



"The significant problems we face cannot be solved at the same level of thinking we were at when we created them."

—Albert Einstein

11-Oct-02

The Peace Prize

Today, the Nobel Foundation awarded its prestigious [Peace](#) Prize to former American President Jimmy Carter for his untiring efforts to promote peace and humanitarian goals throughout [the world](#) for more than three decades. He finally joins Anwar Sadat and Menachem Begin, who jointly won the prize in 1978 for the peace deal he brokered, as a Nobel laureate.

The list of past winners reads like a Who's Who of international relations and humanitarian causes. On the list are such luminaries as Theodore Roosevelt; Woodrow Wilson; Cordell Hull; Ralph Bunch; Albert Schweitzer; George Marshall; Linus Pauling; Martin Luther King, Jr.; Henry Kissinger; Mother Teresa; Lech Walesa; Desmond Tutu; Elie Wiesel; the Dalai Lama; Mikhail Gorbachev; Nelson Mandela; Yitzhak Rabin; and Kofi Annan. Carter has joined an elite group indeed.

With the prize comes a million dollars and a great deal of international prestige. A Nobel laureate is lauded for his efforts wherever he goes, and his endorsement of various causes carries far greater weight than before. Some have gone so far as to say that the Nobel Peace Prize is the world's foremost honorary distinction.

Beyond the nobility of such an award lies a question begging for an answer: Have any Peace Prize laureates ever truly achieved peace? Certainly, the world as a whole has not enjoyed peace; in fact, over the century in which the Nobel Peace Prize has been awarded, more people have died in armed conflict and human rights tragedies than in any previous century. Has the Nobel Peace Prize advanced peace?

One could go through the list of laureates, and giving them the benefit of the doubt, conclude that they sincerely worked to bring about peace or relieve suffering in a specific area of the world. For instance, Sadat and Begin made strides to relieve the tension between Egypt and Israel, a tenuous truce that still holds. Yet, Arabs and Jews are still at war. Mother Teresa devoted her life to alleviate the suffering of the poor in Calcutta, as well as other places around the globe. Yet, "the poor you have with you always" ([John 12:8](#); [Mark 14:7](#)).

Real peace, though, has been elusive throughout mankind's history. One estimate says that man has experienced only about one hundred individual years of peace since the beginning of recorded history. Peace cannot be achieved by war or by concession to an enemy. No measure ever seems to bring about anything more than a temporary respite in the constant conflict that is human existence.

Humanity has so little experience with peace that we hardly know how to define it. To some, it is merely the absence of war. Others consider it a tranquil, quiet feeling. Many would define it as harmony and concord between people. Most would think of it as all these things and more, a kind of all-encompassing feeling and state of mutual agreement and good will among members of a community, whether it be two people in a marriage or six billion on a planet.

Because we have trouble defining it, we also have trouble putting it into practice. We cannot use what we do not understand. To many of us, making peace is as difficult a task as a baby trying to fly an airplane. It does not—cannot—understand the mechanism it is trying to operate, much less the complex laws and variables that come into play. Peace is an achievement beyond mankind.

Human beings lack a missing element that would [make peace](#) possible. Human nature, one might say, is not all there! Our first parents had the chance to receive this missing dimension in the [Garden of Eden](#) by taking of the Tree of Life ([Genesis 2:16](#); [3:22](#)), a symbol of God's Spirit, [God](#) living His life in us and granting to us the knowledge, gifts, and strength to grow beyond petty and selfish interests. As long as men and women continue to reject God's invitation to a relationship with Him, peace will be an unreachable aspiration.

There is [hope](#), however. [Jesus Christ](#), the Prince of Peace ([Isaiah 9:6](#)), has promised to return to this earth as [King of Kings](#) and establish peace and prosperity for all (verse 7). It is the only way humanity will ever experience true peace.

CGG Weekly: The Peace Prize (11-Oct-02)

So I nominate Jesus Christ for the next Peace Prize. Let's give peace a real chance.

- Richard T. Ritenbaugh

From the Archives: Featured Sermon

[Be Still!](#)

by Richard T. Ritenbaugh

Richard Ritenbaugh, reflecting upon the end-time proclivity of "running to and fro" like so many ants, concludes that this life's rushed tempo is not something of God. He did not intend for us to live in such a fast-paced, stress-filled world. We need to cultivate the practice of slowing down, getting out of the "rat race" and being still, stopping our frenetic lifestyles to get in sync with God. Being still (curtailing movement and speech) is to our mental, emotional, and spiritual health as fasting is to our physical health. It helps us to get in the right attitude, to see righteous reasoning, to receive instruction, to see God at work in and for us, and to know God.

From the Archives: Featured Article

[The Beatitudes, Part 7: Blessed Are the Peacemakers](#)

by John W. Ritenbaugh

This world lauds warmakers, but God says that peacemakers are blessed. John Ritenbaugh explains the beatitude in Matthew 5:9.

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