

The Responsibility of the Bridging Citizens in Times of Political Warfare

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In this moment of heightened polarization within the United States and across the globe, there exists a particular class of citizens who carry a unique responsibility. They are the travelers, the educators, the veterans, the volunteers, the faithful-yet-open-minded, the multilingual, the moderates who have lived in many places and seen the world through more than one set of eyes. By virtue of their lived experience, they have crossed borders both physical and cultural, and in so doing, have cultivated a broader perspective than those who have remained enclosed within a single community or ideology.

Witnesses Across Borders

These individuals have lived in the “North” and the “South,” in large cities and small towns, in domestic spaces and international contexts. They have seen inequality and opportunity manifest in different forms across geography and culture. This mobility gives them a unique vantage point: they are able to recognize repeating historical patterns of division, oppression, and renewal. They are not outsiders to any one community, but participants in many, making them capable of identifying both the fault lines and the bridges that might reconnect us.

Interpreters of Perspective

Multilingual and multicultural, these citizens know that translation is more than vocabulary—it is the art of conveying meaning across difference. In a divided political climate, they can serve as interpreters between competing factions, translating Democratic and Republican perspectives into terms each side can understand. They do not trivialize differences, but they make understanding possible where polarization thrives on caricature.

Moderation as Strength

Too often, moderation is mistaken for weakness. Yet in a political war front where extremes dominate the conversation, moderation can serve as an anchor. To recognize truth on both sides is not an act of compromise but of courage, for it refuses to submit to the simplicity of absolute loyalty. This balance allows bridging citizens to steady their communities in moments of escalating tension.

Service and Credibility

Many in this group have served—in the armed forces, in classrooms, in faith communities, or as volunteers in neighborhoods across the country. Their credibility is rooted not in rhetoric but in sacrifice. They have demonstrated that their commitments extend beyond self-interest. In times of distrust and suspicion, such credibility is a rare and invaluable currency.

The Ethical Burden of Experience

With knowledge comes responsibility. Those who have “spread their wings” cannot claim ignorance when divisions harden. They are called upon to warn against the mistakes of history, to foster empathy, and to model resilience. Having seen how fragile democracy and social trust can be, they are compelled to act not merely as observers but as guardians.

International Perspective in a Domestic Crisis

Their experiences abroad also remind us that America does not stand apart from the world. Domestic divisions are not only internal struggles; they echo outward and influence international stability. Similarly, global forces—from disinformation campaigns to shifting alliances—reach into the American household. Bridging citizens are uniquely equipped to situate domestic conflict within this broader international context.

Guardians of Democracy

In the end, these individuals serve as guardians of democracy itself. They hold the cultural literacy, moral credibility, and practical knowledge to resist division and strengthen civic life. They know that democracy is not self-sustaining; it requires vigilance, empathy, and continuous renewal. By connecting communities, interpreting perspectives, and modeling service, they form a living bulwark against both authoritarian drift and civil unraveling.