“If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone” (Romans 12:18).

CONFLICT is one of the significant areas that a camp or conference leader must be prepared to address. It may be a legal conflict or relational conflict with or among employees, campers or donors. The ministry may be sued; the organization may have been damaged and needs to pursue a legal claim to be made whole; or an unresolved disagreement may be damaging relationships and breaking down morale. Any of these can be intense, aggressive, negative time-consuming processes and experiences.

At the same time, we are compelled to live out the multiple Bible verses that call for peace in the life of the believer, such as: “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God” (Matthew 5:9) and “If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone” (Romans 12:18).

What a challenge—especially as we recognize that the heart of the gospel is peace and reconciliation. We see this reflected by the apostle Paul in Colossians 1:20, “For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.” Paul spoke of it again in 2 Corinthians 5:18, “All this from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation.”

When advising clients, my goal is to help them embrace and discuss with them the prospect of utilizing Peacemaking Principles in conflict resolution. These principles can include such things as the following,
which are presented by Peacemaker Ministries (www.peacemaker.net):

- **The 4 G’s of Peacemaking**: 1) Glorify God, 2) Get the log out of your eye, 3) Gently restore and 4) Go and be reconciled.

- **The PAUSE Principle of Negotiating**: Prepare, Affirm relationships, Understand interests, Search for creative solutions, and Evaluate options objectively and reasonably (based on Philippians 2:3-4; Matthew 7:12).

- **The Four Promises of Forgiveness**: 1) I will not dwell on this incident. 2) I will not bring this incident up and use it against you. 3) I will not talk to others about this incident. 4) I will not allow this incident to stand between us or hinder our relationship (based on Matthew 6:12, 1 Corinthians 13:5 and Ephesians 4:32).

Camp and conference leaders should consider having the organizations they serve embrace the alternative dispute resolution process of the Institute for Christian Conciliation (part of Peacemaker Ministries). These principles have been effective in resolving conflict and restoring relationships among individuals and organizations.

Camps and conference centers can use agreements and contract provisions that waive the right to bring suit in court and commit to using an alternative dispute resolution process controlled by the Rules of Procedure for Christian Conciliation.

Doing so allows you and your camp or conference center to embrace truth about potential legal conflict and to live out the truth of, “If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.”