

The Bridge, by Allan Baker

For me, approaching the act of reconciliation is something like walking closer to the edge of a deep ravine. You see, I'm afraid of heights. Being close to the edge of a high cliff, or the window seat in the CN Tower, scares me - it is a risk - even though my head knows that everything will be OK. Approaching the act of reconciliation is also a risk because my feelings are involved; my spirit is involved.

If you've ever been to British Columbia, you may have gone to the Capilano Suspension Bridge in North Vancouver.

I have been thinking of this bridge as the Bridge of Reconciliation. The reason for that is that, through reconciliation, we are no longer separated from each other.

Of course, there are lots of reasons why I don't need to cross the Capilano Suspension Bridge. What is on the other side that isn't here? I'm perfectly OK as I am - even though my family enjoys the experience of crossing the bridge - and they seem to particularly enjoy watching the look of anxiety on my face. They seem to be full of delight when I've made it across to the far side, knowing that there's only one way back. These can also be reasons not to engage in the process of reconciliation - do I need additional connections to the community? Do I need to "grow", or be transformed in this way? Do I really have to face this fear? Can I trust the bridge?

When I face the prospect of reconciliation, it is usually accompanied by some sense of avoidance. "You won't get me out on that wobbly bridge again!"

On the Capilano Suspension Bridge there are many boards to step on - and empty spaces in between. The bridge swings back and forth, and it has seemed to me that there are some who deliberately make it move, causing people like me to feel even more fear. Crossing the bridge is a process, just as reconciliation is a process.

I've only visited Vancouver twice - thank God! Every time we've been there, the rest of the family has wanted to cross this bridge. I can't avoid it. I now know not to suggest Vancouver as a vacation spot. That's a bit like reconciliation too - we can't avoid it. Once we're confronted with the prospect of crossing the bridge of reconciliation, we have a choice to make. Will our life be richer through the experience of having crossed the bridge? Our healing is the reward - and I do feel a sense of accomplishment and wholeness having walked across that tipsy bit of plank suspended above the treetops along the Capilano River.

Imagine what could happen if we all were to face our fears and walk the bridges of reconciliation in our lives!

Just Imagine !