

Building the Bridge Together: Toward Healing and Reconciliation

Dave Wisnewski
Floy Rorie

Building the Bridge *Together*
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What is reconciliation? What is its relationship to healing?

- 18 Do not remember the former things, or consider the things of old.
- 19 I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert.
 - Isaiah 43:18-19

Difficult questions for difficult times

- Reflecting to yourself:
- *What Would Jesus Do* first to start the healing process? What should you do?
- Do you have family or friends who are diametrically opposed to your beliefs and you to theirs? What can you do to “heal” these relationships?
- “Healing” sounds fine in a Sunday School Lesson, but realistically will they listen or will you listen? What do you expect in the “listening”?

What do Paul and Timothy tell us about dealing with differences between family and friends?

- Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. Colossians 3:13
- Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave YOU. Ephesians 4:32

Is reasoning together similar to compromising? Does this make us weak? Does it weaken our beliefs?

- “Come now, let us reason together, says the Lord: though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall become like wool.” Isaiah 1:18

How to make hope a reality...

1. Build Bridges not Walls.
2. Educate yourself.
3. Don't just talk the talk, walk the walk...take action.
4. Speak to people beyond your comfort zone. Reach out to others who live a different reality.
5. Look after yourself so you remain strong physically and mentally.

...but those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint. Isaiah 40:31

What does it mean to be the church? What role does the church play in reconciliation?

- 1 As for the one who is weak in faith, welcome him, but not to quarrel over opinions.
- 2 One person believes he may eat anything, while the weak person eats only vegetables.
- 3 Let not the one who eats despise the one who abstains, and let not the one who abstains pass judgment on the one who eats, for God has welcomed him.
- 4 Who are you to pass judgment on the servant of another? It is before his own master that he stands or falls. And he will be upheld, for the Lord is able to make him stand.
- 5 One person esteems one day as better than another, while another esteems all days alike. Each one should be fully convinced in his own mind. Romans 14:1-5

Building the Bridge Together We Must...

TAKE AWAYS

- Ask Jesus to "Heal Our Land" one heart at a time.
 - Remember healing starts with me. What can I do?
- Acknowledge negative emotions when they occur - anger, frustration, blame, suspicions, etc.
 - Ask WWJD sincerely and prayerfully right then. Listen. Act.
- Acknowledge damaged relationships - family, friends, others.
 - Prayerfully ask for the courage to take the first step of reaching out.
- "Bear with each other and forgive one another..." Colossians 3:13
- "Let us reason together.." Isaiah 1:18
- "Be kind to one another, tenderhearted..." Ephesians 4:32
- Share your journey of healing/reconciliation with others who are in the same journey - trusted friends/family, church community.
- Remember "those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength..." Isaiah 40:31

“Heal Our Land” by Oscar Williams

- Oscar Williams and the Band of Life, featuring C. Ashley Brown-Lawrence, presented August 18, 2020.
- Williams is Director of Music and Fine Arts at The Potter’s Church in Dallas.
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kopj2aCcllo>

Addendum 1: "Heal Our Land" Lyrics

- If my people who are called
- By my name will humble themselves and pray
- Seek my face, turn from their wicked ways
- And I will hear from heaven and forgive their sins
- And I will heal their land
- So heal our land Lord
- Heal our land Lord
- Heal our land Lord
- Oh heal our land
- Heal our land Lord
- Heal our land
- Heal our land Lord
- Heal our land
- If my people who are called
- By my name will humble themselves and pray
- Seek my face, turn from their wicked ways
- And I will hear from heaven and forgive their sins
- And I will heal their land
- I know you can Lord
- And you will Lord
- All we ask is heal our land

Addendum 2: Three Important Things in Human Life

- When Henry James, of all people, was saying goodbye once to his young nephew, Billy, his brother William's son, he said something that the boy never forgot. And of all the labyrinthine and impenetrably subtle things that that most labyrinthine and impenetrable old romancer could have said, what he did say was this: ***"There are three things that are important in human life. The first is to be kind. The second is to be kind. The third is to be kind."***
 - Listening to Your Life, by Frederick Buechner

Addendum 3: Lincoln's 2nd Inaugural Address

- March 4, 1865
- Fellow-Countrymen:
- At this second appearing to take the oath of the Presidential office there is less occasion for an extended address than there was at the first. Then a statement somewhat in detail of a course to be pursued seemed fitting and proper. Now, at the expiration of four years, during which public declarations have been constantly called forth on every point and phase of the great contest which still absorbs the attention and engrosses the energies of the nation, little that is new could be presented. The progress of our arms, upon which all else chiefly depends, is as well known to the public as to myself, and it is, I trust, reasonably satisfactory and encouraging to all. With high hope for the future, no prediction in regard to it is ventured.
- On the occasion corresponding to this four years ago all thoughts were anxiously directed to an impending civil war. All dreaded it, all sought to avert it. While the inaugural address was being delivered from this place, devoted altogether to saving the Union without war, insurgent agents were in the city seeking to destroy it without war—seeking to dissolve the Union and divide effects by negotiation. Both parties deprecated war, but one of them would make war rather than let the nation survive, and the other would accept war rather than let it perish, and the war came.
- One-eighth of the whole population were colored slaves, not distributed generally over the Union, but localized in the southern part of it. These slaves constituted a peculiar and powerful interest. All knew that this interest was somehow the cause of the war. To strengthen, perpetuate, and extend this interest was the object for which the insurgents would rend the Union even by war, while the government claimed no right to do more than to restrict the territorial enlargement of it. Neither party expected for the war the magnitude or the duration which it has already attained. Neither anticipated that the cause of the conflict might cease with or even before the conflict itself should cease. Each looked for an easier triumph, and a result less fundamental and astounding. Both read the same Bible and pray to the same God, and each invokes His aid against the other. It may seem strange that any men should dare to ask a just God's assistance in wringing their bread from the sweat of other men's faces, but let us judge not, that we be not judged. The prayers of both could not be answered. That of neither has been answered fully. The Almighty has His own purposes. "Woe unto the world because of offenses; for it must needs be that offenses come, but woe to that man by whom the offense cometh." If we shall suppose that American slavery is one of those offenses which, in the providence of God, must needs come, but which, having continued through His appointed time, He now wills to remove, and that He gives to both North and South this terrible war as the woe due to those by whom the offense came, shall we discern therein any departure from those divine attributes which the believers in a living God always ascribe to Him? Fondly do we hope, fervently do we pray, that this mighty scourge of war may speedily pass away. Yet, if God wills that it continue until all the wealth piled by the bondsman's two hundred and fifty years of unrequited toil shall be sunk, and until every drop of blood drawn with the lash shall be paid by another drawn with the sword, as was said three thousand years ago, so still it must be said "the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether."
- With malice toward none, with charity for all, with firmness in the right as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in, to bind up the nation's wounds, to care for him who shall have borne the battle and for his widow and his orphan, to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace among ourselves and with all nations.

Addendum 4: Kennedy's 1st Inaugural Address, excerpts

- January 20, 1961
- We observe today not a victory of party but a celebration of freedom--symbolizing an end as well as a beginning--signifying renewal as well as change. For I have sworn before you and Almighty God the same solemn oath our forbears prescribed nearly a century and three-quarters ago.
- The world is very different now. For man holds in his mortal hands the power to abolish all forms of human poverty and all forms of human life. And yet the same revolutionary beliefs for which our forebears fought are still at issue around the globe--the belief that the rights of man come not from the generosity of the state but from the hand of God.
- We dare not forget today that we are the heirs of that first revolution. Let the word go forth from this time and place, to friend and foe alike, that the torch has been passed to a new generation of Americans--born in this century, tempered by war, disciplined by a hard and bitter peace, proud of our ancient heritage--and unwilling to witness or permit the slow undoing of those human rights to which this nation has always been committed, and to which we are committed today at home and around the world.
- Let every nation know, whether it wishes us well or ill, that we shall pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship, support any friend, oppose any foe to assure the survival and the success of liberty.
- This much we pledge--and more.
- ...To our sister republics south of our border, we offer a special pledge--to convert our good words into good deeds--in a new alliance for progress--to assist free men and free governments in casting off the chains of poverty. But this peaceful revolution of hope cannot become the prey of hostile powers. Let all our neighbors know that we shall join with them to oppose aggression or subversion anywhere in the Americas. And let every other power know that this Hemisphere intends to remain the master of its own house.
- ...So let us begin anew--remembering on both sides that civility is not a sign of weakness, and sincerity is always subject to proof. Let us never negotiate out of fear. But let us never fear to negotiate.
- In the long history of the world, only a few generations have been granted the role of defending freedom in its hour of maximum danger. I do not shrink from this responsibility--I welcome it. I do not believe that any of us would exchange places with any other people or any other generation. The energy, the faith, the devotion which we bring to this endeavor will light our country and all who serve it--and the glow from that fire can truly light the world.
- And so, my fellow Americans: ask not what your country can do for you--ask what you can do for your country.
- ...Finally, whether you are citizens of America or citizens of the world, ask of us here the same high standards of strength and sacrifice which we ask of you. With a good conscience our only sure reward, with history the final judge of our deeds, let us go forth to lead the land we love, asking His blessing and His help, but knowing that here on earth God's work must truly be our own.

Addendum 5: Reagan's Farewell Address

January 11,
1989

- My fellow Americans:
- This is the 34th time I'll speak to you from the Oval Office and the last. We've been together 8 years now, and soon it'll be time for me to go. But before I do, I wanted to share some thoughts, some of which I've been saving for a long time
- It's been the honor of my life to be your President. So many of you have written the past few weeks to say thanks, but I could say as much to you...One of the things about the Presidency is that you're always somewhat apart. You spend a lot of time going by too fast in a car someone else is driving, and seeing the people through tinted glass—the parents holding up a child, and the wave you saw too late and couldn't return. And so many times I wanted to stop and reach out from behind the glass, and connect. Well, maybe I can do a little of that tonight.
- People ask how I feel about leaving. And the fact is, "parting is such sweet sorrow." The sweet part is California and the ranch and freedom. The sorrow—the goodbyes, of course, and leaving this beautiful place. You know, down the hall and up the stairs from this office is the part of the White House where the President and his family live. There are a few favorite windows I have up there that I like to stand and look out of early in the morning. The view is over the grounds here to the Washington Monument, and then the Mall and the Jefferson Memorial. But on mornings when the humidity is low, you can see past the Jefferson to the river, the Potomac, and the Virginia shore. Someone said that's the view Lincoln had when he saw the smoke rising from the Battle of Bull Run. I see more prosaic things: the grass on the banks, the morning traffic as people make their way to work, now and then a sailboat on the river...I've been thinking a bit at that window. I've been reflecting on what the past 8 years have meant and mean. And the image that comes to mind like a refrain is a nautical one—a small story about a big ship, and a refugee, and a sailor. It was back in the early eighties, at the height of the boat people. And the sailor was hard at work on the carrier Midway, which was patrolling the South China Sea. The sailor, like most American servicemen, was young, smart, and fiercely observant. The crew spied on the horizon a leaky little boat. And crammed inside were refugees from Indochina hoping to get to America. The Midway sent a small launch to bring them to the ship and safety. As the refugees made their way through the choppy seas, one spied the sailor on deck, and stood up, and called out to him. He yelled, "Hello, American sailor. Hello, freedom man."...
- Well, back in 1980, when I was running for President, it was all so different. Some pundits said our programs would result in catastrophe. Our views on foreign affairs would cause war. Our plans for the economy would cause inflation to soar and bring about economic collapse. I even remember one highly respected economist saying, back in 1982, that "The engines of economic growth have shut down here, and they're likely to stay that way for years to come." Well, he and the other opinion leaders were wrong. The fact is, what they called "radical" was really "right." What they called "dangerous" was just "desperately needed."...
- ...But I never thought it was my style or the words I used that made a difference: it was the content. I wasn't a great communicator, but I communicated great things, and they didn't spring full bloom from my brow, they came from the heart of a great nation—from our experience, our wisdom, and our belief in the principles that have guided us for two centuries. They called it the Reagan revolution. Well, I'll accept that, but for me it always seemed more like the great rediscovery, a rediscovery of our values and our common sense.
- Common sense told us that when you put a big tax on something, the people will produce less of it. So, we cut the people's tax rates, and the people produced more than ever before. The economy bloomed like a plant that had been cut back and could now grow quicker and stronger. Our economic program brought about the longest peacetime expansion in our history: real family income up, the poverty rate down, entrepreneurship booming, and an explosion in research and new technology. We're exporting more than ever because American industry became more competitive and at the same time, we summoned the national will to knock down protectionist walls abroad instead of erecting them at home.
- Common sense also told us that to preserve the peace, we'd have to become strong again after years of weakness and confusion. So, we rebuilt our defenses, and this New Year we toasted the new peacefulness around the globe. Not only have the superpowers actually begun to reduce their stockpiles of nuclear weapons—and hope for even more progress is bright—but the regional conflicts that rack the globe are also beginning to cease. The Persian Gulf is no longer a war zone. The Soviets are leaving Afghanistan. The Vietnamese are preparing to pull out of Cambodia, and an American-mediated accord will soon send 50,000 Cuban troops home from Angola.
- The lesson of all this was, of course, that because we're a great nation, our challenges seem complex. It will always be this way. But as long as we remember our first principles and believe in ourselves, the future will always be ours. And something else we learned: Once you begin a great movement, there's no telling where it will end. We meant to change a nation, and instead, we changed a world....
- Ours was the first revolution in the history of mankind that truly reversed the course of government, and with three little words: "We the People." "We the People" tell the government what to do; it doesn't tell us. "We the People" are the driver; the government is the car. And we decide where it should go, and by what route, and how fast. Almost all the world's constitutions are documents in which governments tell the people what their privileges are. Our Constitution is a document in which "We the People" tell the government what it is allowed to do. "We the People" are free...
- Well, this time, so far, it's different. President Gorbachev has brought about some internal democratic reforms and begun the withdrawal from Afghanistan. He has also freed prisoners whose names I've given him every time we've met...
- Finally, there is a great tradition of warnings in Presidential farewells, and I've got one that's been on my mind for some time. But oddly enough it starts with one of the things I'm proudest of in the past 8 years: the resurgence of national pride that I called the new patriotism. This national feeling is good, but it won't count for much, and it won't last unless it's grounded in thoughtfulness and knowledge...An informed patriotism is what we want....
- And that's about all I have to say tonight, except for one thing. The past few days when I've been at that window upstairs, I've thought a bit of the "shining city upon a hill." The phrase comes from John Winthrop, who wrote it to describe the America he imagined. What he imagined was important because he was an early Pilgrim, an early freedom man. He journeyed here on what today we'd call a little wooden boat; and like the other Pilgrims, he was looking for a home that would be free...I've spoken of the shining city all my political life, but I don't know if I ever quite communicated what I saw when I said it. But in my mind it was a tall, proud city built on rocks stronger than oceans, windswept, God-blessed, and teeming with people of all kinds living in harmony and peace; a city with free ports that hummed with commerce and creativity. And if there had to be city walls, the walls had doors and the doors were open to anyone with the will and the heart to get here. That's how I saw it, and see it still...And how stands the city on this winter night? More prosperous, more secure, and happier than it was 8 years ago. But more than that: After 200 years, two centuries, she still stands strong and true on the granite ridge, and her glow has held steady no matter what storm. And she's still a beacon, still a magnet for all who must have freedom, for all the pilgrims from all the lost places who are hurtling through the darkness, toward home...
- And so, goodbye, God bless you, and God bless the United States of America.

Addendum 6: Great Is Thy Faithfulness - Chris Rice

- "Great is Thy faithfulness, " O God my Father,
 - There is no shadow of turning with Thee;
 - Thou changest not, Thy compassions, they fail not
 - As Thou hast been Thou forever wilt be.
 - "Great is Thy faithfulness!" "Great is Thy faithfulness!"
 - Morning by morning new mercies I see;
 - All I have needed Thy hand hath provided—
 - "Great is Thy faithfulness, " Lord, unto me!
 - Summer and winter, and springtime and harvest,
 - Sun, moon and stars in their courses above,
 - Join with all nature in manifold witness
 - To Thy great faithfulness, mercy and love.
- "Great is Thy faithfulness!" "Great is Thy faithfulness!"
 - Morning by morning new mercies I see;
 - All I have needed Thy hand hath provided—
 - "Great is Thy faithfulness, " Lord, unto me!
 - Pardon for sin and a peace that endureth,
 - Thine own dear presence to cheer and to guide;
 - Strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow,
 - Blessings all mine, with ten thousand beside!
 - "Great is Thy faithfulness!" "Great is Thy faithfulness!"
 - Morning by morning new mercies I see;
 - All I have needed Thy hand hath provided—
 - "Great is Thy faithfulness, " Lord, unto me!

We Just Disagree...Home Free

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7wWizXiBPoA>

- "We Just Disagree"
- (originally by Dave Mason)

- Been away, haven't seen you in a while
- How've you been, have you changed your style?
- And do you think that we've grown up differently?
- Don't seem the same, seems you've lost your feel for me

- So let's leave it alone, 'cause we can't see eye to eye
- There ain't no good guy, there ain't no bad guy
- There's only you and me and we just disagree
- Ooh-hoo-hoo, oh-oh-ho

- I'm going back to a place that's far away
- How bout you, have you got a place to stay?

- So let's leave it alone, 'cause we can't see eye to eye
- There ain't no good guy, there ain't no bad guy
- There's only you and me and we just disagree
- Ooh-hoo-hoo, oh-oh-ho

- So let's leave it alone, 'cause we can't see eye to eye
- There ain't no good guy, there ain't no bad guy
- There ain't no good guy, there ain't no bad guy
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