

March 31

Proverbs 15:1 (NIV) A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.

A few days ago, a uniformed soldier boarded a plane. Another passenger gave up his first-class seat for the soldier. It was the passenger's way of showing thanks and honor. Also, on the plane was Drexel University Professor George Ciccariello-Maher. Last Christmas, Maher stated that the only gift he wanted was "white genocide." When he saw the passenger offer the soldier that first-class seat, Maher became angry and tweeted, "Some guy gave up his first-class seat for a uniformed soldier. People are thanking him. I'm trying not to vomit or yell about Mosul." That tweet began a volley of angry messages. The "war of words" culminated with Maher visiting a news station to defend his original tweet.

Sometimes it does not take much to stir up trouble. The professor's words were not a mistake. He planned his response, knowing that it would stir up anger. Yet, he felt that his words were justified; therefore, the resulting firestorm of words was not his fault. Each statement thereafter added fuel to the situation until it reached national television. This path has become the path most traveled. However, Jesus shows us another way – His Way. A quiet, gently answer turns away anger. It can calm a volatile situation and even subdue it. A gentle answer takes away the fuel from an angry situation and allows peace to enter. We are to choose the way of peace, the way of the gentle answer. This does not mean we say and do nothing. Instead, with the guidance of the Holy Spirit, we are to speak words that do not compromise our faith and that diffuse the anger. People in the world are led by the spirit of this world. Harsh, angry, bitter words are "natural" for them. Therefore, we should not expect gentle words. Because we are new creations, we are no longer to follow the ways of the world. We are to choose the way of the gentle answer that turns away anger. Thus, the way of peace often rests with us. That is not a burden; it is a choice, a choice we once did not have.