per year* in reduced costs and preserved member support, which more than covers the *one-time* cost of training an entire team (see Training Costs and Savings).

- Ministries and businesses that establish Peace Sower Teams can see many benefits as well, including improved job performance and career advancement for their employees, a more creative and productive work environment and higher profitability, resulting in a return of $1.50 to $6.85 for every dollar invested in this training (see Employers Reap a Double Benefit with RW Training).

COURSE AND COSTS

Foundational training in relational wisdom and peacemaking is available through the RW Academy. New online courses and practicums in coaching and conciliation are scheduled for 2022 (details here).

The cost to train a five-person Peace Sower Team with two people qualified to serve as presenters, one to serve as a coach and two to serve as both coaches and conciliators will be approximately **$4,500**. RW360 recommends that churches pay the startup costs and half of the individual training costs (**~$2,700**) while individual team members pay half of their own training costs (**~$1,800**).

More detailed information on the benefits, savings, costs and training associated with Peace Sower Teams may be found at www.rw360.org/pst.