

Roadmap to Reconciliation 2.0: Moving Communities into Unity, Wholeness, and Justice

by Dr. Brenda Salter McNeil

Name: Durenda Johnson
Campus Location: ATS/NY City
Introduction to Racial Reconciliation
Course Number: CD7700/UR7700/S0C206/PMN205
Spring Semester & Year: 2023
Professor: Nathaniel Perez
3/09/2023

RoadMap to Reconciliation 2:0

Dr. Brenda Salter McNeil writes the book, *Roadmap to Reconciliation 2.0*: with Christian leaders in mind, seminary students, building communities, organizations, and those who want to join the journey of transformative reconciliation and take the bull by the horns. McNeil urges the church to tune into people suffering in all parts of the world, not just the United States of America, and act upon it by journeying together to make a difference in racial justice, gender disparity, social inequity, and more. She calls attention to the spiritual process one must take for reconciliation by using the solid principles model for guidance on racial and ethnic. That will happen over time and not overnight. McNeil notes that the term reconciliation differs in the eyes of many when the time to pursue it. Reconciliation is not a one-time experience. She describes reconciliation as a continuing spiritual process throughout one's life journey. In the text McNeil outlines how to be effective in racial reconciliation. She makes it known that reconciliation is a biblical concept. It goes hand in hand with forgiveness, repentance, and justice but extends beyond for the greater good to embrace deeper relationships with others. She exhibits what reconciliation looks like in the real world.

McNeil draws attention to the cultural decree, which was the command of God to human beings to replenish the earth through procreation. She highlights the same approach to reconciliation will not fit everyone globally because their struggles differ. *Roadmap To Reconciliation 2.0* points out the cold conflict versus hot conflicts. The text focuses on the ancient world babel tower versus the metaphor version of the building of the tower in this modern society. One other point McNeil makes is how the one unified language and refusal to migrate stopped the building in contrast to the day of Pentecost came, and the different languages made the people join forces. McNeil teaches about the state of preservation. She explains that the

turning point in reconciliation consists of catalytic events, realization, identification, preparation, and activation. Within the text, she discusses transactional and transformational. It also educates you on how to do justice. She explains the abbreviation CARE and what it looks like to pursue it. One must first learn to communicate, advocate, relate, and educate.

This book reveals my biblical worldview perspective. God's authoritative Word influences my life; I am abundantly clear that God is the creator of all things, all things belong to Him, and my new identity in Christ I have is because of Him. Most of all, I understand I gave up my life to pursue Christ. Also, I am trusting the transformation process by renewing my mind daily. It is an ongoing spiritual process, just like reconciliation. One thing is for sure McNeil is spot-on about the importance of taking on a new identity to form a relationship with him and others who do not look like me. *Roadmap To Reconciliation 2.0* is very clear on "He invites us to come and die. In essence, he says that something of our old identity must now die, and we must now embrace our new identity in him. This is the principal Jesus talked about 'For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it.' To be in relationship with 'the other' is to take on a new identity."¹

My spiritual expectation is that my relationship with God will grow deeper and that I will walk in his supernatural power. I believe it is essential to draw near to God and not bypass spiritual disciplines but linger in his presence a few times a week through solitude, stillness, prayer, meditation, and lament. McNeil highlights the importance of restoration on the reconciliation journey to renew oneself, recharge, and reconnect. She states, "To rest and have chances for self-care, solitude, prayer, and lament."²

¹ Brenda Salter McNeil, *Roadmap to Reconciliation 2.0: Moving Communities into Unity, Wholeness and Justice* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2020), 74.

² *Ibid.*, 114

I strongly agree with *RoadMap to Reconciliation 2.0* “To use our personal power to speak up and not keep silent when we see injustice happening in our workplace, our community, our campus, and our place of worship. This is the hard work of sticking our necks out to speak truth to power .”³ From my perspective, we cannot sit by and do nothing when we see things happening. There was a time in my life that my voice was silent, and I did nothing about it in my workplace. I did not call the union rep, nor did I have a voice or the strength to speak out against the injustice of racism. I just moved on from the situation. I was traumatized and broken by it. But today, I understand the importance of lifting my voice high like a triumphant doing justice and educating others. To break through barriers from a biblical perspective and communicate effectively. To be outraged at the injustice, brutality, and exploitation and speak out against the broken systems at hand. And stand in solidarity with my black and brown people and fighting the powers that be and willing to hold them accountable when necessary to help others who cannot help themselves.

Another point McNeil makes that I mostly agree with is that moving forward, “We have to enter into a time of prayer and discernment. It is imperative that we pause and ask God what we are uniquely called to do.”⁴ From my own experience, there were times that I prayed and acted but did not wait for the Holy Spirit to give me the answer I needed to move forward, and nothing went as planned because God did not call me to do it. So, I learn to be sure of what God calls me to do by spending time in his presence.

RoadMap to Reconciliation 2.0 impacts my theology; it allows me to see that God wants to be intimately involved and bless the lives of his diverse humanity and that one race does not have the sufficient degree to manifest his glory, so he made many. The book gives me insight

³ Ibid.,102

⁴ Ibid., 93

into the purpose of the cultural mandate, which goes beyond just being fruitful and multiplying and spreading in every part of the world. God's worldwide mission has always been for the diversity of races to create different cultures.

Furthermore, this book impacts my anticipated ministry of racial reconciliation by giving me a more comprehensive worldview. One thing for sure is it helps me to understand reconciliation clearly. And it gives me a state of awareness; and prepares me to participate in the reconciliation process. The book also teaches me how to communicate effectively using the acronym CARE in my diverse community. This book has influenced my thinking. It made me examine myself to see if I'm doing enough by being one of the voices for the black and brown people in my community and if my relationships with my neighbors are shallow.