

Meditating and Mediating: Finding and Offering the Savior's Peace

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Late last summer I learned that I would be one of the plenary speakers for this conference. May I just say, I'll never again be bothered by receiving short—even impromptu—notice to give a talk. Knowing nine months in advance—literally enough time to bring a baby to term—about a responsibility such as this is an exercise I don't think my soul could survive again!

As I was deciding on a topic, my thoughts turned quickly to *mediation*, a subject I've studied and I currently teach. Then I quickly attached *meditation* as part of the discussion, hoping that in my desire to present this message well, I'd *have* to have some real-life experience with this soulful reflection in order to talk with you about it. Well, I haven't traveled to Tibet or even Tooele for a meditative retreat, but I have been taught a few things I hope I can share with you in a meaningful way today.

The most important thing I've learned—or relearned—is that when we yearn for understanding and inspiration, when our minds and hearts race and our souls reach out, our Heavenly Father, as our opening hymn affirms, "reaches [our] reaching" (*Hymns* [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1985], no. 129). With that in mind, I can face this awesome task; for I know that however small my contribution will be to this effort today, he will reach to fill in the rest.

Meditation and *mediation*, two words distinguished only by a T. As I began thinking about the two of them, I immediately felt there was a strong connection between them. Then my thinking and research led me to spend quite a bit of time exploring them as separate concepts and exercises. On the other side of that effort, I looked for linkage between the two, only to discover that the connection is almost as close as their spelling. Quite simply, we meditate to draw closer to our Heavenly Father; we are able to do so because of the mediation of our Redeemer between us and the Father. Then, when we have gathered the peace and inspiration from this process, we commit ourselves to follow the Savior's example. This can lead us, when we observe conflict, to offer to mediate and thus offer peace to others.

So, how do we become such a conduit for peace? How do we effectively meditate

and what skills do we need to develop in order to then meditate when given the opportunity? First, let's consider the quest for meditation that taps these divine resources.

Obviously, the turbulence and discontent of mortality does not offer peace. In recent years, the two days of this conference I've shared with many of you have come to represent to me a refuge from the distraction and distortion of the world. I leave here with a more peaceful soul. This year, we are exploring the conference theme found in Moroni 9:25. I'd like to focus for a moment on the last five words of that verse: "rest in your mind forever." I think that the verb *rest* is used to convey more than a mere "settling in" or "finding of place." It speaks of peace and acceptance of Christ's mission. Mormon writes his precious son, Moroni, a heartfelt letter in which he acknowledges the sin-laden, "past-feeling" world they live in. Yet, even against this tortured backdrop, Mormon admonishes his son to be faithful, believing, and strong. He wishes for Moroni (and for each of us as we read his words and are taught) meaningful understanding of the Savior's atoning sacrifice. This understanding allows peace to rest within us despite external turmoil. It's the type of rest mentioned in the Doctrine and Covenants 43:34—"Let the solemnities of eternity rest upon your minds"—that Mormon wishes for each of us. And, at times, we must rest and not be anxious as the Lord's timing unfolds; for in Psalm 37:7, David urges us to "rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for him."

In today's self-help literature, the soul is a popular topic. Best-sellers instruct us in how to care for it, how to discover peace and the sacred in our everyday lives. Meditation can be defined as such an exercise of the soul. But in the context of the gospel, the definition is expanded and deepened: 2 Nephi 4:15 instructs us that one of the things that delights our souls is the study of the scriptures. In addition, President Brigham Young stressed that our "first and foremost duty [is] seeking unto the Lord our God until we open the path of communication from heaven to earth—from God to our own souls" (*Discourses of Brigham Young*, sel. John A. Widtsoe [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1954], 41).

For our purposes today, then, I speak of meditation as that communication that accesses peace. It is that soul-searching, reflecting, pondering contemplation that President James E. Faust encouraged at the general Young Women's meeting this past March [1998] when he urged those beautiful young daughters of God to "hold your soul very still, and listen to the whisperings of the Holy Spirit. Follow the noble, intuitive feelings planted deep within your souls by Deity in the previous world" (*Ensign*, May 1998, 97).

Are you concerned with the comparison of your lives of perpetual motion to stillness? I am. What do I need to learn about stillness and its relationship to establishing a loving, replenishing relationship with our Father in Heaven? The scriptures hold the answers as they also urge us to practice stillness. Psalm 46:10 and Doctrine and Covenants 101:16 command us to "be still, and know that I am God." The kind of stillness that invites the Spirit to instruct us is one of quiet repose and focus.

President David O. McKay has defined meditation as "the language of the soul." He points to our weekly recommitment to our baptismal covenants as we partake of the sacrament and speak our daily private prayers as times of meditation when we feel the

"yearnings of the soul to reach out to feel the presence of God" (Conference Report, April 1946, 113, 115). Similarly, Elder Franklin D. Richards concluded that meditation includes thinking, planning, analyzing, praying and fasting (Conference Report, October 1964, 76).

I am comforted by these definitions, because, like many other things I've learned in the gospel, I had supposed that meditation was a finished state; but the yearnings President McKay and Elder Richards describe sound more like a process, an ongoing effort. Like you, I imagine, when I seek to feel the presence of God, I'm not often able to leave my responsibilities behind to climb to a mountaintop and breathe in the quiet of wooded silence or spend a day at a deserted beach on an outcropping of rock, meditating and communing with God. I know this is not yet my season for stillness and aloneness; indeed, I may never have or even require one of those in order to progress. So, in my need now, I must search for soulful peace and discover it en route; I must order my meditation "to go."

With that said, let me add that I hope you and I do have those occasional times when we have the setting and the time to shut out the world's interference and renew and refresh. In the meantime, how can we be still—at least momentarily—and gather peace? What allows you—if only for an instant—to meditate, to recharge your soul?

I have two pictures I see nearly every day on my "beaten path" that inspire such meditation in me. One is a photograph that I took some years ago on my first trip back East. It was a beautiful summer day, and as I followed the path down from Thomas Jefferson's beloved Monticello, I came around a bend and was suddenly overcome by the beauty of the scene just in front of me. Standing amid the lush greenness, dappled by summer sunlight, I was struck by beauty and a Sacred Grove kind of reverence. My soul was captivated by the scene, and I knew I needed to "be still" as the scriptures direct; I could almost hear the Lakota tribal saying admonish me: "The trail is beautiful. Be still." I wanted to capture those feelings, to carry them with me from that place and access them when my heart and mind were unfocused and in need of peace. When I remembered that I had my camera with me, I decided to take a couple of pictures. I admittedly am not an expert photographer—I'm known in our family for being spatially inept: when I point the camera at a scene, somehow I manage to get the focal point, usually a group of people, off-center while I preserve for posterity the blank wall above their heads! As a result, I had little confidence that, once developed, the pictures would communicate any part of what the actual experience had meant to me. Surprisingly and blessedly, the picture did turn out, and every time I look at it, it speaks peace and replenishment to my soul.

Another literal reminder of the source of true peace in this life is a picture of the Savior by Gary Kapp that hangs above the stairs in our home. If I lift my eyes as I race down from my bedroom towards the front door, I see this portrayal of my Redeemer, the bearer of truth and light to a darkening world. In an instant, this picture can remind me of his intercession for me with my Father. It also instructs me as to why I seek peace: not merely to achieve some "inner level of being" but that I might be a better servant, that I might offer peace as my Savior did and does.

What triggers your meditation, your process of gathering peace as you move quickly

through your day? In preparation for this time with you, I conducted a nonscientific survey and received the following answers to that question. A friend answered by describing the replenishment he feels while he is sculpting. When his hands are productively engaged in this familiar activity, his mind is left to meditate, to reflect and recommit to true principles. Another dear friend of mine who has children who range from early elementary school to mission age responded, "The closest thing I practice to meditation happens when I'm in the car alone, usually on the way to pick someone up to deliver them somewhere else. I can invoke relative quiet and must sit still in my seat. Often, I utter a prayer as I drive, and I can feel a real connection to my Heavenly Father." Because this friend has, on many occasions, brought calmness and perspective to my troubled soul, I know she finds peace in her Suburban or she wouldn't have it to offer to me.

Which brings me to the reason that we meditate to seek peace: so we can be instruments in the Lord's hands in giving peace to our sisters and brothers. Thomas a Kempis, a German author of religious texts who lived in the late fourteenth and early fifteenth century, taught that we cannot offer what we do not have; thus, we must keep peace within ourselves before we can give it to others. The first two verses of our opening hymn today ask, "Where Can I Turn for Peace?" When our hearts are aching and wounded by anger, where do we find solace and wholeness for our souls? The third verse answers that privately, lovingly, the peace comes from our "Savior and Friend."

Similarly, in John 14:27, the Savior offers peace that will soothe our troubled, fearful hearts; and two chapters later, in 16:33, he speaks of his peace in contrast to the tribulation of the world: "These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world."

The Savior knows our times, and he knows our hearts. He also understands the effect that such unrest can have upon our souls, and he offers perspective that allows us to find joy even amidst the tribulation. As we meditate, we seek inspiration; and the Holy Ghost seeks to convey the Savior's empathy and love. In our world filled with noise and motion, the Spirit will not shout to get our attention; we must allow its whisperings to get through to us. And what will the Spirit instruct us to do? To love and serve one another.

Thus, the reason the Lord urges us to draw near unto him through prayer and meditation is so we can speak and act in his name. He encourages us to strive for unity of purpose with Heavenly Father through him, to be "one in me as I am one in the Father, as the Father is one in me, that we may be one" (D&C 35:2). What we must seek to do, then, is to take the peace, the connection with the divine, the understanding that we have of Heavenly Father's love for us because of our Savior's atoning and mediating acts; and, in an unbroken line, extend that love and accompanying peace to others.

As I was meeting with President Merrill J. Bateman a couple of weeks ago, he asked how my talk was coming and made the following observation about meditation and mediation: "They are one and the same to the Lord." As I reflected upon his comment, I was reminded of Doctrine and Covenants 59:23: "But learn that he who doeth the works of righteousness shall receive his reward, even peace in this world, and eternal life in the world

to come." Our service, if offered in righteousness, with "love unfeigned" (2 Corinthians 6:6), becomes a kind of meditation in that it draws us closer to God and replenishes the peace within our souls.

Let's focus now on that type of service that offers a way to bring peaceful resolution to the inevitable conflicts in our lives and the lives of others. The Beatitudes affirm that "blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God" (Matthew 5:9). In a general conference session in 1930, Elder Hyrum G. Smith urged all members of the Church to increase their efforts toward peacemaking. "We should all be peacemakers, every one of us, first with ourselves, in our homes, and then with our neighbors. I bespeak for you, my brethren and sisters, a further degree of energy and diligence in the preparation for peace in our own homes and in our own hearts" (Conference Report, October 1930, 111).

What is mediation and what are the skills of a mediator, a peacemaker, who is seeking to follow the Savior's example? How do we acquire and hone these skills and then effectively apply them in our spheres of influence?

Mediation can be defined globally, academically, or by context. In a broad sense, it is a win-win solution, the opportunity to be creative and to promote the healing of relationships in conflict. In the world of legal education, mediation is classified as one of the alternatives to mainstream dispute resolution or, in other words, litigation. It is a process for resolving disputes outside the courtroom which uses the presence and skills of a neutral third party to create a safe environment, to help the parties identify and discuss their needs and interests, and to facilitate the creation of possible solutions that serve well all who are impacted.

In addition, mediation is the family member who brings two cousins together who have quarreled and have been avoiding one another to truly listen to each other. It is the sixth grader who sees a problem at recess and gets a warring group of fourth grade students cooperating on the playground again. And it is the elderly woman who cares enough about her neighbors to risk a few moments of discomfort to get them talking to one another about how they will get on with life after a dispute between their children.

As you have listened to these definitions, I hope you recalled a time when, although the process may not have been formally labeled "mediation," you were involved in an exercise of facilitating and healing. I would imagine that those of you who are mothers could immediately point to a recent example. When I think of my toughest mediations, I recall one that occurred before I had read any theory on mediation or received the skills training to mediate. The parties were my husband, an avid baseball fan and coach, and our oldest son, who was about seven years old at the time. Gary had always assumed that his sons—due to both genetics, environment and . . . brainwashing . . . —would love the game of baseball as much as he always had. When, after one year of T-ball, Travis announced to his dad and me that he'd really rather be part of a children's performing group, I could see we had a clash—of interests and expectations. They needed a mediator, and I happened to be the closest (and only) one available. Through a few "perspective" comments, I was able to facilitate their truly listening to and even empathizing with each other; and they took it

from there because their relationship was more important than the opinions they held in conflict. I'm happy to report that, lo these many years later, Travis continues to prefer dancing to double plays (although he's an avid supporter of his dad's and brothers' teams), and Gary has actually learned to appreciate the performing arts.

Jim Holbrook, a friend of mine who is an experienced mediator, has commented on this focus on relationships and the impact conflict can have upon them. He states, "'Healing' is resolution. When you are in conflict, the world is out of kilter, you are miles apart, and you cannot help each other reassemble the known universe. Achieving resolution helps you restore your balance, mend your relationship, get what you both need, and make you whole again."

If you've ever had your world spin out of orbit like this (and most of us have at one time or another), you can appreciate the need for healing. This description of the loss of our bearings can apply to disputes in many contexts, whether they be business, government, neighborhood, or family; it is definitely true of these closest interpersonal relationships. The scriptures admonish us to "come now, and let us reason together" (Isaiah 1:18), to avoid contention and strife; however, rather than instructing us *never* to disagree with another person (which is humanly impossible), I feel this instruction and warning is advising us as to the constructive tone and prospective focus that the resolving of these disagreements should have. In order to help others keep the process kind and forward-looking, we can ask a simple, essential question: "What would the Savior do in this instance?" The answer includes—as it always does—a personal dedication to study both the divine model through prayer and the scriptures as well as the topic through research and experience. Thus we must invoke meditation—study, prayer, and pondering—and apply effort to become a conduit for peace, to mediate.

Over the past ten years, I've had the opportunity, in both formal and an informal settings, to assist people who were in conflict. As I have observed them setting aside their pride, applying newly learned skills, and looking to a better future, I have glimpsed a tiny portion of the joy and vicarious satisfaction that the Savior must feel as he observes our progress toward peace.

As sisters and brothers in the gospel, we should work alongside one another in our homes and our wards and branches in a way that promotes mutual growth and progress. These same principles of promoting peace should also be applied beyond those circles to our neighborhoods and communities. When we encounter conflict and the potential destruction of relationships, we must be prepared to offer healing assistance through mediation.

Learning to be a good mediator involves the pursuit of both an art and a science. The art of it may involve some natural talent combined with humility that permits us to see people and their problems in an objective, constructive light. The science part of this effort requires study and practice that cultivates the following skills: impartiality, listening, understanding, questioning, reframing, raising doubts, making suggestions, directing the process, patience.

Let's discuss some of the basics about each of these skills.

Impartiality involves resisting the urge to judge, remaining balanced and objective, and extending fairness and courtesy to all parties. If one or more parties feel that you are favoring one side, they will assume that they will not be dealt with evenly and will not invest themselves in the process.

Listening, really listening, to someone's story, is one of the most exhausting and most important exercises you'll ever engage in. Demonstrate empathy and make reflective statements that show you are tracking the parties' comments.

Understanding seeks to know the personalities and backgrounds of the parties as well as the facts of the immediate conflict while showing concern for the feelings of those involved.

Questioning allows discovery by the mediator and the parties and should, therefore, be open-ended and inclusive. Seek advice from the parties on a regular basis.

Reframing removes strong, emotional, or value-laden phrases and words and paraphrases the communication in neutral, positive language. For example, if a child states the following about his older brother, "Jared hates me and treats me like a baby! Whenever his friends are around he doesn't know I'm alive!" your reframed comment could be, "You're feeling left out when Jared has his friends over to play." Working from this statement, the speaker would feel heard and his older brother could be pulled into joint problem solving about how to deal with this situation in the future.

Raising doubts invites parties to move from the positions they're stuck in to examine their underlying interests. It also allows them to move to a place where they can begin to understand the interests of the other party.

Making suggestions primes the pump and invites the parties to engage in some creative brainstorming. As they do so, they are more able to discover mutual interests and begin to collaborate on some possible solutions.

Directing the process sets a hopeful, positive tone and permits the parties to feel the security of an orderly, fair structure. It keeps the discussion focused on the problems rather than on the people and moving forward productively.

Patience is that genuine, unwavering confidence in the parties' ability to craft a fair solution. It provides a foundation that permits the parties to resolve their own conflict.

The New Testament is filled with instances of Jesus' masterfully using these skills to bring peace and instruction to his followers. In one instance, captured in the eighth chapter of John, he demonstrates his mastery of understanding, patience, raising doubts and reframing. Jesus fully understood the motivation of the scribes and Pharisees who brought the accused woman to him, and he knew the law that dictated her punishment. Drawing on

the dusty ground as they badgered him, Jesus patiently endured their questioning of him and their reciting of Mosaic law. When he at last responded to their question of whether the woman should be stoned, he did so with a masterful reframe in verse 7: "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her." After the accusers, forced to look in the dark corners of their own hearts, had dispersed, the Savior, in verse 10, gently questioned the woman, "Where are those thine accusers?" He had used these mediation skills to defuse a volatile conflict and invite learning and growth in those present at the time and in those of us reading these words so many centuries later.

Thus, as we seek to be instruments of peace, to establish a connection with our Heavenly Father through the atonement of Jesus Christ through meditation, this internal exercise must have external evidence. That is the reason for such soul searching and pondering, and it constitutes true worship. As we become peacemakers, our lives can become a form of prayer, of demonstrated devotion.

To help me remember how I can take inspiration, knowledge and skills and put them into action by extending peace to others, the T that distinguishes the word *meditate* from the word *mediate* has become symbolic to me of the bridge between these two concepts. Five words that begin with a T serve as continual reminders to me to transfer the peace I find into efforts to assist others who seek it.

1. *Thanks* for all of our blessings from God should be expressed continually and openly. As we, through our meditation, become assured of Heavenly Father's awareness of us and his desire for our well-being that prompted him to offer his only Son to atone for our sins, we are filled with gratitude and a desire to return that thanks. How can we offer thanksgiving to our Father and our Savior? By loving and serving one another. We are reminded in Mosiah 2:17 that, quite literally, when we serve our fellow beings, we serve our God. Offering peace to those who are troubled and weighed down by contention in their lives is a particular act of love and service.

We are all part of a great and eternal family, and we are charged—individually and collectively—with the opportunity and blessing of returning to our heavenly home. Last year, the six of us in our family could feel the pace of our individual lives accelerating with college, missions, callings, and work. As a result, we felt a need to have something to specifically remind us of the eternal truths of the gospel that connect us. The result, after trial, error, editing, and much discussion, was a family mission statement. As I reread it recently, I was touched by the distinct impression that although it was originally crafted for our immediate family, its application extends to our broader family, which includes all of you as our sisters and brothers. It reads, "We strive to show our unflinching love for and commitment to one another through an attitude of appreciation, honest communication, and selfless service that we may find laughter in each day of this life and be worthy in the next to return to our Heavenly Father together." I am thankful that we travel this road in one another's company.

2. *Trust* in the inspiration and instruction you receive through the Spirit. As Psalm 37:3 exhorts, "Trust in the Lord, and do good." Follow his example, and bring your

motivation and actions in line with his. Allow the Spirit to direct you in acquiring knowledge and skills that bring peace to those around you. Surrender yourself completely to the Savior's work; ask that his will be done, and mean it. Then, create an atmosphere that permits others—even those weighed down by conflict in their lives—to trust you to assist them in working through their problems and learning essential, even eternal, lessons from the process.

3. *Teachability* or humility is essential in the quest for peace. It permits a vulnerability, an open heart that invites change and growth both in ourselves and others. When Enos offered his lengthy, mighty prayer unto the Lord, he did so with complete humility. That humility caused him to turn from his guilt, to believe that his faith had made him whole, and to immediately begin to pray for the welfare of his brethren. Like Enos, we can earnestly seek, through prayer, to understand how to assist others. Frequently, when parties come to discuss their differences, they each have their own firm, predetermined plan for reaching their goals; however, as a mediator, you can assist them in coming up with a third option, a better one, for meeting the needs and interests of both sides. When we are teachable, when we help others set aside pride that blocks out apology and selfishness that shuts down learning, our minds are enlightened, and we experience growth and can foster it in others.

4. *Temple* learning keeps our sights lifted and our souls renewed. When peace eludes us, when we are burdened and discouraged and, therefore, unable to effectively serve others, the experience of worshiping in the house of the Lord can right our thinking and allow truth and light to filter through; we cannot restrain them in that sacred place. One of the important truths we learn in the temple is the eternal connection between receiving enlightenment and offering service. The sacrifice spoken of in Mark 8:35—"For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel's, the same shall save it"—teaches us the divine irony that as we lose ourselves in service, we literally find the substance of our own souls.

Such is the mutual fulfillment, I've come to realize, that is the message of Mosiah 18:8–10: "And now, as ye are desirous to come into the fold of God, and to be called his people, and are willing to bear one another's burdens, that they may be light; yea, and are willing to mourn with those that mourn; yea, and comfort those that stand in need of comfort . . ." Since I joined the Church in Texas some twenty-plus years ago, that has been my favorite passage of scripture. As I was taught the truths of the gospel by two dedicated, earnest sister missionaries, I felt a kinship with those good people who were lined up at the Waters of Mormon to be baptized by the prophet Alma. I was transported back in time to experience with them their joy and their commitment to "bear one another's burdens." I viewed this as a one-way act, a demonstration of the depth of my belief and acceptance of gospel principles. I must be "strong" and lift a "weaker" brother or sister's heavy load.

Not too many years later, I needed to revisit the meaning I had attached to these scriptures. I am an only child, and when I was young, I chose to mow lawns for extra money rather than baby-sit. As a result, my understanding of the skills and patience required to care for children was just this side of nonexistent: I knew how to change a grass catcher but not a

baby! And marriage came earlier in life for me than I had planned. Soon, as the mother of four active, inquisitive sons, I frequently felt overwhelmed. From that vantage point, the verses in Mosiah spoke to me differently. Because I was now frequently in need of perspective and lifting from others rather than being the one offering the lightening, I viewed the words of the scripture to mean that we, as brothers and sisters, take turns with the burden bearing. At times, I am in need, and you are able to lift part of my burden as we journey together; then soon, our experiences will be reversed, and I can shoulder a portion of your load.

Lately, I've decided that the service Alma is instructing these new members of the Church to render goes even beyond such reciprocity. I have been struck by the mutually beneficial experience that true service, the kind worthy to be called charity, truly is. In this baptismal covenant in which we promise to serve one another, we are committing ourselves beyond merely helping someone we see as "weak" or offering tools to fix someone else's problems. We must offer ourselves to serve with a purity born of following Christ's example. For, as author Rachel Ramen Spring states, "Fixing and helping may often be the work of the ego, and service the work of the soul." Thus, Mosiah 18:8–10 is about serving and giving and, through this very same act, receiving blessings because we are following the Lord's way. That mutual service is the process by which we can simultaneously receive and offer equilibrium and peace.

5. *Truth*, wherever it is discovered, is embraced by the gospel of Jesus Christ. As the Savior revealed to Thomas in John 14:6: "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." His role as mediator between us and our Father in Heaven is enlivened by truth. As we seek to work past the deceptions, lies, and, most treacherous of all, half-truths that the adversary continually assaults us with, and assist our brothers and sisters to do the same, we must stay focused on eternal truths. Truth is our beacon and our homing device. It offers us security and peace when things seem to shift around us. As we embrace it, we claim our heritage as daughters and sons of God.

Elder Franklin D. Richards spoke in a general conference address in 1974 about why the Lord pronounces peacemakers to be "blessed": "The blessed part of being a peacemaker is that those who are peacemakers and who live the gospel principles receive a testimony borne of the Holy Ghost. They enjoy the peace that surpasseth all understanding, relief from inner tensions, joy and happiness, contentment, growth and development" (Conference Report, October 1974, 154). Such blessings are wonderful byproducts of having our hearts and minds dedicated to mediating the conflicts of those around us.

If we seek to be instruments of peace in the Lord's hands, if we plead as David did in Psalm 19:14, "Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength, and my redeemer," he will make us fit for his service. What we currently bring is substance enough if we will be still, submit, and be pliable. He will shape our hearts and refine our minds so that we can be pure instruments of peace in his hands. Then, as we are assured in Psalm 23:3, the Lord will restore our souls and lead us in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake. May we offer our whole souls—without a single hesitation or reservation—to the building of his peaceful kingdom is my prayer, in the

name of Jesus Christ, amen.