

# An invitation

I wanted to again welcome you all to this conference! Thank you all for coming! *My hope is that this conference will stretch our minds upward! To make us reach beyond, and never remain content.* My hope is to add a little light.

Please hear my heart, I am going to do my best to share it with you. If I say something that resonates with what you know to be true, I hope that you will pick it up and put it into practice. If I say something that is offensive to you, please feel free to disregard it. I am not up here because I think I got it all figured out, but because I am doing my best to hear and respond to the voice of God to me. Nothing I am about to say is a Thus saith the Lord kind of thing, however, what I am saying is, this invitation to look at some things a little differently, is an invitation from God for you to consider.

*The things of God are of deep import,* I hope that you will take some time to ponder these things, I also hope that you'll test these things for yourself, and find out if these things are true for you.....*We must commune with God.*

In the prayer for covenant we pray *"give us a new heart"* (if we are taking that inspired prayer seriously, we are acknowledging that we need a new heart in order to be his covenant people) then, in the answer to prayer for covenant He says *"Obtain a new heart"*. I find this very similar to when traditionally hands are laid on our heads and the phrase was *receive the holy ghost*. Almost like, go and obtain a new heart. So the question is, how do we obtain a new heart? I want to suggest that one way we show our desire to obtain a new heart is by being willing to look at things that seem to contradict for the purpose of understanding more truth.

Sometimes at first glance at the truth there seems to be contradictions. Take for instance these two quotes; this one from 3d Nephi, *he that hath the spirit of contention is not of me, but is of the Devil, who is the father of contention; and he stirreth up the hearts of men to contend with anger, one with another. Behold, this is not my doctrine, to stir up the hearts of men with anger, one against another, but this is my doctrine, that such things should be done away.*

Then from Mathew- *Think not that I have come to send peace on earth. I came not to send peace, but a sword; for I have come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. And a man's foes will be they of his own household.*

Wait, what? Jesus is saying that the devil is the father of contention and yet He(Jesus) came to bring not peace, but a sword? When things seem to contradict in scriptures, many are willing to simply dismiss them, or shelve them. But when people have strong differing viewpoints sometimes it seems to give license for excommunication, basically- (your views are wrong so I am not going to talk to you anymore!!) I want to share some reasons why strong differing opinions are opportunities to understand the gospel in greater depths.

Ultimately we found this group of people because we got to a point in our life when we were hungry for the truth, and searching for a place we could worship God with others who were also hungry. As most of you already know, we joined this crowd in 2020, so we were late to the ballgame.

We were trying to get to know what we just got ourselves into, when it became quite clear to me, that there were still conflicts remaining with this people surrounding the statement of principles project, and other conflicts as well. Seeing these issues, I felt a deep conviction to do something to help pull people together. At that point I was very naïve and basically thought that some magic pixy dust would fix everything.

Those of you who know me a little bit, know that for the past two plus years, Carolyn and I, searched for information on this statement of principles project. We had no idea how far that rabbit hole went, nor did we realize that the rabbit itself is not white and fluffy at all! In other words, we are no longer as naïve as we once were. Pixy dust will do us no good. But I still believe that even with the strength of differing opinions that seem to divide us, we can work through these things and **become** a unified people. We are inviting you to join us on this journey of learning how to better understand one another's differences so that we can use the things that seem to divide us as something that instead unites us and pulls us together.

These past view years have been very interesting, we have had many indicators, or fruits showing that we as a people are very much struggling with the idea of being one. As I mentioned before, we learned of this people and received the covenant in the early summer of 2020, from that time to this day, I am here as a witness that this people do not have a unified Statement of principles. The continuation of disunity amongst this people are the fruits of what I am testifying of. Let me be clear on what I am NOT saying, I am NOT saying that we must reopen this project. I am suggesting it is a debacle that needs to be processed.

I wanted to make a joke about this, Sometimes humor on a topic can be healing. But I understand that sometimes with sensitive topics, its foolish to introduce humor too early. If any of you are familiar with the book *Who moved my cheese*, you might know what I mean. If we can not laugh yet about our mistakes from the past, maybe its because we are still stuck in those mistakes. The Question is, are we ready to process that fight in a way the brings us all together, so that we can be healed and unified moving forward? Or, are we content with being gridlocked?

There is a statement of principles, but it is not a unified statement. The first thing I realized about this wonderful people was exactly that; that is, that we are not yet unified, we are not yet one. There was a podcast released in August of 2020 "one heart first". This podcast essentially highlighted an existing conflict, suggesting we need one heart first. The idea of taking a message to the descendants of Lehi (or the lost sheep remnant of this land), is a potentially touchy topic. In this talk the idea of translating the book of Mormon into multiple different native American languages was brought up and was completely discouraged. This would not be a unified or a

unifying effort. Now 4 years later the covenant of Christ has been presented and will likely be the best way to present the book of Mormon to many of Lehi's descendants. However, how confident are any of us that we can do any such thing in a unified way if we still have unresolved issues and feelings on some very important topics? How do we imagine we could move forward and take something as important as this, in a unified way, to the descendants of Lehi if we cannot unify ourselves in looking at our recent past and fully reconcile ourselves with each other?

*Will it have to wait for a more faithful generation at a later time? Or can we rise up?* These issues yet remain, because we as a people are not, or have not been willing to face them head on. Sweeping them under the rug does not resolve them. I know that shining a light on an issue can be painful, and I am not trying to be offensive. I only bring all of this up because I have faith and hope that God is doing something among this people. I love him, and I love all of you and want to labor alongside all of you to move towards resolving these things. But how is that to be accomplished? I am not trying to criticize the efforts of this people. I am actually trying to suggest that even if it seems impossible, it is possible to resolve these things and have a deeper connection in Christ as a result of laboring through these things together. I remember very clearly realizing that I was called to a work of pulling people together, and before we can begin to put things together, we might benefit from a sober assessment of where we are and where we've been so that we can get a better idea of who we need to become, so that we can go where we want to go.

I have learned a lot and still have a lot to learn. I am open and will make myself available to hear anyone's viewpoint on these things. I, by myself, am incapable and inadequate. Nothing has helped me realize that more than putting this conference together and giving this talk. But the Lord said he is laboring alongside us, I can see that he is, now more than ever. This whole thing is a purifying process. If we allow it, He will sit as a refiner of silver and will purify us so that we can offer an acceptable sacrifice. Not a covenant to sacrifice but a covenant by sacrifice.

I know that a great many of you heard about and prayed for our baby twins when newborn. I want to thank you for that, it meant a lot and still means a lot. Perhaps not as many of you are even aware of the last time that Amulek went to the hospital. He went in on Sept 30<sup>th</sup> last year, the fifth year anniversary of the day when the statement of principles was adopted by a majority of this people. We were released from the hospital the day of the Annular eclipse 14 days later. Out of the three times Amulek has been in the hospital this time was the shortest. I believe that there are some very interesting symbols in some of these things. Ultimately the Statement of principles debacle has been the nucleus or center point of conflict for this people. I would like to suggest, that this same argument is not unique to our dispensation, but has been the same argument throughout the ages; Its basically the question of, how are we to be governed? Well the answer of how we are to resolve that unresolvable conflict is found in the sign of the annular eclipse. Annular basically means ring shaped. I believe it is the symbol of an eternal covenant. That last experience at the hospital with Amulek last year, was when the

inspiration for this conference was fully crystalized for me. I am completely fascinated at all of what has unfolded between now and then. Some have already pointed out that with the path of the two total eclipses an X forms across the united states. Possibly indicating the end, I am fairly certain it has some sort of ominous foreboding. Well, with the annular eclipse added in as an option, there is a possibility for a new beginning if God can truly have a covenant people.

The Book of Mormon prophesied of a time when the bible and Book of Mormon would **grow** together to be the means to end all disputes. It also has several examples of how this is to be done, it's quite simple to conceptualize, but attempting to put it into practice has thus far seemed fatal. The answer to prayer for covenant also lays out quite plainly how disputes can be resolved. Whenever I have asked people about this conflict, I have also asked if people were taking this dispute to the Lord. The response I have received is, NO, we haven't. So, my question is, why not? Are we waiting on the Lord? Or are we so convinced that the other guy isn't going to be humble and meek enough for the formula to work? Can we say that the Statement of Principles is the only major conflict this people has had to deal with? No, So the question is, have we learned the right thing as what to do, or how to deal with conflicts? Or have we learned the wrong things?

The prayer for covenant and the answer to prayer for covenant not only states that we have disputes it also gives guidance, instruction, and even a commandment on how to resolve those and all other disputes. Why don't we keep Gods commandments? Are our hearts so hard that we would rather be stopped in our progress? Nephi said- *Don't you remember what the Lord has said?- if you choose not to harden your hearts and ask Me in faith, believing you will receive, consistently keeping My commandments, these things will certainly be revealed to you*

I would like to mention that Mckay and Edwin did something different earlier this year. I thought that was interesting. I thought that was a pretty alright example of moving towards doing what Nephi is suggesting here. The only difference I see, is Nephi is suggesting to go directly to God to resolve a conflict, and Mckay and Edwin brought it to Denver. Though I am grateful for the step they took, If we were all to do that with our disputes then it would quickly turn into a Moses kind of situation. *Pray together in humility and together meekly present your dispute to me, and if you are contrite before me, I will tell you my part. -Jesus is pretty much volunteering to be our mediator and our therapist and our judge all at the same time!*

Instead of following those directions, what it seems that this people have largely done is sweep disputes under the rug and then claim that (miraculously) we no longer have disputes because we are choosing not to dispute. If there is a conflict in our minds, that we feel we can't talk about, it will oftentimes turn into anger, sadness, or loneliness. We as a people still have unresolved disputes. And we will always have disputes that come up. The question is how are we going to resolve those conflicts? It is important to ask ourselves not only what have we learned that is correct and true, but also what have we learned that is actually false. I am not suggesting that we should just fight things out. There is fine line here, between that and we just need to simply choose not to dispute. That seems to be turning into a correlated mantra, almost

like, just follow the prophet, or just keep sweet, or you just need to fit in. One way we could look at it is this, when no one is choosing to dispute, that is a fairly solid indicator, letting us know that we have arrived at mutual agreement. These things don't happen overnight. *The problem with councils and conferences is that we don't agree to hold disagreements long enough in order to reach a proper resolution.*

The existence of swords and spears among us is evidence that we need to learn to beat them into plowshares and pruning hooks. In the new translation it says exchange instead of beat. I find value in the use of both these words. *In days to come the mountain of the Lord's house will stand unchanging above the mountains, and tower above the hills, and all the nations will look joyfully at it. And many people will go and say: Come, let's go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob, that He may instruct in His ways and we'll walk in His paths. For instruction will come out of Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. In this way He'll govern the nations and settle matters between people. And they'll exchange their swords for plowshares and their spears for pruning tools; nation won't take up sword against nation, they'll never again experience war.*

When there is a mountain of the Lord's house unchanging in the top of the mountains, it will be because the people that went up previously (to build that house) will have already learned to exchange their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning tools. Why else would the rest of those that hear about it later, and go up, want to do that? I am suggesting it will be because they will be following the example of those who went before.

*Remember there are others who know nothing, as yet, of my work now underway.* What is the work now underway? Isn't the work God is up to today the unifying of all things in Christ? What is the main issue referenced in the prayer for covenant and the answer to prayer for covenant and even the "build a house" parable? It's having a unified house. Was the Statement of Principles perhaps intended to be something that reached far and wide, to speak out to the searching souls, that are unable to find what God is doing as yet? Like an ensign to the nations? Was it possibly intended to be a complete blueprint?

Having His ways and paths given to us, and having matters settled sounds to me like the unifying of all things in one, and his work now underway. It is a work. *The answer to prayer for covenant and the covenant are the beginning blueprint.* If all we have is the beginning of a blueprint, and if following it seem impossible, are we still expected to get started on this labor? Yes, I want to suggest that we won't get much more of that blueprint until we do. Because it's a revelatory process.

Although he is laboring alongside us and he is the one that purifies, it is still up to us to do this work. It is our responsibility to beat our swords into plowshares, it does not say and **he** did beat their swords into plowshares, that would be taking away our agency, the labor of beating **their** swords into plowshares was something **they** did. Which would also suggest it is a **unified** effort. Ultimately a **unifying** effort.

We are not a generation that has any real clue of how awful it would be, to be at war using actual swords to kill one another. In other scriptures the sword symbolizes truth. In the recent Stanley conference, Karen Strong suggested that we ought to seek for God's truth. All of us have truths, or swords that we are clinging to. Are we willing to exchange these strongly held viewpoints for a way to cultivate deeper connection with our family in Christ, and for a deeper understanding of the truth?

I am convinced that that is precisely why the Lord asked the questions in the build a house parable "What have you learned? What ought you to have learned?" I agree, they *are designed to get us to talk to one another*, ultimately to receive and understand more truth.

Not sharply though, *sharpness should be avoided*. Sharpness can be connected with anger, So.. can we start over, and exchange that criticism, resentment and defensiveness for compassion, interest and curiosity? What if we cannot have plowshares unless we bring together each of our swords which is how we would have a share of that plow? Plowshares that cultivate love.

Remember the quote from Mathew? *Think not that I have come to send peace on earth. I came not to send peace, but a sword; for I have come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. And a man's foes will be they of his own household.* Lets also look at something from the sermon on the mount -*And blessed are all the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God.*" So he sends a sword, and we, to become the children of God must learn to beat that sword or exchange our swords into plowshares. In other words, be a maker of peace. The sword is a gift. We would be rejecting that gift to simply deny that we were given a sword or conflict. And with the statement of principles, and many other issues in mind, we are definitely now facing conflicts with those of our own household, aren't we? Because the covenant itself makes us brothers and sisters, doesn't it? At very least it opens the door for us to enter.

What does it really mean to keep the covenant, or to abide it? And if we are not working towards reconciliation, and learning to resolve disputes by taking them to God, then what are we doing to keep or abide the covenant? One person explained that Abide- could mean steadfastly connected into, or I really like this one; to become **grown** into.

The parable of the 10 virgins gives a hint of how that growing into is likely to happen. The 5 foolish lacked oil. *Oil is a symbol of the holy Ghost*. Take olive oil for instance, the olives go through a process of friction, heat, and pressure. I also want to mention that it would be very difficult to get any olive oil with a single olive. *They failed to acquire the necessary spirit with which to avoid conflict envy strife tumult and contention. To **grow into** the kind of people God will welcome into his dwelling requires practice experience and effort.* Or in other words a process that literally would transform the original entity into something entirely different even receiving a new name.

This idea of growing into something new is also in Isaiah with the swords and spears. Spears pierce, leaving deep wounds, and even death. This too is something that is very difficult for

people of our generation to really understand. What came to my mind was a movie I watched sometime around 2007. It's called *End of the Spear*, it is based on actual events that happened in 1956, where five male (Christian) missionaries were speared by a group of the Waodani tribe (a people from the tropical rain forests of Eastern Equador). It is told from the perspective of Steve Saint (son of Nate Saint, one of the missionaries killed in the encounter), and Mincayani, one tribesman who participated in the attack. The two formed a lifelong bond that continued until Mincaye's death in April 2020. I looked into some of the ways this movie maybe compared to what really happened to see what I could learn about this story that literally goes from people killing people with spears, to that kind of violence ending among them. In the movie there is a moment where Steve Saint realizes that its Mincayani that was the one that killed his dad all those years back, and they have it show a very dramatic climactic moment of reconciliation; but, *"the dramatic climactic reconciliation between Steve as an adult and Mincayani did not actually happen as depicted – it was more of a slow, growing love and friendship between the real-life Steve and Mincayani"*. I share this quote because this helped me to see that the process of exchanging spears into pruning tools is more likely to be a slow process, **growing** love and friendship between enemies (or perceived enemies) is a long drawn-out work and progress.

Pruning tools are used to trim the tree of dead, or unproductive branches, helping the tree to better grow and produce fruit in abundance. Pruning tools are also used to harvest that delicious fruit as well. What if these pruning tools were only there to trim away the wayward branches that were like the unproductive ideas that we have about ourselves? Have you ever had a friend tell it to you straight and then you were mad at them for a little while but then were grateful? If you haven't had a friend do that, then you are probably that friend. Or., maybe you don't have real friends. That pruning off of a bad idea is painful, if we take it personal. That is because we often identify with our ideas, especially the handed down ways of thinking. It would be good to realize that we are not our ideas, and that our bad ideas can die, without us being threatened.

To me it seems very clear, and evident, that even after 7 years there remains to be swords and spears in the hands of fellow covenant people. I am not saying that we all need to think alike, but many of these issues are very much at our heart as a people. I am suggesting that we need take very seriously and do the work necessary to knit our hearts together to obtain the one heart we seek.

I believe that the knitting together of hearts in a way that cannot be broken is done by looking closely at our differences, valuing each other as equals becoming curious and interested and working towards resolving those differences. The most intense differences are obviously the toughest to resolve, but once resolved have the potential to knit us together in ways that could not be possible without the initial differences in the first place.

This idea of beating a sword into a plowshare would only be the beginning of a work. After swords are turned into a plowshares then it would be time to clear the weeds, plow the soil,

and plant new seeds. Why is the covenant to *cease to do evil* immediately mirrored with *to seek to continually do good*? Perhaps it is because; *Its not enough to avoid out right evil, we have to be good, being good means being separate from the world, united in charity towards one another and have united hearts*. Holy shit that's a tall order! Sounds like some delicious fruit though!

Have yall heard the parable of the vacant lot? If you haven't, look it up!

To only clear the sin away without planting good seeds full of new life would be like asking God to forgive your sin but not replacing it with the effort to grow into perfection. Do we even believe that **growing** into perfection is even possible?

I want to quote one of the most famous quotes of the restoration. But I'm going to quote the whole thing. *My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into many afflictions, knowing this, that the trying of your faith works patience; but let patience have its perfect work,*(or basically its work of perfecting you) ***that you may be perfect and entire, lacking nothing***. *If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and upbraids not, and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering, for he that wavers is like a wave of the sea, driven with the wind and tossed; for let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord. A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways.* Couple thoughts on this; usually people only quote about a quarter of this, cutting out some majorly important things. When we encounter a conflict we can count it a blessing, because we can use that in order to work towards perfection, or being more complete. In essence it's a chance to exercise our faith in the direction of becoming more like Christ, lacking nothing. When we do get stumped, we just need to remember that God is laboring with us because he wants us like him more than we do! Ask and he'll surely answer. However its important to remember that if we ask not focused on becoming perfect and instead are unsure of what we want, then we can be sure we will receive nothing.

For this body to be double minded is like this scripture.

*The hand cannot say to the foot, I have no need for you.* The hand and the foot may receive different messages, but it is the same brain that sends the signals. It is the same heart that pumps the blood to all the members of the body. Could it be that to some degree we already are of one heart, but we have the strong tendency to "THINK" that we are not? If we can realize that, then we can move forward in laying down our hostilities towards one another and see each other as equals and as one body despite our differences.

*If your heart is right and my heart is right and if I'm looking to God and God only, and you're looking to God and God only, then the trivial things of having things in common are of so little import that they matter not.* If we can acknowledge that, then that is at least one way in which we are already of one heart.

Nephi's brother Jacob is an example of someone who rose up or listened to God only, answering the call. Putting together this conference and giving this talk is for me part of listening and

answering that call. As inadequate as I feel, here I am. If we are all listening to God and obeying his voice we are laboring together.

God said he would labor with us, and is laboring with us. *For the sake of the promises to the fathers will I labor with you as a people, and not because of you, for you have not yet **become** what you must be to live together in peace. If you will hearken to my words, I will make you my people and my words will give you peace. Even a single soul who stirs up the hearts of others to anger can destroy the peace of all my people. Each of you must equally walk truly in my path, not only to profess, but to do as you profess.*

If each of us can do that then we can start to see ourselves as children of God and at the same time view each other as children of God. With God as our father we are family. If we are doing this we are not going to allow anyone to stir up our heart to anger. Even if some would spitefully use us.

*If you are not so constituted within your own heart, where there can't be any lies, if within your heart you are not at peace in charity toward those who would in the name of your own religion spitefully use you then your confidence cannot wax strong in the presence of God and all of this is connected to the Doctrine of the priesthood. - Denver*

How is that connected to the priesthood? The ordinance offered in 2017 was given to us at the same time that we were all given a conflict to deal with. What did the earlier commandment look like given to Moses, we aren't sure because it was rejected. *But it shall not be according to the first, for I will take away the Priesthood out of their midst. Therefore, my Holy Order and the ordinances thereof shall not go before them, for my presence shall not go up in their midst lest I destroy them.*

There is a prophesied time when it will come back. This is a revelation to Joseph Smith.

*Question: What is meant by the command in Isaiah: Put on your strength, O Zion — and what people had Isaiah reference to? Answer: He had reference to those whom God should call in the last days, who should hold the power of Priesthood to bring again Zion, and the redemption of Israel. And to put on her strength is to put on the authority of the Priesthood, which she, Zion, has a right to by lineage; also to return to that Power which she had lost.*

Zion cannot come by way of a strongman but there are some priesthood ordinances that need to be taken very seriously. I am persuaded that the covenant given in 2017 is this type of ordinance.

My hope is that we can take these things very seriously, and not need to repeat the mistakes of a prior dispensation. Another revelation given to Joseph Smith. *Behold if it were not for the transgressions of my people speaking concerning the church and not individuals, they might have been redeemed even now, they have not learned to be obedient to the things that I require at their hands, but are full of all manner of evil, and do not impart of their substance as become saints to the poor and afflicted among them, and are not united according to the union required*

*by the law of the Celestial kingdom and Zion cannot be built up unless it is by the principles of the law of the celestial kingdom otherwise I cannot receive her up unto myself, and my people must needs be chastened until they learn obedience if it must be by the things they suffer.*

As we know, they did end up suffering a lot, my hope is that we will not need to suffer, because *to obey is better than sacrifice and to listen than the fat of rams.*

In order to move forward we must to go back. When we kneel down for family prayer I ask my family, "who wants to say the prayer?". Almost every time I do this my 3 year old son Amulek says "ME!". He always wants to pray, and he wants to do it by himself. As adults that face all kinds of conflicts we lose the child like desire. I wasn't around from 2006-2016 when some of this information was fresh and new, and the desire for truth was felt in a innocent kind of childlike excitement and hunger. Somehow we need to return to that innocent kind of hunger for truth. Because there are things that now occupy our brain space, we may need to voluntarily revisit some things, in order to move past them. When our twins were first born we had a very traumatic experience with both boys getting meningitis, two years later Amulek (The older of the two) got meningitis again, I knew at that point that it was in part because I never was able to let go of the trauma I had experienced. This second visit seemed to break me. I felt like it was more than I was able to handle. What I learned was that I needed to go back and process that trauma to really let it go and move on. What I am suggesting is that we as a people need to go back and process some things to let them go and move forward as a people.

Consider Rafiki's lesson in Lion King, to show Simba the importance of returning to face his past, He smacks Simba on the head with his stick, Simba says owe, what did you do that for? Rafiki says it doesn't matter its in the past,(mocking Simba because this was the line of thinking he was stuck in) Then he says yeah but it still hurts, Then Rafiki says yes the past can hurt, but the way I see it, you can either run from or learn from it. So what have we been doing? More importantly, what are we going to do next?

I want to share some quotes kinda paraphrased form John and Julie Gottman's book Fight Right, it also seems to suggest the need to go back and process things to be able to move forward.

*A professor noticed something at a local restaurant -*

*The restaurant was known for having a wait staff that never wrote down the orders, the servers were able to remember the orders perfectly, even large ones, the professor noticed that his waiter had a very sharp recall of the orders that he hadn't passed onto the chef yet, but once he delivered the orders to the chef he could no longer remember the details of the order. It seemed to imply that unfinished business stuck in the waiter's mind more vividly than the orders that were already completed, Zeygarnik tested this in a lab setting,*

*In this study people were able to recall incomplete tasks with a 90% higher accuracy rate than the completed tasks.*

*There are implications that connect here with when people fight.*

*When in a fight, until resolved, as far as your body is concerned, that fight is still happening, unless you fully process something, especially emotionally, it stays in your memory, then over time that memory starts to get distorted. Memories are unstable.*

The Gottman's have a series of 5 steps to process a fight. I am not going to go into that right now, but I highly recommend their book and to study this out in more detail. Some more things they said to consider when processing a fight. *There is no God camera to say who is right and wrong, Just experience and perspectives. If you don't process these things with your partner they won't go away, they'll fester. Like a pebble in your shoe. You might need to sit down and process something, if, talking about it leads to more conflict. Fighting about the fight leads to more fighting about the fight. Even if processed years later, it will still improve the relationship and help towards resolving a fight.*

I really appreciate the Gottman's work, it has definitely benefited my marriage and relationships. The idea is basically to learn to stop fighting against each other and start fighting for each other.

When you forget a problem, it might be because it's resolved. When you are triggered easily with certain things it's usually because the issues are still not resolved. What this has to do with is brain space. What is occupying the space in our hearts and minds? *Therefore, if any of you will come to Me, or will start to come to Me, and remembers that your brother or sister holds anything against you, go your way first to your brother or sister to be reconciled with them, and then come to Me with full commitment in your heart and I'll welcome you.* This passage indicates to me that part of the reason we are told to go back to our brother or sister and first be reconciled to them is so that no part of our heart is preoccupied with the issues we hold against one another.

You can only get out of gridlock when you are both willing to go deep into expressing your dreams and fears with each other. Are we keeping our focus on that vision of becoming perfected in Christ? Jacob worded it perfect and entire. It could also be described as having Natural fruit.

What if natural fruit appearing is connected to cross pollinating?

Was Peter and Paul able to cross pollinate?

A branch can have many blossoms, each blossom forms by being connected to the true vine. The bees need to come and cross pollinate those blossoms in order for fruit to appear. Bees? Bees are pests! They sting people and are kinda annoying! Well, they are very necessary for natural fruit to appear. Time will need to pass from when truth is lovingly shared and accepted between humble blossoms for that fruit to appear and then is finally ripened. So if it makes sense that each one of those fellowships, in the time of Christ couldn't be polluted unless they were polluted directly; then it also makes sense that the way that natural fruit will appear is by cross-pollinating the bits of truth together to receive the complete DNA of the natural fruit. Of

course, being cross pollinated doesn't guarantee good fruit. That is where the pruning tools come in, I suppose. Remember too, that the flower totally gives itself over to become the fruit, it goes through a transformation, taking on itself a new life, and eventually also producing seed.

This is the work that makes us family. This idea and the exchanging swords for plowshares seem very connected to putting clay bricks together to build a house. If each of us had one brick of truth to add, would it be enough to build that house?

*It is ordained that some things are only to be given to people who are mine and cannot otherwise be given to mankind on earth. You do not yet understand the glory to be revealed unto my covenant people. God's people must know ancient truths so they can turn their hearts to the fathers but it will be to Covenant people that these things are revealed not to individuals to whom this outpouring will be given.*

The mysteries of godliness are the riches that we are in search of, the vision we can collectively use to get out of gridlock. If we are the people prophesied to welcome truth from wherever it comes from then what are we doing to prepare ourselves to do that?

*Everyone is remembered by God and when you close down Revelation you get less, humble people get more" "We determine whether we have hard hearts or open hearts, One of the ways to determine whether our hearts are open and not hard, is the degree to which we regard those who are other, not only with respect and charity but curiosity" We will never discover the riches that we are missing and are outside of this body until we discover the riches we are missing out on that are inside of this body.*

*What is God up to today? Or what exactly is the work now underway? He is up to the work and the challenge of reuniting all things in one in Christ, not by exclusion and subtraction and coercion, but by openness and by addition and by tolerance*

If the work now underway is The unifying of all things in Christ then the question is how are the sharpest of conflicts to be resolved? What I am suggesting is the two extremes of avoiding the fight and embracing conflict are both wrong. A course between the two would be to acknowledge the conflict do our best to understand the differing points and then present it to God so as to be able to use it to cultivate not only our relationship with each other, but our relationship with God! This would be a way we could take more seriously what God is up to today, in the unifying of all things in one in Christ.

Please consider deeply the things I am saying.

**Tares are ripening, what of the wheat.** The prophecy that the wicked will slay the wicked and that if you don't want to take up your sword against your neighbor you must flee to zion indicates to me that there will one day be a peaceful people. What are we going to do about our situation? Are we going to ripen into wheat? Or will we too become tares? Come and see

This Conference, is an effort and an act of repentance to consider and discuss what we have learned and what we ought to have learned for the past 7 years. We acknowledge our efforts are meager. We are humbled and grateful that the Covenant of Christ A Modern English Version of The Book of Mormon has been published for us all to read and that we will formally give our voice as a people to determine if we will accept it as God's Covenant, on Sunday morning.

I almost completely rewrote my talk using this book. The plainness in all the points I discussed was beyond what I imagined! This translation is to help us understand what we ought to learn, to help us prepare for the Lord's return. It connects with the build a house parable: the people building a house in preparation of the Lord's return.

I want to share a few thoughts on being gathered as a hen gathers her chicks. When chicks first hatch, up until about six weeks, they are gathered every night under the mother hen. This is because she is their source of heat. Without a source of heat young chicks would simply die. She is literally the source of life, for them.

*You people of the house of Israel, how often I've gathered you as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings and how often I have guided you!* So when ever Israel has been successfully gathered, they have also been guided. The mother hen communicates with her young where to find food, lets them know when danger is near and to hide, and if a chick gets lost she makes a guiding sound to lead that chick back to her.

*Again how often I've tried to gather you as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings. You people of the house of Israel who have fallen, O house of Israel who live at Jerusalem as well as you that have fallen: how often I would have gathered you as a hen gathers her chicks, but you refused!* If chicks refuse to be gathered, they might be fine, for a few hours. When the night comes if they are not warmed by the body of the mother, they will not last the night.

*You people of the house of Israel whom I've spared, how often I will gather you as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, if you repent and return to me with all your heart! But if not, O house of Israel, your dwelling places will become desolate until the time when the covenant to your fathers is kept.* All your heart? Most if not all birds form a pecking order. A pecking order is kinda a survival of the fittest thing. Well, in my observations, for the first few weeks, while the chicks are completely dependent on their mother hen to survive, there is no pecking order among them. They naturally form pecking orders later, but can you imagine them fighting underneath the mother hen? That's why she would require them to return with all their heart. Otherwise they don't have a place. Under her, there is not only safety, there is also peace.

In this song I hope you view the word freedom as being defined as free from sin. Or perfected in Christ as I mentioned before was our ultimate goal.