

## GATHERING OUR THOUGHTS

from December 5, 2021

Kent Dobson's fourth teaching in the series *Born for These Times: Opportunities and Challenges* is available to view on [C3's Facebook page](#) or on C3's YouTube channel. If you watch the Gathering on the Facebook page, you also get to enjoy Ruth and Max Bloomquist. If you watch the [teaching on YouTube](#), you'll just see the teaching. The [meditation by Teresa Colbry](#) is available in a separate video.

Kent referred to Bob Dylan's song [My Back Pages](#), and the line "I was so much older then; I'm younger than that now."

Questions to ponder:

What kind of society makes this—the way we live, our lifestyle, our values—possible?

Is there an absence of love in our culture? of nurturing care?

Is there a lot of disconnection or separation?

What's happening to family life?

What is the *effect* of mass factory education—on the human soul? on the individual?

What happens (especially to our young people) when we feel anonymous?

How have we allowed or created media that so easily fuels hatred?

What happens when our young people feel invisible?

[Robert Bly](#) passed away this past week at 94. He is one of Kent's heroes, who wrote *Iron John*, which focuses on the maturation of young men, their initiation into adulthood.

He also mentioned Richard Rohr's list of five Promises that young men should know, from [Adam's Return—The Five Promises of Male Initiation](#)

1. Life is hard.
2. You are not that important.
3. Your life is not about you.
4. You're not in control.
5. You're going to die.

Final question: What would it take for us to be more loving in the world?

[Vaclav Havel quote about hope:](#)

Kent read this quote as it was printed in Bill Plotkin's *Nature and the Human Soul*. It is reproduced here from the book *Disturbing the Peace*.

(Between 1985 and 1986, Havel conducted a series of interviews with the Czech journalist Karel Hvížd'ala, who was living in West Germany at the time. In Czech, the resulting book was a kind of confessional autobiography, called *Long-Distance Interrogation*. The English translation was published in the spring of 1990, and called *Disturbing the Peace*.)

From *Disturbing the Peace*:

. . . [T]he kind of hope I often think about (especially in situations that are particularly hopeless, such as prison) I understand above all as a state of mind, not a state of the

world. Either we have hope within us, or we don't. . . . Hope is not prognostication. It is an orientation of the spirit, an orientation of the heart. It transcends the world that is immediately experienced, and is anchored somewhere beyond its horizons. . . . I feel that its deepest roots are in the transcendental, just as the roots of human responsibility are, though of course I can't – unlike Christians, for instance – say anything about the transcendental. . . .

“Hope, in this deep and powerful sense, is not the same as joy that things are going well, or willingness to invest in enterprises that are obviously headed for early success, but rather an ability to work for something because it is good, not just because it stands a chance to succeed. The more unpromising the situation in which we demonstrate hope, the deeper that hope is. Hope is not the same thing as optimism. It is not the conviction that something will turn out well, but the certainty that something makes sense, regardless of how it turns out. In short, I think that the deepest and most important form of hope, the only one that can keep us above water and urge us to good works, and the only true source of the breathtaking dimension of the human spirit and its efforts, is something we get, as it were, from ‘elsewhere.’ It is also this hope, above all, that gives us the strength to live and continually to try new things, even in conditions that seem as hopeless as ours do, here and now.”

*Disturbing the Peace*, pp. 181-182—[Vaclav Havel](#) (playwright, dissident, Czech statesman)