

From: Dick Bernard dick.bernard@icloud.com
Subject: Question.
Date: August 10, 2023 at 9:24 AM
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Bcc:

#1

I've been asked to give a two minute talk to about 20 teen visitors from Ukraine on Aug 22, in context about the Minnesota Alliance of Peacemakers, of which I was President 2005-07. (Another similar group was here a year ago - very impressive young people.) Impossible?

But I'd like to give them a little postage stamp history of the U.S. from my perspective. Part of this would be this timeline.

Any comments you might have on the below, including specific words, would be appreciated. Afterwards I'll share with you what I shared with them.

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My notion of American history in context with the Alliance of Peacemakers:

1492 - European colonial domination begins in North America.

1776 - United States beginnings

1865 - American Civil War

1898 - Spanish-American War/Phillippine Insurrection

1914-18 - World War I (U.S. enters 1917)

1928 - Kellogg-Briand Pact

1939-45 - World War II (U.S. enters Dec. 1941)

1943 - United Nations Association founded

1945 - United Nations Charter

MINNESOTA

1946 - United World Federalists founded (2004 renamed Citizens for Global Solutions)

1983 - Minnesota Peace and Justice Coalition begins

1995 - Minnesota Alliance of Peacemakers begins <https://www.mapm.org> - initially coalition of 9 groups, formed in the remains of the Peace and Justice Coalition

2001 - 9-11

#2 next page - Fred
#3 third page - Steve

from Fred Aug 10, 2023

#2

D. Bernard timeline

Dick,

You can't read your list in two minutes, much less provide any sense of understanding. I suspect you're joshing and will have more time.

I believe it is proper to acknowledge some major failing regarding peace-making. There were *hundreds of peace treaties* with Indigenous nations. Sharp Ukrainian teenagers will know we're not perfect. Gotta mention the brutal capture of slaves. I suggest inserting in your timeline:

1500–1763: European countries—Britain, France, Spain, the Netherlands—with colonies in North America are growing through *peace treaties and wars* with Indigenous nations. US government continues this policy to c. 1900.

1526–1807: The Atlantic Slave trade brought millions of captured men and women to American colonies. US bans importing new slaves in 1807, but slavery continues until the Civil War's (1861–1865) end.

1945—to present: United Nations is formed in San Francisco on Oct. 24, 1945 dedicated to maintain international peace and security. Peace-keeping role continues.

1950–2000: Korean War (no peace treaty ever signed) and wars in southeast Asia; beginnings of Asian economic power: Japan, China, India, South Korea, Saudi Arabia, etc.

The Optimism of Ideas

from Steve Aug 11, 2023

Most summaries of American history use the landmarks of geo-politics to recount our past. Wars, epidemics, economic boom and bust, and political confrontations dominate the story. It is true that our imperfect practice of government has enabled exploitation and prejudice while one group or another has sought prominence and privilege. At the same time there have been voices encouraging reform and enlightenment.

It's easy recognize the results of personal and national aggression and war in the world today. Ukraine and Russia, tensions in the Middle East, the residue of slavery and oppression of native people in the United States are examples.

At the same time, there are individuals like you who maintain hope—even optimism—and continue to have faith that human imagination can find ways to translate ideas into a sustainable world.

Reinhold Niebuhr wrote about *The Irony of American History*, describing contradictions in our national past. While there was slavery, there was a moral crusade to end its practice; while industrial growth took a toll on the lives of labor, immigration to the States responded with the promise of opportunity. Niebuhr doesn't suggest that those contradictions are equivalent. His book does show that the scaffold of our national aspirations has endured differences and conflict.

There are similar contradictions European history: The splendor of Renaissance art and all it represented while feudalism and cultural divisions defined the lives of the majority; the flurry of social reform that grew under 17th and 18th century monarchies; economic and political liberalism that accompanied the harsh practices of industrialism.

I'm not suggesting that "Sure, there are difficulties, but things will work out and we'll be just fine." What I am suggesting is that the possibilities of human consciousness are deep and resilient, and shouldn't be disparaged or abandoned.

There are menacing threats in this fragile world. Human error and misjudgment, exploitation of our natural resources, evil people, and the confounding implications of science and technology are dangers. But those of us who believe in conservation, stewardship, tolerance, and an energy directed toward mutual benefit need to work together—despite the differences of language, geography, color and history—to preserve a future.

This is not a century for the faint of heart. Morality, decency and principle continue to face challenges of avarice and hostility.

This fragile world needs its citizens to recognize and understand the transgressions and burden of the past, to resist national aggression and suspicion, and, as difficult as the faith may be, maintain their spiritual dedication to humanity.

It will take more than these words to meet the challenges of our own ironies. I'm afraid we've left much of that up to you.