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## Peace through reconciliation

By Elise L. Moore

Two years ago I attended a luncheon at a World Council of Churches meeting held in Nashville, Tennessee. The Council's General Secretary, Dr. Konrad Raiser, discussed "the ministry of reconciliation" as the WCC's theme for this decade. Since then the theme has been formalized into *The Decade to Overcome Violence: Churches Seeking Reconciliation and Peace*. It's turned out to be a relevant, if not controversial, topic. Dr. Raiser's talk dramatically changed my view-point. His examples of successful reconciliation were moving, one involving South Africa being the most powerful for me. Later, I attended a talk by Archbishop Desmond Tutu, who spoke of his personal experience in reconciliation.

As a result, I began to define prayer as a ministry. I saw the ministry of reconciliation mentioned in Second Corinthians 5:17-19 as an important aspect of the wider healing ministry. This might be obvious to others. But up to this time healing for me had primarily meant physical cure of sickness accomplished by spiritually mental means. Peacemaking and reconciliation, when considered as part of healing, took on a divine authority that they hadn't had for me before.

The first step in reconciliation is praying for wisdom. Wisdom is practical spirituality. It's inspiration, good ideas, creative solutions, that meet the problem at hand.

The second step in reconciliation is including everyone in prayer. It's not "my" idea versus "your" idea, my solution versus yours, my God versus your view of God. It's not private—it's universal. As I pray for my country's leaders, soldiers, and their families, I pray for other countries' leaders, soldiers, and families. Hopefully, in doing this I'm not ignoring what needs correcting, but rather recognizing God's power in every corner of the world.

As a third step, I pray that everyone be reconciled to God and restored to safety. I trust this prayer will reach each individual in moments of crisis to help him or her understand "even in a degree the divine All-power" which "destroys fear, and

plants the feet in the true path. . ." (*Science and Health*, p. 454).

The purest prayer involves a lot of yielding to God. And I'm the one to begin yielding. I can't wait for others to yield. I've got to give up those political views that keep popping into my head. They just get in the way of effective prayer. I need to quiet fear and apathy with spiritual feeling, with the thoughts from God that guide me and others to a higher outlook and a better life (see *Science and Health*, p. 7). I need not to condemn those with whom I disagree. Condemnation of people would only close my eyes to what God is seeing and doing. God requires me to lift up my eyes, my point of view, to what is spiritual.

What is this spiritual view? It begins with God. It's a conscious awareness of good. It comes as intuition or inspiration. It's feeling the power of God, which acts to strengthen our lives and protect us. It's dwelling "in the secret place of the most High" and abiding "under the shadow of the Almighty" (Ps. 91:1). The spiritual view of God shows our relation to Him to be like that of a child to a heavenly Father-Mother, and restores each one to this right relationship.

God gives us the courage to meet resistance and the wisdom to know how to resolve conflict. In Bible times, Paul and Silas's ministry of reconciliation and healing met stiff opposition. They were beaten and imprisoned. But they defied discouragement and "sang praises" to God. The result was that the prisoners' chains fell off and their cell doors opened. The Bible says this experience not only physically freed them from prison, but also mentally transformed the prison warden. He welcomed a new view of God and Christ Jesus. At the same time he reconciled with Paul and Silas, washing their wounds and feeding them. In the morning, Paul insisted that the magistrates also acknowledge some degree of reconciliation. He refused to leave the prison until the magistrates "came and besought them, and brought [Paul and Silas] out" (Acts 16:22-40). Paul knew that genuine reconciliation involved right actions, not just right words.

In my prayer for world peace, I'm desiring genuine reconciliation. I'm declaring the transforming effect and power of prayer to restore everyone's right relationship to God and to one another. Such prayer has contributed to peace between individuals and nations before. It can do it again.