



BUILDING BRIDGES: RESTORING HOPE

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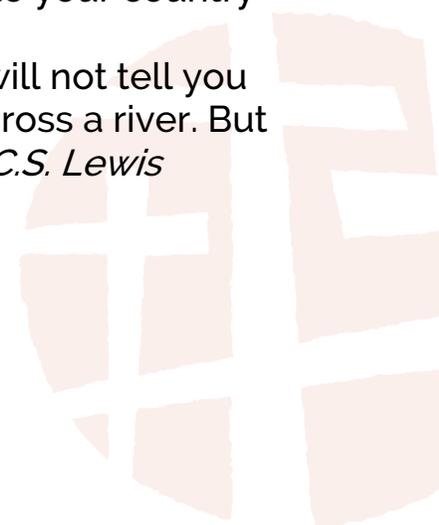
"For he himself is our peace, who has made the two one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility." Ephesians 2:14 TNIV

"His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms, according to his eternal purpose that he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord." Ephesians 3:10-13 TNIV

Part One – The Imani Bridges Story

"Oh, Aslan,' said Lucy. 'Will you tell us how to get into your country from our world?'

'I shall be telling you all the time,' said Aslan. 'But I will not tell you how long or short the way will be; only that it lies across a river. But do not fear that, for I am the great Bridge Builder.'" *C.S. Lewis*



"God's Kingdom agenda seeks the personal salvation of all persons and the social transformation of all places. This means the salvation message goes beyond the merely personal to address our whole society, its structures and its systems." Dr. Ray Bakke

Part Two: Biblical Foundation for Building Bridges

Point 1 – To Build A Bridge We Need To Know God's Will

"Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven." Matthew 6:9-11 TNIV

Point 2 – To Build Bridges We Need A Common Vision

"I in them and you in me—so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me." John 17:23 TNIV

Point 3 – To Build Bridges We Need To Be Connected

"So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ." Ephesians 4:11-13 TNIV



"From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work." Ephesian 4:16

Point 4 – To Build Bridges We Need A Wholistic Gospel

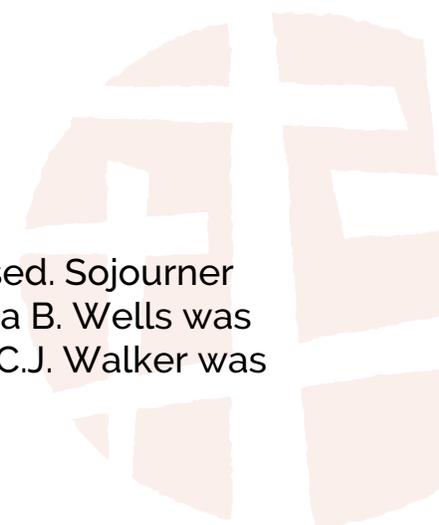
Jesus was asked by a teacher of the law, "Of all the commandments, which is the most important?" Jesus answered, "The most important one is this: 'Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.' The second is this: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no commandment greater than these." Mark 12:29-31

Point 5 – To Build Bridges We Need To See Each Other As Equals

"In Christ's family there can be no division into Jew and non-Jew, slave and free, male and female. Among us you are all equal. That is, we are all in a common relationship with Jesus Christ." Galatians 3:28 (The Message)

Conclusion

"I am where I am because of the bridges that I crossed. Sojourner Truth was a bridge. Harriet Tubman was a bridge. Ida B. Wells was a bridge. Fannie Lou Hamer was a bridge. Madame C.J. Walker was a bridge." **Oprah Winfrey**



Debate between unbeliever Celsus and the African Christian Theologian Origen

Celsius: "When most teachers go forth to teach, they cry, 'Come to me, who are clean and worthy', and they are followed by the highest caliber of people available. But your silly master cries, 'Come to me, you who are down and beaten by life', and so he accumulates around himself the rag, tag and bobtail of humanity."

Origen: "yes they are the rag, tag and bobtail of humanity. But Jesus does not leave them that way. Out of material you would have thrown away as useless, he fashions people of strength, giving them back their self-respect, enabling them to stand on their feet and look God in the eye. They were cowed, cringing, broken things. But the Son has set them free."

*"Brothers and sisters, think of what you were when you were called. Not many wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth. But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things in the world to shame the strong. God chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things – and the things that are not – to nullify the things that are, so that no one may boast before him."
1 Corinthians 1:26-29 TNIV*



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. In what ways are you a BRIDGE or in what ways is God asking you to be a BRIDGE?
2. Am I building bridges with people whose views I disagree with? Am I being curious and trying to see things from their perspective?
3. Am I building bridges? Or am I walling myself up inside a fortress filled with people who think exactly like me?
4. As a small group, read Ephesians 4:1-7 and answer the following questions.
 - a. What do you believe God's personal call is on your life?
 - b. What does it mean to live a life worthy of the calling you have received?

