

how our churches can
help heal a divided
america

slides will be available

brianmclaren.net

let's stay in touch!

convergenceleadership.org

pointing out the division is not
being divisive.

- bruce reyes-show

i have not come to bring peace,
but a sword (of division) ...

blessed are the peacemakers

being church in these times:

creative progressive/spiritual activism

holding the tension

walking on eggshells

nostalgic/regressive

being church in these times:

creative progressive/spiritual activism

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nostalgic/regressive

white supremacy
environmental irresponsibility
gender/orientation inequality
etc.



PCUSA



UCC



UMC



Episcopal



Christian
Church DoC



ELCA

Historic Black,
Ethnic/
Immigrant,
Progressive
Roman
Catholic,
Progressive
Evangelical,
etc.



PCUSA



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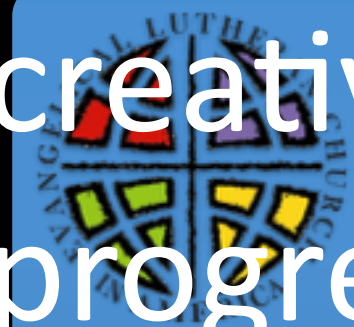
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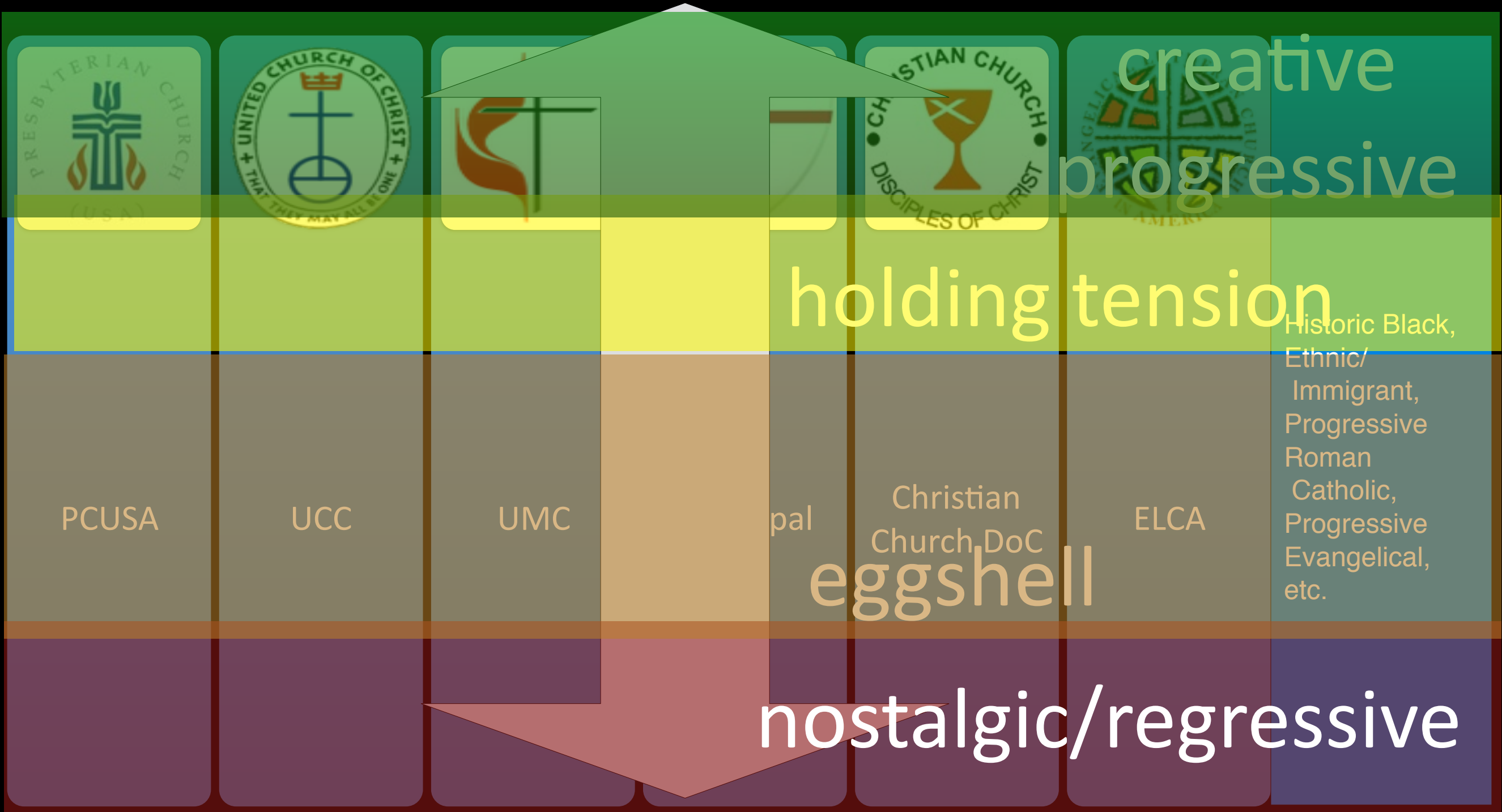
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creative/
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eggshell

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eggshell

nostalgic/regressive movement

building a movement

A CREATIVE/PROGRESSIVE SPIRITUAL MOVEMENT

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pointing out the division is not being divisive.

healing does not mean surrendering.

so - how do we heal in the midst of struggle?

1. understand that people are where they are. don't blame/shame them for being where they are.

creative progressive/spiritual activism

holding the tension

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nostalgic/regressive

2. learn to articulate a person's position in words and tone that proves to them you understand.

when you don't understand, say, "I'm curious ..." and ask questions.

What's the story behind that?
How did you come to feel that way?

3. develop the courage to differ graciously.

wow! i see that differently!

if you'd ever like to hear a different approach to that subject, i'll be glad to share it. i don't want to argue - but if you're curious, i'll be glad to share.

would you allow me sometime to share with you why i've come to see that differently?

4. try to find a legitimate need that you can actually meet.

5. don't react to criticism, but respond to criticism and especially misrepresentation as an opportunity to respectfully clarify your message.

6. understand the role each sector can play in healing, especially ...

holding the tension:

- practicing civil discourse
- achieving respectful disagreement
- negotiating adjacent freedom
- create win/win solutions when possible
- making yes, no, or let's negotiate decisions when necessary
- returning to core values, beliefs, mission

7. understand the psychological/
sociological obstacles we face in
communicating across difference.

Over the years, I've stumbled across several built-in biases that we share because of the way our brains evolved. You probably know most of them already, so I only want you to look for 1 or 2 that are new to you.

There's really only one thing you need to remember:

People can't see what they can't see.

Confirmation Bias

Our story or system excludes what doesn't fit.

Complexity Bias

We prefer a simple myth to a complex truth.

Community Bias

It's almost impossible to see what our community doesn't see.
(Belonging/Social Identity & Desirability/Mimetic Theory)

Complementarity Bias

If you are open to my ideas, I'll be open to yours -
and vice versa.

(Complementarity Theory in Social Psychology)

Competency Bias

We don't know how little (or much) we know,
because we don't know how much (or little) others know.
(Dunning-Kruger Hypothesis)

Consciousness Bias

Some things simply can't be seen from where I am right
now.

(Integral Theory, Human/Moral Development Theory)

Complacency Bias

I can't handle that much pain.
(Psychic Numbing)

catastrophe bias

i remember dramatic catastrophes and don't notice
gradual improvement

conservative/liberal bias

My political leanings help me see some things and miss others.

nurturing fairness & kindness!

or

strictly enforcing purity, loyalty, liberty, & tradition!

moral foundations theory

Lakoff's strict father vs. nurturing parent

confirmation
complexity
community
complementarity
competency
consciousness
complacency
catastrophe
conservative/liberal

people can't see what they can't see.

?

“people can’t see what they can’t see”
isn’t the whole truth.

*people can't see what they can't see
until someone helps them see it.*

here's how you can help (not force)
others (and yourself) see more.

Confirmation Bias

Surprise and “abduct” people - through an immersive experience (field trip), unexpected guest, or powerful personal story.

And change the world by telling a bigger, better framing story.

Complexity Bias

Simply, briefly, confidently explain your 1 or 2 most important points.

Save the rest until they ask for it - as confirmation.

Community Bias

Create a fair, welcoming, more desirable community
with conviction AND an onramp

Attractive Leader, Cell, and Movement

Complementarity Bias

Flip the script - “Do unto others”

When you think a person is wrong, show them uncommon kindness, persistent patience, genuine curiosity, and sincere respect.

Competency Bias

Help people admit they have a lot to learn ... and build their confidence that they'll enjoy learning and succeed at it.

Consciousness Bias

Introduce people to immersive and “transcendent experiences” (states) and offer practices for growth in and through stages

complacency bias

Tell one story with feeling &
provide one simple step within their current capacity.

Beware of cynicism & apathy triggers

catastrophe bias

tell stories and show images of gradual positive change, illustrate positive statistics graphically, warn people of media attraction to catastrophe

conservative/liberal bias

Start with compassion & fairness

and employ

Purity vs. Degradation, In-Group Loyalty vs. Betrayal,
Liberty vs. Oppression, Tradition vs. Rebellion

*people can't see what they can't see until
someone helps them see it.*

And you can help (not force) others (and
yourself) to see more.

Choose just one of these practices and make
it habitual. (Then come back for more.)

Checklist

1. Have I “abducted” my audience through imagination, surprise, unexpected vulnerability, etc? (confirmation)
2. Have I made 1, 2, or 3 memorable, simple points and trimmed away everything else? (complexity)
3. Have I presented myself and my group as welcoming of opponents and pleasant to be around? (community)
4. Have I shown script-flipping respect, kindness, patience and curiosity to those I hope to influence? (complementarity)
5. Have I celebrated people’s ability to change their minds & learn? (competency)
6. Have I helped people experience a “state” that can later become a “stage?” (consciousness)
7. Have I given them one thing to do right now about one problem? (complacency)
- 8 Have I acknowledged influence of catastrophic news/images in media, and countered with positive stories and images?
9. Have I led with compassion and fairness, but also appealed to purity, loyalty, liberty, and tradition?

a creative/progressive movement

holding tension

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