

WGVU
Public Media
A SERVICE OF GRAND VALLEY STATE UNIVERSITY



MOMENTUM
CENTER

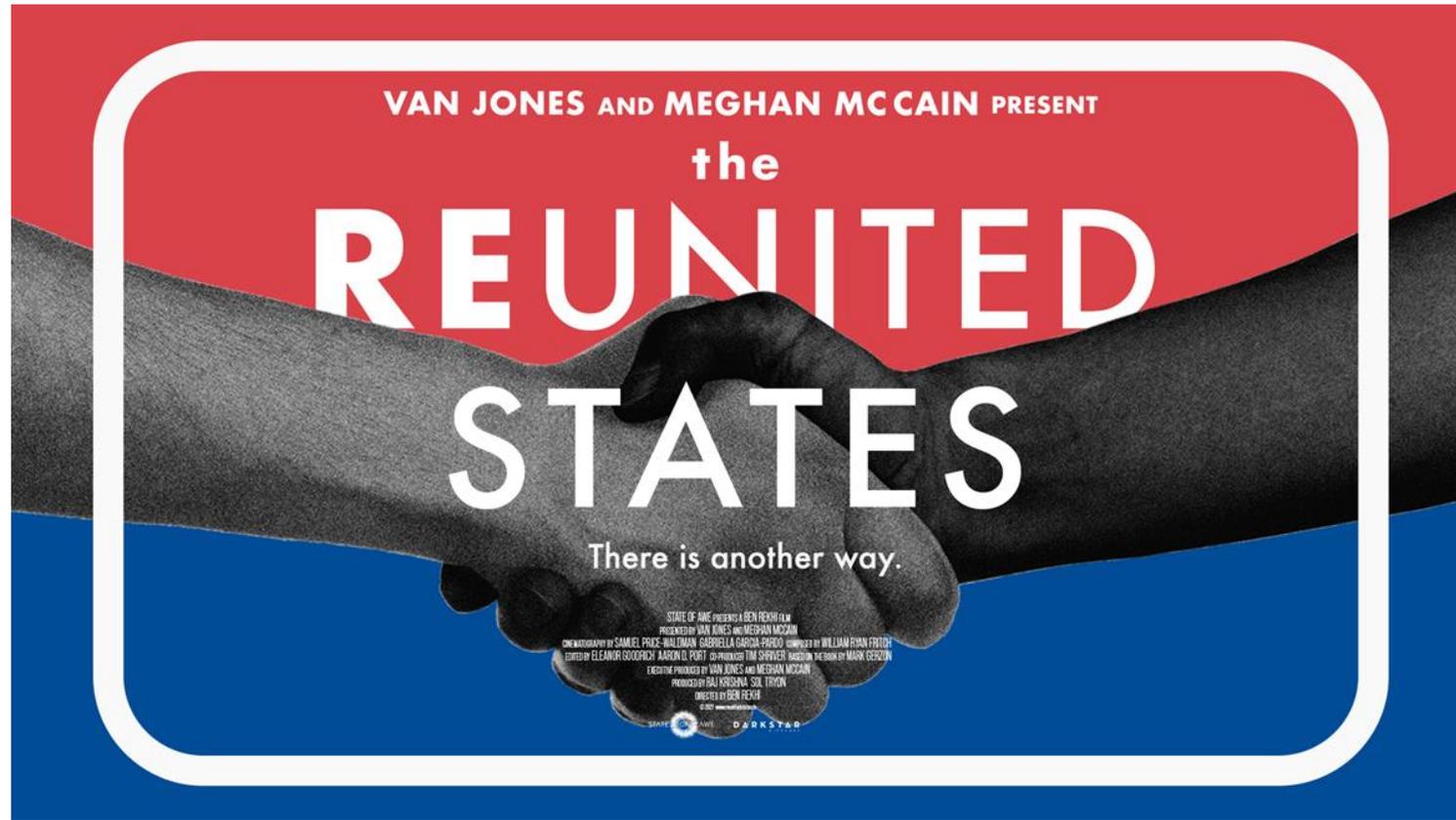
FOR
SOCIAL
ENGAGEMENT

the
Chamber
Grand Haven
Spring Lake
Ferrysburg

NAACP

 Fetzer Institute

meijer



Co-Facilitators:
Steve Chappell, WGVU
Barbara Lee VanHorssen, Momentum Center

Welcome and Instructions

Panelists

Question and Answer

Breakout Sessions

Polling

Next Steps

Town Hall Agenda

Stay on Mute/Turn on Camera

Close Captioning – Subtitles On

Submit questions/comments via Chat Box

Breakout Sessions/Zoom App/Camera On

Next Steps – Recording – Debrief/Action

Communication Guidelines/Ground Rules

Instructions

Communication Guidelines/ Ground Rules



Honesty – we aren't here to debate who's right and wrong, but to communicate honestly



Equality – all people are equal and valuable



Respect – we all have preconceived ideas that can get in the way



Active Listening



Responsibility – for our words and our feelings



Shame Free Zone

Panelists

September 22 Panelists:
Joy Gaasch Floyd Cook



Breakout Conversation

1. What are your hopes and concerns for your family, community and/or country?
2. Where are you seeing problematic divisions? Which most impact your life?
3. What comes up when you think of your individual role in bridging understanding and reunification?
4. What have you learned? Is there a next step you would like to take based on this conversation?

Reunited States – Breakout Room Notes

Room 1 – Mary Jane

What are your hopes and concerns for your family, community, and country?

- i. My adult son and daughter have drastically different political views which limits what they can talk about.
- ii. "It's hard to hate up close." - Brene Brown
- iii. Find empathy when talking to people with differences. Look for common ground.
- iv. We want to hear each other's humanity.
- v. We hope we can get an update on the family in the documentary who has traveled the United States.
- vi. I resonated most with Heather's mom. She works hard and she gets it.
- vii. It hurts when you are using empathy, but your conversation partner is not.

Where do you see problematic divisions? Which impact your life most?

- i. The documentary pointed out that political divisions are symptomatic of other root problems.
- ii. How we treat one another is important. Sometimes actions or words are dehumanizing.
- iii. People in the documentary said I am a Republican because I do not want to be a Democrat and vice versa. Why are we choosing political identification because of something we don't want to be called?
- iv. Also heard, "If you are Christian, you cannot be a Democrat." This is something Ottawa Impact promotes and is aiming to get rid of the DEI office in the county.

What comes to mind when you think of your individual role in bridging understanding and reunification?

- i. Weekly email newsletters that list anti-racist resources and opportunities. Making connections with others.
- ii. My role is to be braver in speaking while being respectful (not condescending).
- iii. I am part of a non-profit that includes social engagement. I facilitate a weekly segment on inclusion that addresses inequality. More upfront speaking stronger with diplomacy to keep the conversation going.
- iv. In my household and backyard, I encourage my family to learn and explore. When I get uncomfortable or angry, I pause and write it down and allow myself to think about it and come back to it. I do not want to respond to anger with anger. I am practicing this.
- v. In my job I support partners to create and get access to opportunities to learn and explore. It is a dynamic role and community landscape. I try to provide resources for our partners.

Room 2 – Mary

What are your hopes and concerns for your family, community and/or country?

- i. We need to continue to take a look at racism and it will take education
- ii. The movie showed that the conversations the family engaged in were helpful because they started to deal with anger and pain
- iii. By virtue of the demographics we have around us. We can change when we live with people who are different than we are
- iv. We must change housing in this community. We must make housing affordable for others to move into our community to create a more welcoming diverse community.

Where are you seeing problematic divisions? Which most impact your life?

- i. The most impactful thing in our community is what is happening with our local school boards and country government. We need to be present in countering the impact of the attack on DEI and book banning.

What comes up when you think of your individual role in bridging understanding and reunification?

- i. Find a place where we can learn and share information with people who are different than us.
- ii. Change will happen from the bottom up
- iii. How do we bring leaders into the group
- iv. We need to equip people to become collaborators.

What have you learned? Is there a next step you would like to take based on this conversation?

- i. We need to create small groups of people who come together in a book club atmosphere to share common interests from a variety of perspectives. The makeup of the group is important in that the demographics need to be varied. It's important that it is made up of people with different opinions and backgrounds so that a variety of ideas can be shared and an opportunity to grow and learn together about what it takes to create a healthy community. Coming together with the hope and desire to bring about positive change one small group at a time. Inclusion in the group needs to be carefully thought out to remain a place where no one overriding opinion becomes prevalent.

Room 3 – Greg

What comes up when you think of your individual role in bridging understanding and reunification?

- i. Importance of International Travel
- ii. Small groups are the best way to advance the conversation. Church to church conversation from different communities.

Group 4 – Jamie

What are your hopes and concerns for your family, community and/or country?

- i. Business case for diversity
- ii. Running on single issues: "Change the things they are mad about"
- iii. Running only based on topics
- iv. Roles of religion and race (white)
- v. We are a nation of immigrants

Where are you seeing problematic divisions? Which most impact your life?

- i. Do we really think of things equally?
- ii. Single issue is stopping development and growth
- iii. Can't govern with personal agendas
- iv. Gap of haves and have nots
- v. Not treating people with civility
- vi. Deliberate choices to engage and share stories with others

What comes up when you think of your individual role in bridging understanding and reunification?

- i. Biggest push back was only white males
- ii. Don't respond when you are angry
- iii. When comfortable in a conversation, people assume natural agreement
- iv. Push back places people on the defensive

What have you learned? Is there a next step you would like to take based on this conversation?

- i. Listen for understanding instead of a counterpoint to be "right"
- ii. Learn how to ask non-threatening question
- iii. Share stories, more of an advocate
- iv. Look locally to converse this because it can be overwhelming

Group 5 – Elliott

What are your hopes and concerns for your family, community and/or country?

- i. We came to the conclusion that we feared an outbreak of widespread sectarian violence. The fact that some individuals see this violence as their duty in certain circumstances came up repeatedly.
- ii. We all hoped that we could unite for the preservation of our future and that of our loved ones but admitted that this could only happen if we face our past as a collective.

Where are you seeing problematic divisions? Which most impact your life?

- i. We found that the divisions between in and out groups seemed to only be growing. Nativist sentiment was cited as one of the most troubling elements of division. People are becoming tribal and fearful.
- ii. We came to the conclusion that political divisions among our families were most problematic.

What comes up when you think of your individual role in bridging understanding and reunification?

- i. I said my role is to point out how the community is being divided and how this makes us weaker as a whole.
- ii. Someone said their role was to call out injustice in their church community because they can speak the language and are seen as an outsider.
- iii. Another said they could try to heal the divide by talking to people in a non-judgmental manner.

What have you learned? Is there a next step you would like to take based on this conversation?

- i. We all determined that we need to act as information gatherers and distributors. We all see a different side of the mountain and we need to communicate that across the peak.

Post-Polling



Reunited States Poll

1. How comfortable are you talking with someone from a different place on the political spectrum now compared to before you watched the movie or participated in this conversation? (Multiple Choice) •

- Much more comfortable
- 50% More comfortable
- 50% No change
- Less comfortable
- Much less comfortable

2. How helpful was this event? (Multiple Choice) •

- Not all all helpful
- 27% It made me more aware
- 27% It motivated me to take action
- 47% It convinced me to become or continue to be an advocate

3. What action(s) are you willing to take now? (Multiple Choice) •

- 60% Read/listen to podcasts/watch documentaries - learn more
- 87% Engage in more conversations on a variety of topics with people having different viewpoints
- 40% Receive additional resources

Thank You!

September 22 Panelists:
Joy Gaasch Floyd Cook



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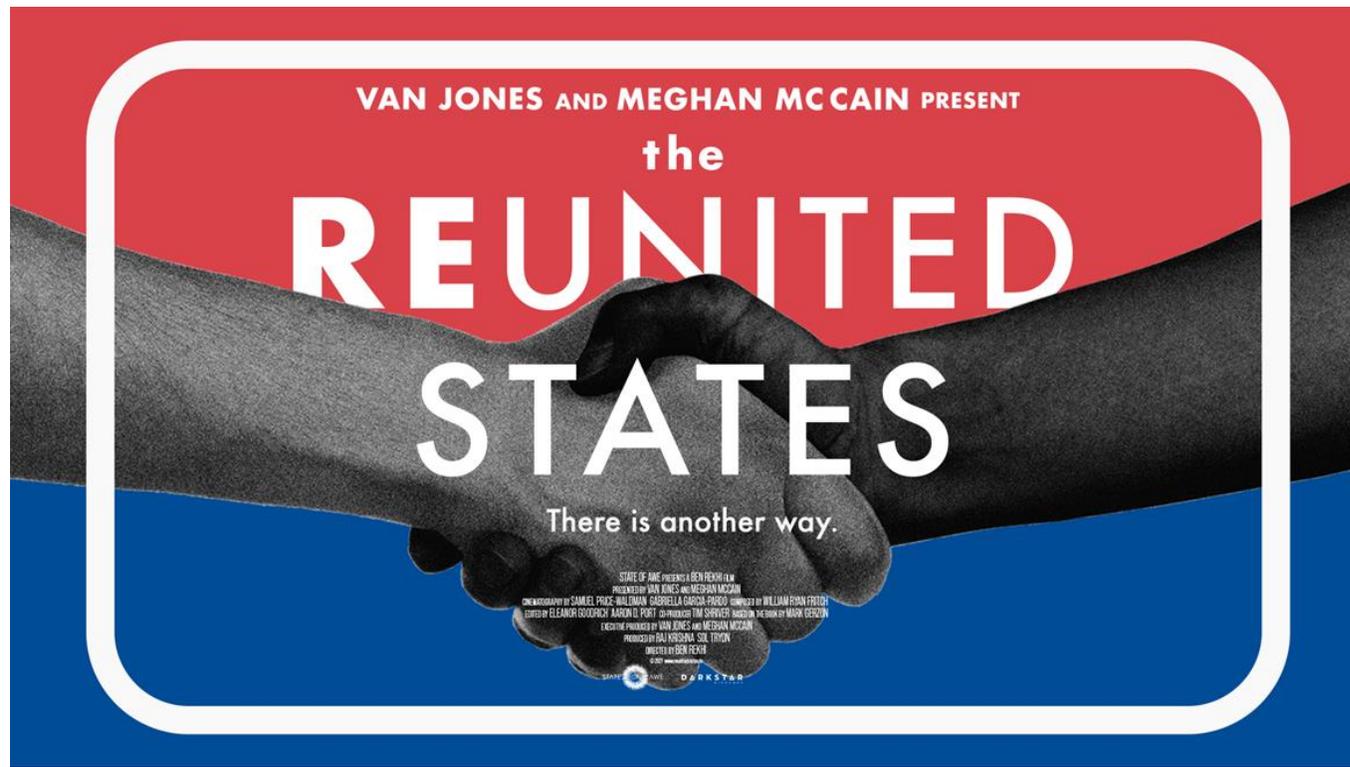
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