

Bridgebuilding: Making Peace with Conflict in the Church

(Canterbury Press, 2019)

Reflection and Discussion Questions for Each Chapter

Chapter 1 – What is Conflict Doing in God’s World?

1. Before reading this chapter, what would you have said was the reason there is conflict in God’s world?
2. What has this chapter offered you that is new or surprising?
3. What difference might it make to look at conflict in the ways proposed by this chapter?

Chapter 2 – Know Thyself – and Value Others

1. What was most striking for you in this chapter?
2. How well do you think you know yourself and your strengths? And how comfortable are you with what you know about yourself?
3. What experience have you had of engaging with a personality profiling tool? In what way did you find any insight from the tool helpful?
4. How well do you think you do at managing the ‘excesses’ of your style? And what have you found that you need to do to help get the best out of others who are different to you?

Chapter 3 – Grow in Emotional Maturity

1. What was most striking for you in this chapter?
2. What patterns have you observed in how anxiety is managed within your own family of origin? In what ways can you see these patterns being passed down the generations?
3. In reflecting on the four principles offered towards the end of this chapter, which of these is most obviously a work in progress for you? How do you think you might improve in the identified area?
4. Who do you look to as a model of maturity that you aspire to? What steps are you taking to grow in your own maturity?

Chapter 4 – Be Real about Power

1. What was most striking for you in this chapter?
2. What would you identify as your own sources of power, both inherent and attained?
3. In what ways do you seek to use your power to serve the common good and to build up the body of Christ? How can you encourage others to use their power in the service of God’s kingdom?
4. Which systemic power imbalances trouble you within the Church and within wider society? How do you think they might effectively be addressed?

Chapter 5 – Use Good Theory

1. What was most striking for you in this chapter?
2. In what ways can you see either Curle’s model or Dugan’s model offering a useful framework for reflecting on a social conflict that you know about?
3. What do you notice if you apply either Curle or Dugan’s model to a church conflict that you are familiar with?
4. What might be some of the limitations of such theoretical models in understanding conflict in church life?

Chapter 6 – Shepherd the Process

1. What was most striking for you in this chapter?
2. Can you think of an example where your view of a difficult experience was changed by hearing another's perspective on what happened? What helped to you to be able to hear that person?
3. What do you understand as the difference between the content and the process of a conversation? What might help you to pay more attention to the process?
4. What examples come to mind when you think of someone helping to structure the process of a discussion to enable it to be fruitful?

Chapter 7 – Make Space for Feelings, Silence and Touch

1. What was most striking for you in this chapter?
2. How easy do you find it to express your feelings and emotions in words? What do you think might help you do better?
3. Think of a time when someone's silent presence or touch brought the reassurance or healing that you needed. What do you notice as significant, looking back?
4. How comfortable are you with silence? What has helped you to befriend silence?

Chapter 8 – Recognise the Limits

1. What was most striking for you in this chapter?
2. What has been the most intense conflict that you have faced in your life? Where would you place it on Speed Leas' scale?
3. What publicly-known conflicts do you think might fall into the category of a between-frame, identity-based conflict?
4. If you or someone you know has had a bad falling-out with another person, resulting in a parting of the ways, what has hindered a reconciliation? Could you foresee such a reconciliation ever happening in this life?

Chapter 9 – Love Your Enemy

1. What was most striking for you in this chapter?
2. Which story most spoke to you? Why did it do so?
3. Who can you identify as someone who has become an 'enemy' in your mind's eye, because of something they have done or said that hurt you?
4. What have you found helpful in overcoming enmity with another person, or group? What inspiration might you take from the stories offered here?

Chapter 10 – Build a Culture Together

1. What was most striking for you in this chapter?
2. Where do you look for inspiration in developing peacemaking habits?
3. What within the current culture of your church helps to build a culture of peace?
4. What two or three further steps would you like to see your church take to develop a stronger peacemaking culture? And, what will it take for these to be acted upon?

Chapter 11 – Observe the Peacemakers

1. What was most striking for you in this chapter?
2. Who has inspired you to be a better peacemaker in the setting where you find yourself? What have you learnt from them?
3. What has been your experience of 'prophetic listening' or 'listening for the essence'? How do you think you might develop this further?
4. In trying to work for peace in the midst of conflict, what helps to sustain and renew you?

Chapter 12 – Build Bridges to Heaven

1. What have you most appreciated in your reading of this book?
2. What elements, for you, are missing from or insufficiently covered by this book?
3. Where do you see yourself wanting to grow as a bridge-builder and in making peace with conflict in the Church?
4. How do you plan to follow up on reading this book? What action will you take?