



David Bailey: [\(00:03\)](#)

When we see sin and brokenness, it's an invitation from God to be part of the healing, be a healing agent, and to also receive healing ourselves.

Joanna Meyer: [\(00:14\)](#)

You're listening to the Faith and Work podcast where we explore what it means to serve God, neighbor and society through our daily work. Hi, and welcome to the Faith and Work podcast. I'm Joanna Meyer, director of public engagement at Denver Institute for Faith and Work, and I'm thankful to have you join me today.

Joanna Meyer: [\(00:31\)](#)

Today, we'll engage a topic that is a tense one for many members of our community, which is diversity, specifically diversity in the workplace. In the corporate sector, we see a new emphasis on diversity, which is often referred to as DEI, diversity, equity and inclusion. It's grown from being a buzzword to being an imperative in many corporate circles. In fact, McKinsey and Co. found in their latest report, Diversity Wins, that the most ethnically and gender diverse companies financially outperform their peers. It's amazing, the numbers suggest that diversity is good for business.

Joanna Meyer: [\(01:07\)](#)

And yet, many Christians struggle with elements of the discussion. Whether it's the pressure to adopt socially acceptable attitudes to fit the latest corporate imperative, or concerns about movements like Black Lives Matter or critical race theory, it's difficult to know how to navigate cultural differences in God honoring ways.

Joanna Meyer: [\(01:25\)](#)

We've heard from many business leaders that they feel pressured to take a stand on certain issues, but they may not know where to land and how to do that in a way that's kingdom minded, which is why I am so grateful for today's guest, David Bailey. David is the founder and CEO of Arrabon, which is an educational nonprofit that teaches communities, churches and organizations nationwide about becoming empathetic, reconciling communities. He's a public theologian and culture maker. He leads by example in cross-cultural engagement and in practices of reconciliation. David's a speaker and a consultant, he's a strategist, and he's also a co-author of Race, Class and the Kingdom of God, which is a study series available through the Arrabon website. He's the executive producer of the documentary, 11:00 AM Hope for America's Most Segregated Hour, and he also led the Urban Doxology project.

Joanna Meyer: [\(02:18\)](#)

Speaking personally, I find David to be incredibly savvy, deeply read, and so relationally invited. I am thrilled to have him be part of the podcast today. Well, David Bailey, welcome to the Faith and Work podcast. What a treat to have you with us.



David Bailey: ([02:35](#))

So glad to be here with you. Thank you so much for having me.

Joanna Meyer: ([02:37](#))

Before we jump into some of the heavier questions, I would love to little know more about your personal and professional background. Tell us what have you been doing all these years and what led you to found Arrabon?

David Bailey: ([02:46](#))

So I'm from Richmond, Virginia. Have been in Richmond my whole life. It's amazing that what I learned in Richmond is literally taking me around the world. I, short story is, grew up in a strong Christian family, was really involved in a lot of urban ministry, even though we lived in the suburbs. We lived in a working class suburb. So what that meant was my parents did a lot of urban, suburban partnerships. And I had relationship with people who had a lot less money than me when I was in church, and a lot of people had a lot more money than me, people who were poor, people who were really wealthy. And I didn't know, that was unusual. I didn't know that was unusual until I was in a sociology class, and people started talking about those people. And sometimes those people were poor people, sometimes those people were rich people, but I realized folks had very strong opinions about folks that they didn't know anybody, or had very limited knowledge and access to.

David Bailey: ([03:43](#))

And so long story short, a greater part of my life really starting around 14. I started to play music and that was the way I would go around and play music around town, play at different churches or weddings or different gigs. And I did that really up until about 2015. I worked as a professional musician, as a music director, as a producer. You basically become an anthropologist, learning how to make connections across people of a lot of difference. And my wife said, "Hey, David, you really know how to communicate to people and how to make connections across different folks and you're a big reader. You should start writing and teaching about this, and people could ask you how to do it."

David Bailey: ([04:35](#))

And that's how Arrabon got started. I just realized that I ended up having this rich life of relationships across racial, ethnic, socioeconomic, educational differences. And I wanted to share that with others and had a way to be able to do that. I was a part of a church plant that was committed to these same values, and so we had to put this into practice. And so literally around same time, I started writing and teaching about it, we started at this church where I had to put this into practice. And 13, almost 14 years later, here we are.



Joanna Meyer: ([05:15](#))

In the short time that I've gotten to know you, I continue to be amazed at your relational generosity, how you're able to reach across to people in such different seasons and stages of life. And also your intellectual breadth. You can connect with people from all sorts of religious or cultural traditions. And I just think that's a godly superpower that you've been given.

David Bailey: ([05:35](#))

Oh, thanks.

Joanna Meyer: ([05:35](#))

So it's fun to see it at work. I'm curious about this word Arrabon, because it's a biblical term I wasn't familiar with until I got to know you. What does it mean and what are its implications for what you do?

David Bailey: ([05:49](#))

The word Arrabon means a foretaste of things to come. The way that it's used in the New Testament is that the Holy Spirit is given to the church as a foretaste of the Kingdom of God that's to come. Well, here's the thing, the world doesn't get the Holy Spirit, but the world gets the church. And we're like a try before you buy policy. And so we should be a foretaste of the kingdom of God that's to come. And so that's the thing that we try to do to the world. And that's how, as a ministry, we try to equip people to be a foretaste of the Kingdom of God within their personal communities.

Joanna Meyer: ([06:25](#))

What do you guys actually do?

David Bailey: ([06:28](#))

So we work at three levels. We work on just basically teaching and equipping people, just having these frameworks. We work on institutional change. I think that's a particularly unique aspect of the work that we do. And so a lot of people, when they think about issues of race, they go personally, "Either I'm a racist or not a racist." Or they might even say like, "I try to keep treat everybody right personally," or you have other folks that talk about, "Hey, the system's messed up and we need to do systemic change." And what tends to happen is people argue back and forth with each other about, is this a personal problem or systemic problem?

David Bailey: ([07:14](#))

Now, let's just say it's both. It takes a long time to change people, and it also takes a long time to change policies and systems and practices from a high policy level. So what we actually focus on is that a lot of us have a lot of influence in our institutions. And so people form institutions and institutions form people. And so what we focus on is, hey, our institutions can be places of what we call being a



reconciling community. Even if our communities are diverse, a diverse community isn't necessarily a reconciling community.

David Bailey: [\(07:54\)](#)

And so we work with Christian ministries to really think about how do you'd be a reconciling community. And then sometimes people who are Christians might ask me to come into their business and to share this vision. And this goes beyond diversity, equity and inclusion. I think it's a much richer, deeper approach to focus on being a reconciling community. So we actually help with these institutions along that lines. And then the third way is that we just also support leaders, sometimes leaders of color, sometimes just Christian leaders that are on the front lines, trying to do this work of reconciliation.

David Bailey: [\(08:38\)](#)

One tone that you see underneath what we do is that we see the practice of reconciliation as spiritual formation, that it's not just only about Joanna you and I working on a conflict, or even us fixing the problem of race or class or whatever problem we fix. It's actually about our transformation that we experience in the process of whatever God's called us to. It's not just about the outcomes, it's about the process. And so that's our approach that we do through everything that we do as a ministry.

Joanna Meyer: [\(09:11\)](#)

So cool. I have a ton of questions for you, but I want to go back to this idea you mentioned about influencing at an institutional level, because we talk about that at Denver Institute. We've been inspired by an author named Hugh Hecló, who's done some writing on thinking institutionally. And I think as Christians we don't engage society or culture at that level very often. Like you said, we either think broad and systemically or we think personally. Tell us more about what is an institution and what do you think it looks like at that level to model godly principles of reconciliation?

David Bailey: [\(09:47\)](#)

I think the first institution that we're all a part of is the institution of the family. We have communities like a family of origin, ways that we deal with conflict. Very few of us, some of us might have a bias towards, maybe your family taught you that when conflict happens, you try to win and you go on the attack. Your other family might deal with, "Hey, let's retreat and maybe not deal with it, or let's try to keep the peace." But as Christians we're called to actually make peace. And this is something that's a really fascinating word because that's the only word in scriptures like peacemaking, "Blessed are the peacemakers." And that's being aside being called the children of God.

David Bailey: [\(10:33\)](#)

And so this is really interesting that in the Christian family, in God's family, part of our characteristics, the way that we behave is as a peacemaker. And so both in our personal families and our work and our job and our communities, our schools, our churches, these are all various institutions that we can start off by



just saying, "If it's Christian in front of it, if it's a Christian church or a Christian workplace or a Christian ministry, or a Christian family peacemaking should be a feature of who we are, because that's who we are within our broader family of God."

David Bailey: ([11:14](#))

And what's a really unfortunate situation is that's not a common practice. The practice of reconciliation and peacemaking is not a common practice in many of our Christian communities and institutions. So then when you add issues of race, like this issue that was 400 years in the making, we've been actually dealing with racial issues before we even were a country. And so we're only decades away [crosstalk 00:11:36]. Yeah. We're only decades away from saying, "Oh, maybe we shouldn't do that. Maybe this is not right."

David Bailey: ([11:43](#))

And so if you don't have basic practice of peacemaking and reconciliation, and then you add something complex as race on top of it, and you deal with something as sensitive as class and culture and personhood, it just makes it hard to do this kind of work. And so a lot of times in our work, we're trying to lay the basic foundation of, "Hey, as a Christian, you're supposed to be a peacemaker. Doesn't matter what your politics is, doesn't matter what your ideology is. If the Bible's on the top of your politics, your ideology, your economic principles, or your political principles, then peacemaking should be part of that journey if being a Christian really means something."

Joanna Meyer: ([12:26](#))

Gosh, that's so fascinating because as I think about the way that I conduct myself in public life, if I was going to have a short list of values that I would want to demonstrate through my life, I don't think I would have peacemaking on the list because I haven't been intentional about including that. And so I would have to sit, and that's why I'm glad I'm going to get to hear more from you at business for the common good. But I need to sit with that a little while of what does it look like for me to intentionally be a peacemaker as I go about my public life?

Joanna Meyer: ([12:53](#))

I wanted to ask a little bit more. You had touched earlier on the difference between diversity, equity and inclusion and reconciliation. And in the context for my question is that I had a conversation with a friend this week that works in the construction industry and she's on the human resources side. And she said, "I'm trying to convince all of these construction companies around our state that they need to be passionate about issues of diversity, equity and inclusion, but it's such a huge shift for them to even include that in the way they do business."



Joanna Meyer: ([13:23](#))

But you're arguing for something different and that's the idea of reconciliation. I know business leaders are not surprised by this emphasis on DEI because it's trendy and emphasized, but you're calling for something different. And what do you think the difference is between DEI and reconciliation?

David Bailey: ([13:41](#))

I think the way I would probably state it would be I think as a Christian, I'm trying to call something in that's even richer than even DEI, but it includes DEI. So if we just go into the biblical narrative, diversity, equity and inclusion is in the garden. It's in Genesis one and two, where the world was beautiful, it was diverse, and God said it was good. And even the climax of creation, you see the unity and diversity of male and female, and that's reflecting the image of God. It's not that men reflect the image of God. It's not that women reflect the image of God. It's the unity and diversity of that, that reflects the image of God.

David Bailey: ([14:27](#))

So diversity, there just wasn't one kind of tree and one type of fish and one type of bird. There's all kinds of diversity in all of creation. There's a lot of diversity in humanity. Equity, the only hierarchy was humans, of course God, but as far as creation, it was humans and animals and plants and things of that nature. But even in that, that was an interdependent relationship. It wasn't just like we're just dominating and colonizing the earth. And then the third way of seeing this equity, inclusion, it was all of God's earth and creation.

David Bailey: ([15:17](#))

Now, then what happens in Genesis three, the world gets broken. And so then there's a need for reconciliation. And you see the story from Genesis three all the way to Revelation, 21 says, "I see a new heaven and a new earth," where God's reconciling all things together and we're not just going back to the garden, but we're taking what happened in the garden and partnering with God and somehow making a city of God that's going to be this new heaven and new earth coming together, where there will be no need for any crying or tears or mourning for other old order of things that passed away, and behold, God's making all things new.

David Bailey: ([15:54](#))

And so this is the work that we're a part of as Christians is in the reconciling of all things. This is a huge narrative throughout of all scriptures. And so I think in secular spaces, there's something about the way that God created us and the DNA of humanity that has as a longing that man, something is not right. We need to make it whole. We need to be whole. And that's something that's happening. And so you find in secular spaces, yeah, it's trendy that they're trying to have flourishing and diversity, unity and diversity. They're trying to have equity, they're trying to have inclusion of honoring all of humanity, but I think we as a church, we know what it is. We know the narrative. We know what it used to be. We know where



we're going. And I'm hoping as Christian business leaders and as Christians in institutions, that we're the ones leading the way in this conversation, versus having people who aren't following Jesus leading the way in these conversations.

Joanna Meyer: ([16:51](#))

Just as you say that, David, this is one of those conversations where I'm getting schooled just by getting to talk to you and by listening to you. I use that phrase, "God is reconciling all things to himself," that's one of those phrases that we use a lot in the Faith and Work movement, but I don't know if I've really thought about living as a reconciler over relational brokenness and differences between culture or class. I've never looked at that as one of those primary themes of scripture. And you're so right. At Genesis three, you see the brokenness and you know that God has put in motion a plan where reconciliation and restoration will be the marching orders for the people of God from that moment on. And you realize, "Oh man, I need to look more deeply at this." Wow.

Joanna Meyer: ([17:39](#))

Before I hit record, you mentioned that you think business leaders are uniquely positioned to have powerful influences, reconcilers in their workplaces. Tell me more about what you meant by that.

David Bailey: ([17:52](#))

Yeah. If there's a philanthropist out here or if somebody were to ask me, "Hey, David, what's your opinion about how do we address these particular issues," I would say that I would spend 40% of philanthropy towards artists, articulating, commissioning artists, whether they're writers, poets, musicians, filmmakers, painting a picture of what we want to see in the world, like the kind of peacemaking, the kind of flourishing of humanity, of every socio-economic background, every racial, ethnic group to tell a story of the foretaste of what we want to see in the kingdom of God that's going to come on earth as it is in heaven.

David Bailey: ([18:43](#))

And I'm not saying that we need to always say this in very overtly Christian propaganda kind of ways. I think things like Les Mis is a very redemptive story, and all these different ways I think we could tell... So I would get 40% of my philanthropy towards that. The other 40% I would do is I would give it to business folks to commission businesses that could actually think through, "Hey, things are broken and how can we engage in this way?" Now, you might say, "Why business?" Well, when you think about it with race, as you understand race, race was created, not for interpersonal reasons. Europeans didn't care about... it wasn't like they just woke up saying, "Hey, I hate Africans." A lot of times people say that race was America's original sin. It wasn't race that was the original sin, it was greed that was the original sin. It was this kind of economic exploitation that was happening, and then race became the means to justify what was going on.



David Bailey: ([19:57](#))

And what's really unfortunate is that it was a lot of Christian theology that was used to justify the sin of greed, propagated through race. I know I'm making a lot of claims, but I think if you just look at the history books, so much of what was happening was done in the name of Jesus. It wasn't in the name of Allah, it wasn't in the name of the Jewish Yahweh. It was done in the name of Jesus. And a lot of times people talk about identity theft as if it's a new thing in North America in 2021. Identity theft was happening when we were putting crosses on land that was already occupied by people, and doing this in the name of Jesus and the name of commerce. And these things got so intertwined that... You just read the history, it just is what it is. It just is what it is.

David Bailey: ([20:57](#))

And so I think we actually have a unique challenge as Christians to confess the areas where our Christian brothers and sisters that come before us hijacked Jesus name and have done stuff that's wrong in the name of money and the name of God, the name of Jesus.

David Bailey: ([21:15](#))

Now I know, I hear people that say, "Well, what about the abolitionists and what about all the people who, because of their Christian faith, they decided to try to buy slavery and did the underground railroad and all that stuff?" And I'm like, "Yes, that's true." I think the best way for me to understand that is the story of the wheat and the tears. You got folks that have engaged and Christians who have sewed seeds of the kingdom, but you also had the enemy sew weeds to choke out what the kingdom is trying to do, and it all will be sorted out in the harvest time.

David Bailey: ([21:58](#))

But right now, there's some bad things sewn in, there's some good things that are sewn in. And so I think a Christian business person could actually see that so much of race has really been around economics. And even if you want to watch on slavery and just say, "Hey, slavery was 150 years ago," we could just talk about how race and economics has impacted stuff post slavery. I think actually a lot of problems that we're dealing with today doesn't have to do with slavery, it has to do with the way cities were planned from the 1930s to the 1950s. And it wasn't even on a corrective course until the 1970s.

David Bailey: ([22:42](#))

And so these are all very loaded things. If people want to really understand that, I say read *The Color of Law*. That would be a really great book to try to understand some of these challenges. But I think that Christian business folks can actually really get imagination and realize, "Hey, we could actually do market based solutions and job creation and access to give people the ability to even be able to climb up and do a ton of stuff economically and professionally in really significant ways." I think like Howard Schultz at Starbucks, he's been trying to do that for years before 2020. He's been trying to do that for years and a lot of that happened because of his relationship with Magic Johnson and investing in businesses in the





hoods, and Starbucks in the hoods and he saw that it was profitable. And so ever since then, he's been trying to do a lot of work for at least over a decade.

David Bailey: ([23:43](#))

And so I think we Christian leaders can really do something. I know that was a really dense answer, but it's a very nuanced, complex thing.

Joanna Meyer: ([23:55](#))

I count on you for the dense answers, David. Tell me the name of the book that you referenced earlier.

David Bailey: ([24:02](#))

The Color of Law. I think that's the best way to really try to understand how race and economics impact one another. I also would add Our Kids by Robert Putnam. He talks about some of the... I think Robert Putnam does a great job at speaking about the economic side of things and how it's hard to get... In the 1950s, if you were in a lower class no matter what your race was, there was a way to have upper mobility. Now because of globalization, that's actually not as accessible today, and the richer and the poorer are widening in a very significant way. He does a great job of talking about it generally, but he also makes the footnote that this is exacerbated when you deal with issues of class.

Joanna Meyer: ([25:08](#))

I will link to those in our show notes today. A simple documentary that was on PBS Frontline really helped me a lot. It's called Against All Odds, the fight for a black middle class. I remember watching that and we'll link to that in the show notes as well and thinking, "Wow, there's some fundamental little history that has happened in my lifetime that have affected class, race, economics." And I just was completely unaware of that. And so over the holidays, people can spend a couple of hours watching that and just continuing to learn.

Joanna Meyer: ([25:41](#))

And for those of you that are in the Denver Metro area, the Interstate 70 redevelopment project that is nearing completion is restoring our city, like what David referred to. Often, the way that our cities have been built have perpetuated differences in race. And so many of you guys know who are listening, that when they decided to bury Interstate 70 and spend billions of dollars on that project, it actually reconnected some neighborhoods that had been historically cut off from the city and city services because of the construction of the interstate. So it's really fun to see Globeville and Swansea-Elyria being connected to the city again.

David Bailey: ([26:19](#))

That's good.



Joanna Meyer: ([26:19](#))

Yeah. It's a nice change to see. Okay. So here's a question I had [crosstalk 00:26:23]. Oh, go ahead, David.

David Bailey: ([26:23](#))

I was just going to say that one of the greatest ways to build wealth of America is home ownership and you got to really think about this like the Huxtables, the Cosby Show. They could not buy a brown stone in New York next to white people really until the eighties, even if they were doctor and lawyers because of red lighting and it was illegal in '68 but it wasn't enforced until about the mid seventies. So this kind of rise of the black middle class, it's about 40 years old, and in a legally uninhibited way. And the thing that was really challenging that the Color of Law would really point this out, is that from the forties, fifties, sixties, seventies, you deal with a lot of eminent domain. And so our highways and all that stuff was oftentimes built through black middle class neighborhoods. And so this isn't just enrichment or in the South. This is like literally all throughout the country.

Joanna Meyer: ([27:32](#))

Denver, Colorado.

David Bailey: ([27:33](#))

Denver, Colorado. Yeah. And I think some of the other stuff too, that's just... These are just facts of just history. In Dr. King's speech, Two Americas, he points out that when the government hands out money to black people, we call it welfare, and then when it gives it out to white people, it's called subsidies. And so it's still the government giving handouts. And then even more in recent times, it's bailouts. Folks make poor decisions economically in their business and we do corporate bailouts. And so that's just corporate welfare. It's still the same thing, it's the government giving out money.

David Bailey: ([28:24](#))

And so what ends up happening is the West was developed by Homestead Land Acts. And so they said, "Hey, let's give a program and show you how to develop land, and let's give it to white people at a pretty discounted rate to develop." And it was clearly white people at the time that was able to develop much of the West. And this leads towards the accumulation of wealth. And of course, there's a lot of poor white people. I'm not saying there aren't poor white people, but the reality of it is that this is how economics and race has played out in America over centuries

David Bailey: ([29:13](#))

And again, none of us who are born today are to blame for it. We aren't the ones that are to blame for the situation, but we can be responsible and try to ask the Lord, "Hey, what kind of creative way can we imagine to bring healing into these situations and to do some innovation?" And I just think this is right for innovation. And unfortunately, you got people who don't follow Jesus are the ones that are trying to find answers. And I think I want some Jesus people in there, some really smart, insightful, creative



entrepreneurs, folks that... I'm just praying to folks unlock and say, "Hey, I want to try to tackle this for the glory of God."

Jeff Haanen: ([30:02](#))

Hi, I'm Jeff Haanen, founder of Denver Institute for Faith and Work, and I would like to invite you to become a part of our new monthly partner community, whether it's a monthly commitment of \$25, \$50 or any amount, your generosity will support Denver Institute's ongoing efforts to help men and women love God, their neighbors and society of through their daily work, including this podcast. To say thank you as a monthly partner, you will receive a welcome box. You'll have exclusive access to private digital content, personalized vocational coaching and discounts for Denver Institute content and experiences. To become a monthly partners, simply visit [denverinstitute.org/give](http://denverinstitute.org/give) or see the show notes in today's episode. Thank you in advance for your generosity.

Joanna Meyer: ([30:48](#))

Conversations about reconciliation. It's very easy to stay at a conceptual level, but the reality is I think about someone that's either an organizational leader or a business leader. They actually have to step in into the unique dynamics of their organization or the unique pressures of their role as a CEO that has public facing responsibilities on some very contentious issues. I'm wondering what insight you would have for someone that just feels pressure as a leader, whether it's tensions internally regarding differences in their own organizations, or public facing pressure to take a stand on some hot social issues that they may not feel prepared to address.

Joanna Meyer: ([31:33](#))

As a Christian, how can they manage themselves and the anxiety they feel in that process, and then what does that mean in their actions towards others?

David Bailey: ([31:43](#))

That's a great question. I'm a leader, I'm a Christian, I run an organization, and I'll tell you some of the things that I try to do. And I actually have a public face ministry. So one of the things I really try to do is that I try to meet my therapist once a month. And I meet with a guy that's like a spiritual director, a guy I've been working with for 22 years, twice a month. I try to have some rhythms with friends where they're not impressed with David Bailey. They can appreciate what God's doing, but they're not impressed. And my wife is not impressed with David Bailey. She supports it, she appreciates it all, but she's just like, "Bro, you're not on stage here."

David Bailey: ([32:37](#))

And so I try to have a rhythm. In my church, I'm a guy that just serves in my church. I'm not a person that's speaking in front of 1,000 people. I'm just a guy that's serving in my church and try to be amongst my neighbors. I say all that to say that for me, it's really easy for things to look great at a conference. It's



really hard to have something of substance at home, in my place of work, in my place of worship, in my home, in my community circle. And so for me, I'm like, "Hey, it needs to work at that basic level." And I try not to be a Clark Kent kind of Christian where it's like, when I go out of town, I'm Superman and then when I'm here locally, I'm a different person.

David Bailey: ([33:35](#))

I try to practice these things locally and in my home, in my community, in my place of work, in all these different areas and really try to have some integrity within that space. I'm a human being and that's why I meet with a therapist, and that's why I meet with a spiritual director, and that's why I try to have friends that can keep it honest.

David Bailey: ([33:59](#))

And so I think at that level, I hope that people have that type of practice in their life. I remember hearing Ruth Amy Barden says, "Jesus said, 'What profits a man to gain the whole world, but to lose their soul?'" And she said that most Christian leaders, they don't tend to their soul, so they wouldn't know if they lost it or not. And so man, when I heard that, I was like, "Oh man, take me to the altar. I need to work on this."

David Bailey: ([34:33](#))

And so I would start there. And then I think I also would say that race and class is our social context in America. If we were in India, it's a different social context. If we were in Nigeria, it's a different social context. I think it's easy to see what's "messed up" about those folks over there, but we are messed up here too. And what's really unfortunate about the way we talk about American history is we tell a better story about American history than the Old Testament tells the story of Israel. And so we should at least be as sinful as Israel, you know what I mean?

Joanna Meyer: ([35:13](#))

Okay, our listeners can't see it, but Dave and I are in video and my jaw just dropped. I'm like, "Never thought about that," but that's true. That's true.

David Bailey: ([35:20](#))

Right. And as Christians it's okay for us to be sinful. Why? Because Jesus can bring us towards healing and repentance and restoration and all of those kind of things, and confession. I don't have any problems with saying that America's messed up, but also I'm saying this is my country, this is where I am. It's just as messed up as David Bailey's messed up, but the grace of God can transform and change us.

David Bailey: ([35:48](#))

And so I would encourage a Christian leader to both have this personal practice because you have this personal practice, and then you start to look and just read and just try to understand, and it interrogates



your own biases and read people from both sides and read the best versions of people from both sides. And then say, "Lord, how can I be faithful in this particular context and the things that you call to steward?"

Joanna Meyer: ([36:19](#))

So as I interact with friends and family members on some of these tough issues regarding reconciliation, I think of two phrases that can stop the conversation cold and seem to keep it from being productive. And the two phrases are Black Lives Matter, and critical race theory. I find that it just creates anxiety, people start backing away. It shuts down the conversation, almost as if... Yeah, they keep productive conversation from continuing. And I wonder if you would weigh in for us as a Christian, how should we look at those two movements? One's a social movement, one's an intellectual movement, but how do we make sense of those, and how can we move beyond them as barriers to constructive conversations about race?

David Bailey: ([37:10](#))

So we live in a day and time where the right and the left try to cancel one another. And so what happens is if you say X, then that means you're a white supremacist, or you're a white supremacist sympathizer. If you say Y, then you're a Marxist. And even it's almost like we do like on your computer, you can hit, I have app, you can hit command F and you can just search for words. And if that word social justice is there, then that means you're a Marxist or what you really mean is Marxism. And if you have any kind of compassion towards America and you're any kind of patriotic, then that means that you stand for white supremacy and misogyny.

David Bailey: ([38:10](#))

It's just the scripts that can happen because you say these words. And these are unreasonable conversations, just unreasonable conversations. And the reason why it's in this way is because it's not about reason. It's really about fear. There's these scripts that partisan political folks are giving human beings to stoke our fear that says, "Basically when I hear this trigger word, that I should be scared."

Joanna Meyer: ([38:42](#))

Yes, yes.

David Bailey: ([38:43](#))

"And I need to take my rational brain off and I should be scared." And it's just really unfortunate because God hasn't given us a spirit of fear, but the spirit of law love and a sound mind. I feel I've missing one other word. There's another word.

Joanna Meyer: ([38:59](#))

Self-discipline.



David Bailey: ([39:01](#))

Yeah. Love, discipline and a sound mind. That's it. And I think as the people of God, we should be some of the most sound mind, disciplined folks because we aren't governed by fear. So we did a webinar, it's on our website on CRT. And just to I think give a sound, mind, discipline approach to it, let me just say I knew about CRT before 2020. I think there's some people, if you got your definition from some that just researched about CRT in 2020, then I wouldn't necessarily always trust everything they said. I also am an original source reader. If you have not read Marx, if you have not read CRT, if you not have read these things like the original source, then I think it's an intellectually to dishonest thing to perpetuate that, "I heard that somebody said this, this and this and this."

David Bailey: ([40:01](#))

When I talk about something, I try to represent it as well as somebody else would represent it. And then I try to read the thesis, I try to read the antithesis of it, I try to analyze it and then bring a synthesis to it. People don't even do this even about Thomas Sowell. People quote Thomas Sowell on a regular basis. And they're doing the meme of Thomas Sowell. I've probably read 12 Thomas Sowell books, but then I've also read a ton of Cornel West books. And here are two black men from different... And neither one of them are stupid and they all have an experience of being black in America and have thoughts that have been developed after a lot of academic discipline. And so I try to be like what Paul says in Thessalonians, to "Test all things, hold on what's true." He's talking about prophecy, but these are all just ways of being like the Bereans, searching out things and seeing what the scriptures have to say, see the kind of claims that folks are making.

David Bailey: ([41:06](#))

So my answer to CRT and to Black Lives Matter, whether you talk about an organizational or a social movement, it depends on what somebody's saying. Some people are saying Black Lives Matter in the sense of imago Dei. And some people are talking about an organization. And I think it's a fair critique to be like, an organization like Black Lives Matter was started by the killing of black men, yet Black Lives Matter is prioritizing trans women. And I am the first one to say that you should not abuse trans women. But I'm like, what does it have to do with Trayvon Martin or Michael Brown or these other folks? Who's paying to uplift trans women in this situation? Where's the money trail in that situation?

David Bailey: ([41:58](#))

And so these are just, I think things that we got to discern and I think ways that we got to read, we got to understand, we got to think. And so at Arrabon, what we try to do is just try to use the language that can be invitational to everybody. We try to do what God does for us. God meets us where we are and tries to love us enough to not keep us there.



David Bailey: ([42:25](#))

And for us at Arrabon, we let you know at the very beginning, we're not partisan, we try to read both sides, we try to speak language and be well read in all these different contexts, but we let you know, we're trying to go for the kingdom of God. We're trying to supersede the partisan nonsense, and try to see what does a kingdom politic look like? What does the kingdom of God look like? And there's going to always be an invitation from the Lord, and there's always going to be a challenge from the Lord for us to be more faithful. And so if you're coming from the left, you're coming from the right, if you're centrist, none of us have a corner on faithfulness and God's inviting us to be more faithful.

David Bailey: ([43:10](#))

And so that's where we're going to come from all the time. So people might hear us and say, "Man, you sound really conservative." Some people might say, "You sound very progressive." I hope people are saying at the end of the day, "You sound biblical." And that's at least what we're trying to. And if we're not, our team is really open for a conversation about, "Oh, man, you could be more faithful in this particular area according to the scripture." We're not up for a conversation that you could be more left leaning or more right leaning. "And here's my scriptural proof text to let you know that my view is right." So that's how we try to approach these things. And if you want to see a deeper thing about CRT, we have resources online about that.

Joanna Meyer: ([43:55](#))

Yeah. We'll link to it in our show notes. This is like a treasure trove of great resources, David. I wonder if we could finish our conversation today with you giving a charge to our listeners, a charge, an invitation to live as people of the kingdom, as people of reconciliation, because nothing happens in this area until our hearts change and we feel compelled by the Lord to live in this way. So I'm wondering if you would offer a few words inviting us into that kind of life.

David Bailey: ([44:29](#))

Oh, thanks a ton. So I would say there are three features of a reconciling community that when we work with institutions what we're trying to get them to ultimately do. One is to own reconciliation and spiritual formation. So there should be a biblical rootedness that however you're doing this, you're doing it from a deeply biblical rooted place. The second feature should be, you should understand your cultural context really well, and not only with the institution, but also outside the institution, also understand the context of America.

David Bailey: ([45:05](#))

The third thing is we want to invite you to imagination, imagination to see how can the kingdom of God come on earth as in heaven, and how could our institution create cultural artifacts that could be a foretaste of the kingdom of God that's to come? So we talk about Arrabon projects or Arrabon practices. As a Christian, we shouldn't be surprised that the world is broken. We shouldn't be surprised that the



world is broken about race. This would be the only sin in the world that's been totally taken care of and eradicated if that's the case. And so it's okay for things to be broken and for us to be able to confess it and to be able to see the depth of brokenness.

David Bailey: ([46:01](#))

I even know in my own life about stuff that I've struggled with for a long time and I think, "Oh man, I got that taken care of. And then you see it, you're like, "Oh man, that's ugly." So of course, that would be with a country and a nation that is not even as committed to following Jesus as I try to be committed to following Jesus, and how we are as Christians that do that.

David Bailey: ([46:24](#))

So I would say when we see sin and brokenness, it's an invitation from God to be part of the healing, be a healing agent, and to also receive healing ourselves. I know this is a scary and fearful thing. I know there's been a lot of shame around it. I know that there could be a lot of anxiety, fear. There could be grief, there could be shame. There could be anger, your anger, other people's anger. But in the midst of all that, I want to invite people to have the courage to walk through that. Have the courage to say, "Hey, God, I want to meet you on this. I want to explore this," and I believe that if you say, "Hey Lord, I want my personal life and my institutions to be a forte of the kingdom of God, to be a reconciling community, to be like a light, to be a witness to the world at this time," I believe God will show up and God will show you opportunities on how to do it, but you got to be willing to take adventure with the Lord.

David Bailey: ([47:34](#))

And I didn't know I was really making that commitment in 2008. I think God gives you these invitations and you don't realize how painful the journey's going to be. And so I have been carrying my cross in this particular area, but I can also say 13, almost 14 years later, I've seen a lot of resurrection, and a lot of times we want a resurrection without a death. And so this is an invitation. I could say 14 years later, I'm saying there's pain, there's invitation for pain and death, but on the other side is resurrection. And I would not change the call and the invitation I've been inviting people and the testimonies that I've been able to see over the years. And I want to invite y'all into that. I think it's really amazing to see what God does when you receive the invitation from God to do this kind of work.

Joanna Meyer: ([48:27](#))

What a powerful thought, David. And I know personally, as we interact, I always feel that invitation from you. I never feel a sense of judgment or condemnation for what I'm not in issues of reconciliation, but an invitation to live into God's purposes for my life and my community more. And that's compelling. It's a model I don't see very often in life on these contentious issues. And so, thanks for the gift of that. Thanks for being part of our podcast today. And I'll be sharing in just a minute more details about how leaders can learn more from you at Business for the Common Good. So thanks for your time now, and thanks for your time at the end of February as well.





David Bailey: ([49:05](#))

Thank you. I'm looking forward to being with y'all.

Joanna Meyer: ([49:08](#))

Gosh, what a gift David Bailey is to this conversation around race and reconciliation. In our show notes, we'll link to the two books, the free webinar on critical race theory on the Arrabon website, as well as the documentary film that we referenced. And if you're intrigued by what David had to share about a vision for reconciliation through business, I encourage you to join us at Business for the Common Good, Friday, February, February 25th. It'll be hosted in person here in Denver or online anywhere in the world. And you can find more information about the event at [businessforthecommongood.com](http://businessforthecommongood.com). I'm excited to talk to you again in two weeks, have a wonderful, wonderful week.

Joanna Meyer: ([49:46](#))

If you've enjoyed this episode of the Faith and Work podcast, please subscribe, leave a review or share it with a friend. Your support is critical to helping other listeners discover this vital resource. The Faith and Work podcast is produced by Denver Institute for Faith and Work, where we believe that work is a way to love God and serve our neighbors. To learn more or to make a financial contribution, visit [denverinstitute.org](http://denverinstitute.org).