

Editorial: We are called to be reconcilers in a broken world

March 29, 2023

Hold out your hands. In one, hold your redemption in and through Jesus Christ, and in the other, hold what you know of our world.

Bring your hands together, one holding the other. This is a picture of our call to be ambassadors of reconciliation in this world.

Look at your clasped hands. In the same way you can't hold your own hand without both hands touching, Jesus came into this world, not distancing himself from the sin and brokenness in it, but getting very near it to break sin and repair our brokenness.

If we follow Jesus, we are called into the same work of reconciliation.

Our call to be reconcilers

Hold your hands apart again. In the hand holding your redemption, imagine these words from Paul:

“If anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us.” (2 Corinthians 5:17-20).

If these words don't take your breath away, I wonder if you're paying attention. These words are at once thrilling and daunting—the stuff of

movies and epic novels, except this is supposed to be our lived experience now that we are reconciled to God in Christ.

If we are going to fulfill our duty as Christ's ambassadors—being his messengers of reconciliation, communicating to the world God was “not counting people's sins against them” but was restoring us to him through Jesus—then we must not shrink back from the news of this world's sin and brokenness. We must engage the many points of sin and brokenness in this world.

Examples of brokenness

In the hand holding the news of this world, give attention to some examples of the brokenness we are enduring.

On March 25, an EF4 tornado left a path of death and destruction—which can be [seen from space](#)—through several communities in the Mississippi Delta.

On March 27, a woman entered The Covenant School in Nashville and, using an assault rifle, [shot and killed](#) three children and three adults.

Also on March 27, [38 migrants died in a fire](#) inside a migrant detention center in Ciudad Juarez, Mexico. Authorities are investigating why they were not let out to escape the fire.

In yet more news on March 27, a *Texas Tribune* report revealed [new information](#) about when and how much was known of allegations that Paul Pressler sexually abused young men. Pressler was central to Southern Baptist Convention politics during the 1970s through 1990s.

In Ukraine, both sides are using for war what amounts to a hobbyist's toy—[Chinese-made drones](#) that “people mostly used ... to play around with ... for experimental purposes,” NPR reported March 28.

Many in the tech world are [sounding alarm bells](#) that artificial intelligence technology is advancing too fast with too few controls. Their greatest concern is AI could endanger humanity.

The preceding examples may seem too big and too far away for us to do anything about them. But each one is local and personal to those directly involved. They are examples for us, because we are enduring our own local and personal brokenness, and sometimes it's easier to see the way to reconciliation when the problem isn't ours.

We may not like or want to hear about the problems of this world we find ourselves in and have helped to create, but we must not shrink back from the news. In fact, we must lean into it, looking for where God is calling us to enact our ministry of reconciliation.

Engaging a broken world

We are glad to report some of the ways Christians are fulfilling their call.

Christ's followers are [bringing material and spiritual reconciliation](#) to the communities in Mississippi devastated by the tornado.

Woodmont Baptist Church rose to the occasion March 27, immediately [becoming the reunification center](#) for parents and their children in the aftermath of the shooting at The Covenant School.

Christians in Ukraine—such as those attending Baptist seminaries there—[continue to spread the gospel in word and deed](#), even in the midst of ongoing Russian missile barrages.

Though there is much more reconciling to do, these efforts at reconciliation should not be overlooked. In both what those involved are and are not doing, we may see where God is calling us—whether it be near or far, big or small, in our families, among our friends or coworkers, in our

neighborhoods, our churches or our communities.

Look again at your open hands, one holding the ministry of reconciliation and one holding the sin and brokenness of our world. Take a closer look at *your* hands. Realize reconciliation is in your hand, and brokenness is, too. It is God, who redeemed you and me and who restores all things, who brings reconciliation together with our brokenness.

Now, you and I are new creations, and we have work to do. How are we going to bring the message of God's reconciliation to the many points of sin and brokenness in this our world? Individually, we can't take it all on, but we can and are called to take on some. How has God crafted your hands to take his message of reconciliation to where he is calling you?

Imagine one more thing with me. Imagine reconciliation in our right hand and brokenness in our left, so that when we engage in the work of reconciliation together—hand-in-hand—we receive the ministry of reconciliation as much as we give it away. This is our true call, not to reconcile ourselves, but to receive Christ's reconciliation and to proclaim his reconciliation to each other.

Eric Black is the executive director, publisher and editor of the Baptist Standard. He can be reached at eric.black@baptiststandard.com. The views expressed are those solely of the author.