Dear Friends, Family, Colleagues ...

First of all, Happy Thanksgiving Weekend!

It has been a very memorable week for me in many ways as November always is. The 24th was the 58th anniversary of my father's passing on Thanksgiving day that year and it is also the 3rd anniversary of my memoir being published. And on the 24th this past Sunday, we had a small healing service for our daughter who underwent successful surgery on Tuesday. So much to be thankful for!

I could go on about November personally and otherwise but I'll leave it at that ...  suffice it to say November memories could be a book of their own!

As we just experienced, another aspect of every November is Election Day and as written in my previous update, this year's Presidential election was tremendously memorable and the next four years promises to be as well. Although the Trump win is cast in stone and a peaceful transition in process, unlike what happened during the 2020 election and the 2021 Insurrection which followed, the popular vote outcome now reveals that more people **voted against** Trump than for him since his popular vote count has fallen to less than 50% of the total vote.

As the 11/18 Washington Post explains. *"As more votes have been counted, Trump has also suffered another blow to his “mandate” claim: The percent of votes he earned has fallen below 50 percent and is unlikely to recover. This was very predictable, based on the outstanding vote, but it’s still noteworthy.****Most voters voted for someone beside Trump****."*

Trump does**NOT** have an electoral mandate and the predicted razor thin margin for either candidate turned out to be right on target. So, we remain a clearly divided country virtually at "50/50". Regarding the racist derived Electoral College vote where Trump won decisively, only seven so-called "swing states" determined his margin of victory. Similar to Clinton in 2016, if Trump had lost just three or four of those seven, he would not have won this election despite having more total popular votes like Clinton did. That's the nature and the unfortunate influence of the Electoral College on Presidential elections.

Bottomline: an amazingly and historically close election result with enormous implications for our country as the current Trump transition is highlighting.

This segues to my new title for these regular updates since the publication of my book three years ago. As I suggested last month, it is now time to M*ove Forward with Hope,*appeal to our common sense, and re-discover our abundant common ground in bridging the chasm that divides us.

As a reader of my previous update responded, *"I can’t stand Trump’s politics or values, or what he and his cohorts are seeking to visit upon us, but as much as we denigrate the worst of his impulses, nominees and goals, if we lose sight of the millions (*working class, lower income voters) *who voted for him, not because of those awful characteristics but because they understandably felt left behind and forgotten about, we will continue to be on the losing end of future elections. Our work is cut out for us, but consistent I think with some of what Bill is writing about; that is we have to be willing to listen and engage with folks on the other side to find common ground where we can. Easier said than done, but essential I think for us to begin wherever we can to break down these barriers between us."*(Don P.)

Now is the time to "break down these barriers" and what might seem like an impossible task can happen at the cellular level ... and fortunately there are some models to draw from including:

* *'Look Away, Look Away'* ... how a diverse array of red and blue citizen activists engaged in the fierce five-year battle that led to the removal of the Mississippi state flag, revealing how race, heritage and long-simmering grievances over the Civil War shape our sense of who we are as Americans. A tremendous portrayal of how deep, deep divisions can be bridged (see  <https://www.lookawaylookaway.com/>)
* James Carville and Mary Matalin story (see [*https://wegotthiscovered.com/politics/what-happened-to-james-carville-and-mary-matalin/*](https://wegotthiscovered.com/politics/what-happened-to-james-carville-and-mary-matalin/)*)*
* Braver Angels; see both [*https://braverangels.org/*](https://braverangels.org/)*and*[*https://braverangels.org/a-braver-way-episode-guide/*](https://braverangels.org/a-braver-way-episode-guide/)
* "Letters from Outside the Camp"  (Richard Rohr, 11/26; see  <https://email.cac.org/t/d-e-smjkhd-tlkrtkjkyd-n/>); to quote: *"Maintain a sense of freedom outside the contemporary political and religious encampments of our day".*
* My Blessed Sacrament Parish Council experience in the '80's where "right" and "left" met at the council table and other forums to discuss social justice issues; more on this perhaps in a future story since it sheds light on how "political" disagreements can be talked through in a church setting
* Re: Hope ...  [*https://robertreich.substack.com/p/how-to-hope-in-a-near-hopeless-time*](https://robertreich.substack.com/p/how-to-hope-in-a-near-hopeless-time)*?*
* Timothy Snyder, Author and Historian: *'On Tyranny'*and*'On Freedom' ... both books are*highly recommended and could be used for revealing "50/50" discussions
* 'Imago Dei" ... see Genesis 1:27

What are some other models that come to your minds? What are the things that we should be able to agree upon (e.g., the  principles of democracy, family, children, etc.) while still keeping a respectful eye on those things we disagree on? For example, could something like the creation of a new 'National Service Corps' bring people together from both "sides" and see each other as friend and co-worker vs. foe? Please get back to me on these ideas with your own thoughts.

Some other useful links, etc.,

* Excellent electoral outcome explanation *...*[*https://www.facebook.com/559835551/posts/10161852858220552/?mibextid=WC7FNe&rdid=M1MnK40d4T9uXLXi*](https://www.facebook.com/559835551/posts/10161852858220552/?mibextid=WC7FNe&rdid=M1MnK40d4T9uXLXi)
* *"America at a Crossroads"*  ... vividly portrays the depth of the divide by talking to people on both sides.... <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/nation/watch-live-america-at-a-crossroads-with-judy-woodruff>
* Reich: [*https://robertreich.substack.com/p/what-will-you-do*](https://robertreich.substack.com/p/what-will-you-do)*? and ...*[*https://robertreich.substack.com/p/weaponized-lies*](https://robertreich.substack.com/p/weaponized-lies)*?*
* 'Letters from an American' ...  [*https://heathercoxrichardson.substack.com/p/november-14-2024*](https://heathercoxrichardson.substack.com/p/november-14-2024)*?*
* 'Minority Reporter' article:  [*https://www.minorityreporter.net/post/wokeness-as-a-higher-consciousness*](https://www.minorityreporter.net/post/wokeness-as-a-higher-consciousness)*?*
* A great interview... [*https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Um017R5Kr3A*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Um017R5Kr3A)
* Exploring Racism Group update: <https://exploringracism.org/update-week-ending-11-23-2024/>

In closing, I recently discovered a new metaphor related to skybox suites in stadiums across the country.

"Skyboxes" are useful as  a metaphor of separation; i.e., from those of us who can afford them to the vast majority who cannot. What we need are more common spaces and places where we can un-separate ourselves and encounter one another no matter what our perceived economic class might be.

Democracy requires community, both physically and of spirit, in the pursuit of the common good to help us understand each other much better than we do ... especially in this enduring "50/50" world electorally and politically that we are living in.

What's your "skybox"? ... it could be your house, church, school, neighborhood, family, political candidates, and many other possibilities.

If we're honest, we each have our own "skyboxes" and they can be used as instruments of separation leading to economic and cultural grievances limiting our ability to socially recognize "others"  with respect and dignity.

Some food for thought at this time of year where we ponder our many blessings with gratitude.

In Hope...  as many of us soon begin the Christian Advent season of Hope!

Peace ... Bill

*Author of: 'Understanding and Combating Racism: My Path from Oblivious American to Evolving Activist'*

[*https://www.amazon.com/author/billwynne*](https://www.amazon.com/author/billwynne)

*Website:*[*www.wewynneauthor.com*](http://www.wewynneauthor.com/)