

Affirmative Action and the Culture of Intolerance

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PAUL BEGALA: OK. Thanks, Judy. Just to set the stage briefly, I'd ask you to recall some of the examples and the litany of intolerant and uncivil behaviors we discussed when we met in December. Folks talked about a culture of immediacy and intolerance that runs throughout popular culture, from talk radio to road rage to incivility on the floor of the Congress. Running through those examples of absolutism and demonization and lack of public restraint seems to be an unwillingness or an inability to recognize others as individuals or communities with rights, feelings and needs, in particular as individuals with experiences that may be radically different from our own.

So from different experiences come different perceptions and interpretations of what might otherwise purport to be the same objective neutral reality. That, it seems to me, is the fundamental problem at the root of many of the behaviors and attitudes that we discussed in December. I believe that there are very few public policy issues that more clearly illustrate or dramatically illustrate these behaviors than the debate over affirmative action. So I'm very grateful today that we have Professor Christopher Edley Jr. to help us

understand how this debate exemplifies [the] culture of intolerance that we've become so concerned with in this group.

Professor Edley has taught at the Harvard Law School since 1981. He's the author of the very well-received book, "Not All Black And White: Affirmative Action and American Values." Chris is a graduate of Swarthmore College, up the road, and of the Kennedy School of Government and the Harvard Law School. He served as assistant director of the domestic policy staff in President Carter's White House and was national issues director for the Dukakis campaign. More recently, after serving as the senior adviser on economic policy during the Clinton-Gore transition, Chris was persuaded to stay on in the government at the Office of Management and Budget, to oversee major legislative policy initiatives.

He also served as special counsel to the president and led the Clinton administration's review of affirmative action programs. After that he was wise enough to escape Washington as described by Kevin, probably wisely, and went back to Harvard to teach and, perhaps, a little R&R. But as they say, a highly placed administration source assures me that he has been lured back—or will be soon—to serve as senior policy adviser, at least on a part-time basis, to the president on the race initiative that he hopes to begin.

So it is a particular pleasure, I think, to bring to you my friend, Chris Edley.

CHRISTOPHER EDLEY: Thank you, Paul. I deny most of what you said, and I'm honored to have been invited to talk to such a terrific group and see several old friends or—Is that Lani? I thought I would try to do two things. I don't have a watch, so rather than throwing something at me, let me borrow a watch. I thought I'd try to talk quickly about two things. One is a few points about affirmative action itself. I'm sorry—technology here. I'm all set. A few points about affirmative action itself and then I'd like to apply it to a concrete problem, and the concrete problem, of course, is what would one say, if you happen to be in the position of trying to advise the president, about what he should do on Saturday in San Diego when he launches this much-touted race initiative, and relatedly, what should the rest of us, who would like to play a

constructive role on this issue, do in response or at the same time that the president is trying to do whatever it is he's going to try to do?

OK. So Part One, on affirmative action itself: There are lots of policy disagreements on affirmative action and on race, more broadly. You could—in a way, you could arrange the policy arguments. Imagine a matrix, and for the rows think of education, employment and contracting—education, employment, contracting; and for the columns, think of a range of different kinds of tools or interventions that one might adopt in each of those contexts, starting on one end with soft measures like outreach and recruitment, to maybe soft measures for inclusion, like simply making race a consideration in an admissions decision, to somewhat firmer measures—a thumb on the scale, some kind of a bonus, to still firmer, maybe a goal, and ultimately to a quota or a set-aside.

So one could imagine a range of interventions in various contexts. Now if you fill in all of the cells of that matrix, it's not easy to see that there are a multitude of contexts and tools in which to think about the appropriate way in which immutable characteristics like race or gender might play in decision-making. Now—and even within a particular context, for example, employment: If one makes a conclusion that, sure, it makes sense to take race into account at least in some circumstances, with respect to employment, well, when you say employment, do you mean hiring or do you also mean promotion? And if you mean promotion, what about layoffs? A multitude of contexts and the arguments might differ. So an initial problem is simply that the complexity of the policy settings almost numbs the mind when it comes to try to make general statements about what our policies might be.

Nevertheless, of course, in public policy discourse and political discourse and, indeed, at cocktail parties, one tries to speak in an abbreviated way, not only to simplify the reality underneath the policy argument, but also in simplified ways, in terms of—well, as James Carville would put it, 'I'm right; you're wrong. I'm right; you're wrong,' which, in fact, is why I called my book "Not All Black And White," because the most important conclusion, for me, is that

talking about race, talking about affirmative action is not rocket science. It's harder than rocket science.

Now if thinking deeply about the problem can't be working through the details of each cell of this matrix, then obviously there has to be some search for what the deeper issues are, what the deeper values are at stake. For example—and I think our first or second conversation with President Clinton back in 1995, during the affirmative action review—I posed a question this way: I said, 'Look, do you believe that there is a moral cost to making decisions about people based upon their immutable characteristics, like color or gender? Do you believe there is a moral cost?'

Now there are at least three ways of answering that question. Some people think, 'Yes, there is a moral cost, and the moral cost is so great that we should never be willing to pay it.' This is the colorblind perspective. 'It's just wrong.' At the other end of the spectrum, there's some people who think that paying attention with color gender is, in fact, really no different from paying attention to a lot of other factors on which we sort people and allocate benefits and burdens when we make public policy or private choices—geography, income, what have you—athleticism—it's simply another variable that one could rationally decide to use in making decisions.

Race is not different. In the middle ground there is a position that, 'Yes, there is a moral cost, a special moral cost, but we ought to be willing to pay that cost in at least some circumstances.' If you take that middle position, you're then drawn into arguing about, 'Well, what might those circumstances be, that would provide a justification for paying attention to race?'

My point is this: The first position, that there is a cost and it [is] too great a cost to bear, is distinguishable from the second position and the third position, but has a logical coherence to it. And, indeed, it has a moral coherence to it. In our arguments about race, in our arguments about affirmative action, in particular, it seems to me, and I argued it's important to understand what the difference is in value commitments that may animate this dispute between the first position and either the second or the third, specifically. One possible explanation is that people who hold the first position are simply less

concerned than I am, for example, about effectiveness. They might say, 'I'm against discrimination; I'm in favor of racial justice, but I'm not particularly concerned with consequentialist arguments about what kind of tool is needed in order to achieve it, because I have a higher principle of color-blindness that to me is more important than instrumental arguments about what measures might be needed in order to achieve equality.'

I am enough of an instrumentalist, enough of a utilitarian to feel uncomfortable with that position, but I understand it. I understand it. Now it's not crazy. I mean, I think the death penalty is, perhaps, an example. Now lots of us have a view about the death penalty, pro or con, that depends upon an assessment of whether we believe the death penalty will deter crime. You may look at the evidence and conclude, 'It's a lousy deterrent, therefore I oppose the death penalty.' You may look at the evidence and conclude, 'Well, maybe it can be a good deterrent, therefore I support the death penalty, provided it's administered in such and such a way.'

There are other people whose perspective—whose moral position is quite different. Their view may be, 'I believe in the sanctity of human life, and therefore'—dot-dot-dot. Well, therefore, they may reason the state should never take another life, or therefore, an eye for an eye, whatever. It's a moral position that has nothing to do with an instrumental calculation about deterrence. Showing somebody who has that perspective a new social science study isn't going to influence them at all. Similarly, it seems to me, on race the role that evidence has in argument depends a little bit on the moral position of the opponent. And clarifying the distinction between moral positions, it seems to me, is useful. I'll come to the why in a moment.

Next difficult question: If you believe that there is a moral cost, but that it might sometimes be worth paying, well, when? Now, of course, within the legal framework the most obvious explanation is to say remediation, to remedy discrimination. The difficulty, of course, is that if you scratch the surface, we have huge disagreements about what discrimination is, how to define it, how to measure it. Disagreements, for example, with some people believing that it's not discrimination unless there is racial animus dripping

from the lips of a perpetrator and an identifiable victim. On the other end, you have people who think, 'Well, any kind of observed social or economic disparity, I think that's discrimination. I don't have to see animus; I don't have to see intent. I've just got to inequality that to me is unobjectionable, is objectionable. That's evidence of discrimination and I want to do something about it,' and, of course, a range of attitudes in between.

My point, again, is this is harder than rocket science. Simply saying, 'I'm against discrimination. I'm against discrimination' is at best a platitude; at worst, it's obfuscation because the difficult issues that divide us are not about opposition to discrimination. It's about the difficult moral choice of, 'Well, how are going to define it? How are we going to measure it? And obviously, what are you going to do about it?'

Choosing a definition of discrimination as its well known to folks who studied this—studied this field involves making commitments familiar to political philosophers, focusing on individual culpability, on the one hand, or focusing instead on our ideals about community, on the other, basic commitments. Part of the problem in wrestling about race is that the communal impulse and the traditional individualistic liberal impulse both run deep in our political culture. A legal or policy or moral position that is reductionist, that tries to embrace only one of those two alternatives, seems to me to open itself necessarily to serious disagreement, which isn't to say there aren't extremists on either side. I was just in the debate with William F. Buckley, for example.

Well, I could say more about discrimination, but let me go on to a third deeply difficult issue. Accepting that remedying discrimination, however defined, might provide a justification in certain circumstance or for paying attention to race, gender, is that the only justification? I remember a discussion in with the president. Ab, I don't remember if you were in this particular meeting, but the suggestion was, 'Well, Mr. President, you can support affirmative action and explain your support for it simply by saying it's necessary as a measure to remedy and prevent discrimination, right? Note

that we've embraced a utilitarian framework. It's necessary to remedy and prevent discrimination.' And he said, 'Yeah, that sounds right. That's right.'

And the argument was, 'Yeah, that's the high moral ground. You can explain that. You can defend that. No problem. Of course, defining discrimination is difficult, but at least there's a position people can understand.' Nods all around. I said, 'Well, wait a minute. I'm not so sure. You said that you want a Cabinet that looks like America. Now did you say you want a Cabinet that looks like America because you wanted to remedy discrimination suffered by Ron Brown and Hazel O'Leary and Donna Shalala or where you trying to remedy discrimination committed by previous presidents, in the way in which they selected their advisers? No, of course not. You said because you were persuaded that by being inclusive you would build a Cabinet that would do a better job of serving you and serving the American people.'

That's a diversity rationale and inclusion rationale that is logically and, I believe, morally distinguishable from the antidiscrimination rationale, from the remediation rationale.' And he said, 'OK. OK. I've got it. OK. So I'm in favor of affirmative action because we want to remedy discrimination.' I said, 'Remedy and prevent, right. Remedy and prevent discrimination and for diversity.' He said, 'Yeah, that sounds right. That sounds right.'

I said, 'Wait a minute. Wait a minute. I mean, you're in favor of diversity in your Cabinet and with federal judges, and I know you believe in it for university admissions. What about the widget factory in Pocatello? And you say you're in favor of it in hiring; well, what about layoffs?' Silence. I said, 'Look, it's just not that easy. It's not that easy. You can be in favor of diversity, but does it then follow that it has equally weighty moral significance in all of these contexts we're talking about? Context matters.' At which point I think Stephanopoulos says, 'How are we going to explain this?'

Does diversity provide a moral justification for paying attention to color? Again, underneath our disagreement about that are disputes about the way the world is and disputes about what we want the world to be. The 5th Circuit Court of Appeals, in the Hopwood case last year, wrote that in their view, notwithstanding the Supreme Court in Bakke or several of the justices in Bakke,

anyway, diversity had never been a compelling interest to justify race-conscious measures in university admissions, public institutions. We accept the notion that universities should care about inclusion, about diversity, but paying attention to diversity on the basis of race, color, is as irrational in the admissions process as paying attention to—what do they say?—hair color and weight, blood type.

Well, I mean, I don't know what planet they're on. I don't know what planet they're on, but they're obviously looking at the world in a very different way from mine. And they're obviously evaluating the kind of community that should be created on campuses in a way that's different from university leaders around the country—remediation, yes; diversity, maybe. Another argument, another difficult argument: Well, doesn't all of this conflict with merit? Conflict with merit? Huge arguments about that. Well, many things could be said, have been said.

One set of issues concerns the instruments that are used for measurement of merit. The tests are not good predictors. They're not good predictors of what it is they claim to predict, for example, the SAT predicting first-year performance in college. OK. The correlation coefficient of about .4 explains about 15 percent, 16 percent of the variation. I think Lani has written with Susan Stern that's about as good as a predictor as weight predicts height—not great. And not a good predictor for anyone—not just for minorities, but for anyone. And, of course—well, what are we predicting, anyway? Why is that what you want to predict? Why is that what you would want to define as merit in the first place? Serious disagreements about that.

Bad instruments—for everyone, you need to amend or abandon the instruments, one could argue. Now there's a second line of argument, that merit depends on mission—that merit depends on mission. I was on a panel yesterday at the Twentieth Century Fund with George Rupp, the president of Columbia, and he said, 'Look'—echoing the wonderful AAU president's statement published a couple of weeks ago—he said, 'Look, inclusion is important. Diversity is important, first, because it contributes to the educational mission of our institutions, and second, because we're trying to

prepare leaders.' Well, that's fine, but of course, the deciding on the mission of the institution is contestable—what it ought to be—deeply contestable. Another problem is that one has to keep in mind in what form one's making these arguments.

I said, 'Look, you say that inclusion promotes the educational mission of the institution. The 5th Circuit in Hopwood didn't seem to believe that. Apparently the Board of Regents at the University of California doesn't believe that—or at least doesn't believe it very seriously. So where's the beef? Where's your evidence? Where's your proof? You're hand-waving. You're citing dead social philosophers, which isn't really much better than citing dead judges for the proposition.' There is disagreement of an empirical sort as to what kind of contribution inclusion can make as well as disagreement with respect to the values that are being pursued.

Now lastly, I want to point out that even if we cross the hurdle of saying that, 'Yes, there are some circumstances in which we should pay attention to race or gender, what have you,' the appropriateness of, say, race-conscious measures in a given context will depend, to a great extent, it seems to me, on the details of that context. And the nuances—the details of the way in which a tool is designed will depend a lot on the context. For example, we have this notion, certainly in the law, that you shouldn't unnecessarily trammel the interests of bystanders and the white guys, right? Don't just gratuitously deprive them of various benefits and opportunities. Do it carefully, I suppose, or at least think about it carefully, try to minimize the extent to which you do that.

Well, that makes sense, and of course, it follows directly from our first assumption, namely that there is a moral cost. Obviously we want to try to minimize that moral cost by designing a tool differently. Well, how do you design it differently? You can't design it differently without having a big argument about how much do we care about the fact, say, that a certain kind of small business contractor doesn't get an opportunity to bid on a certain subset of Air Force contracts. Is that a big problem or is that a little problem that we should worry about?—obviously, again, a sharply contestable

proposition. How do we feel about an emphasis on inclusion and diversity when it comes to promotion, as compared with layoffs in the Piscataway case in New Jersey that's been in the press so much? Even if you think it's important to have diversity within the high school, is it important to have diversity within the faculty of the business department of that high school? Room for argument, it's not all black and white.

Bottom line—and it echoes what Paul said in his introduction: I am persuaded beyond any shadow of a doubt that if one peels away the platitudes and the ugliness and the heated words in so much of the debate on race, one can identify, in a fairly systematic way, some sharp disagreements of an empirical sort and some sharp disagreements of a moral sort or of a value sort. It also seems obvious that our differences with respect to perceptions of the world and our differences with respect to values, are both rooted in and in turn fuel the distance between our communities. Our perceptions and our values shaped by our experiences. our experiences shaped by our community. Our communities separate. Now in the papers this morning, yesterday Gallup announced the results of this great big study that they've done on black-white perceptions. They're going to do Latinos, eventually, but this was just black-white. Over 3,000 people sampled, great big thick book of findings. I went to the briefing last night, and what was interesting is that as they talked about America's attitudes on race—black attitudes, white attitudes and so forth—all the black folks in the room were sitting there grumbling to each other, getting angrier and angrier and angrier. Why? This is so obvious, right? I mean, of course, yeah. What's the big deal? I mean, there was resentment festering in this group of, you know, fairly fancy people, just because it seemed so obvious that the contrasts in perceptions of the way the world is between black and white was such old news that it—I mean, the hors d'oeuvres were not good enough to justifying having come to the event.

The problem, therefore, it seems to me, this—I think this is called transition—the problem, therefore, is when we observe the differences in perception and we observe the differences in values that are animating the policy battles—ugly battles, and we further observe that those differences are rooted in separateness of communities, what do you do? What do you do?

Period, paragraph: OK, so now I want to rewind and go back a couple of months, and let's pretend that we're sitting in the Roosevelt Room in the West Wing, and one of the president's aides says, 'Well, look, the president talked all during the campaign about this bridge to the 21st century and how we all to come together to walk over the bridge together.' Paul probably wrote that stuff, right? OK.

And so we talked about unity, unity, unity, unity. And he talked about unity in the State of the Union and all that rest of it. So what we want to figure out is how do you do it? We needed unity initiative, right? That's the purpose of that meeting, a unity initiative. And Governor—former Governor Winter of Mississippi says, 'Race—you ought to do something on race.' The president is interested in doing something on race. Great. OK. First, problem: Do you do something on race or do something on difference, right? Is it race only or is it race plus gender, plus sexual orientation, plus disability, plus class, plus—What is it? Which should it be? There's the first choice.

OK. Does everybody understand the setting, right? This is a group of folks that are trying to do what you're trying to do, mainly, they're trying to figure out how do we improve civic culture? How do we bring the country together? How do we do good things for America? Hard question. Is it race or is it race-plus? Second question: Let's assume it's race. Does that mean that we should set to work on \$100 billion urban Marshall Plan, right? An initiative to fix K through 12 education, and somebody said, 'Well, Lani Guinier says we need to have a national conversation on race. So maybe what the president ought to do is lead a national conversation on race.' And other people said, 'Well, that's just hot air. We have to actually do something.' So there's a second question.

Is it just conversation? Is it just policy pronouncement? Or is there a third option? Now here's my answer to that, for what it's worth, and then you all can throw things at me and I'll—and I'll subside. I've actually written something, an op-ed piece co-authored with Jesse Jackson, in fact. This is calculated to give the president a heart attack.

And here's our basic thesis: Conversation about race is fine, but interracial civility is not an end in itself. The initiative needs to be not about civility, but about justice. It needs to be not about the discussion gap, but about the opportunity gap, the investment gap. But bold measures to address the opportunity gap will be stillborn because so many of our policy discussions on the social and economic challenges facing the country are poisoned by color.

And so long as the political face on various economic and social challenges, so long as the political face on the problem is black or brown or yellow, our politics is poisoned and the possibility of consensus is handicapped, so an opportunity agenda that does not simultaneously address the problem of connecting communities so that you create the possibility of bringing values and perceptions together won't work.

So the argument is not either-or conversation and program but both. That's one point. And the reverse is true also. You can't have racial justice without having equal opportunity. You can't have racial understanding without closing the opportunity gap. So it's both. As I said, this is harder than rocket science.

The second piece of it has to be if you're going to have conversations, what kind of conversations? Now here my thesis—and this is towards the end of my book and it's very sketchy is as follows—well, let me do it by way of anecdote.

There was a—lawyers do that—shortly after I began teaching at Harvard there was a dinner for the newly appointed elected cardinal in Boston, Cardinal Law—and I was invited to have dinner with him, with a couple of people. I don't know why I was invited. I am not Catholic. I'm not particularly religious. It must have been affirmative action. So there I was. I was at this dinner. And he had just come from his—conservative on church doctrine—he'd come from the South, had a fabulous record of doing things on civil rights.

Boston was in the throes of one of its regularly scheduled bits of racially motivated violence. I asked him, 'Your eminence'—I think that was the right

thing to call him—I said, ‘Your eminence, here we have these two communities. They’re at each other’s throats. People are dying. Do you think there’s any hope of bringing these communities together, some kind of reconciliation?’ And he said, ‘Yes. Yes, I do.’ And I said, ‘Well, why?’ And he said, ‘Well, because I believe in the basic goodness of the human spirit.’ And I said, ‘Well, why?’ And he—I was an assistant professor, learning the Socratic method—you do these things, right? I said, ‘Well, why?’ And he said, ‘I believe in the goodness of the human spirit because I have faith.’ And I started to ask why. And he said, ‘He saw’—he said, ‘Because Christ has risen.’ And he said it with a certain genial finality that let me know I should stop because Christ has risen.

So I was thinking about this afterwards. And I was thinking, ‘OK. Now where does one get faith of that sort if you’re not particularly religious?’ Well, in religion, of course, there’s this possibility of conversion. He believed in the possibility of redemption. That’s what he said, ‘Because I believe in the possibility of redemption,’ he said, and I said, ‘Why?’ And he said, ‘I believe in the possibility of redemption because Christ has risen.’ OK. So redemption. Why should we have faith in the possibility of redemption?

There’s some conversion experience that gives somebody religious faith. I don’t think it is just a sermon. I don’t think it is a legal brief. There’s something else that happens. It seems to me that the shift in values—this conversion, this transformation that takes place is what we need to be about, with respect to racial and ethnic justice—that is say what are the secular analogues of that kind of transformative experience? What are the secular experiences? What are the experiences of whatever sort that will have a transformative effect on people’s sense of community, a transformative effect on people’s sense of who is us and who is them, because with that transformation comes the possibility of bridging the gulf in perceptions and values.

Now this is not a totally weird idea. I think everybody in the room either has children or has been a child, right? Parents do this all the time—that is to say you self-consciously select experiences for your child that you hope will shape

their values, right—who they play with, where they're going to school, the guitar lessons, the ballet lessons, what they watch on television—whatever it is. You pick experiences to shape values. We, in the civil rights movement, spend our time writing legal briefs, by and large, these days and op-ed pieces, rather than trying to figure out what are the transformative experiences that will work now in the '90s—not the '60s, now in the '90s—to have that transformative effect on people's sense of community?

So I was talking to a bunch of Episcopal ministers, and they said, 'We do great things in soup kitchens.' And I said—no pun intended—'God bless you. I think charity is terrific, not enough of it. I'm all for charity. But I don't think that's going to provide the kind of transformative experience that will reshape somebody's sense of community.' I just don't. For there's a hierarchical quality of serving across the table that doesn't accomplish what I think is likely to be the point, the purpose. I mean, maybe Habitat for Humanity is the kind of experience that does it, maybe political activity around a shared problem. Let's fix our schools for every child, right? Let's get rid of the toxic waste dump that's poisoning our water. Let's elect a candidate, whatever. Let's repeal Prop 209—excuse me.

That's the question: What are the transformative experiences? Now let me close by talking about the president again. I was a very strong proponent of the national conversation thesis when I worked at the White House. Then I left. And I concluded that that was all wrong, that that was all wrong. I didn't think that Bill Clinton would do it, could do it, that any political leader could do it, in part because talking about race necessarily almost inevitably means you're going to piss off—Am I allowed to say that?—that you're going to upset 40 percent of your audience.

And as it turns out, most political leaders, be they presidents of countries or presidents of universities—presidents of countries, presidents of universities would just as soon avoid topics guaranteed to upset 40 percent of the audience. You'd rather talk about something else. There's no shortage of subjects. Once in a while they do it anyway. It's called leadership with a capital L. But that's a different session, all right? That's called leadership. When it

happens, we applaud, we write books about it, but it's not a reliable strategy. It's not a reliable strategy.

Secondly, it turns out many of these leaders are busy. You know, there's race, yes, but there's also Bosnia and so forth and so on. So the sustained conversation and attention to this required by the complexity of the subject makes it difficult to figure out what he can do on Saturday and thereafter. Third problem is it's so damned hard. It's so damned hard. Context matters so much, nuance matters so much. Platitudes can be not only unhelpful, they can be poisonous. Working through the media, the possibility of sustained engagement on a complicated issue—daunting. I'm sure Paul Taylor will talk about that issue later on.

So here's what I think. I believe that the president must engage in a process that has five elements: First, relentless teaching—relentless teaching about where America is on race.

UNIDENTIFIED MAN: Present.

EDLEY: You think that's funny. Relentless teaching about where the president is— about where the country is on race, speaking authoritatively about it; secondly, relentless teaching about the ways in which color poisons our consideration of a variety of policy problems. Expose it, deal with it constructively. And in doing so, model for the nation how to wrestle with these difficult value divisions. We're not good at it.

Third, he needs to tell us his vision of racial and ethnic justice in the 21st century, and he needs to explain that vision and explain why his vision is preferable to alternative visions, clarity and moral teaching.

Fourth, he needs to look around the country and identify those examples of leadership and those programmatic examples that to him represent the promising paths towards achieving that vision: What should the federal government do? What should the president of the University of Pennsylvania do? What should the pastor of the local church do? What works and why? How to make progress towards that vision concretely?

And fifth and finally, he needs to recruit and sustain and nourish leaders. He cannot do this alone. He needs people like the folks in this room to exercise leadership. When I give speeches on this subject around the country, I am struck by how hungry people are for help in figuring out how to address problems of race. They know it's hard and they don't know what to do.

Last story and then I'll close: I gave a talk about a year ago to a group of minority officers at the Central Intelligence Agency. It was not a huge group, but there we were. We were at a covert military facility in Virginia. I could tell you where it is, but I'd have to kill you all. And after talking with them about affirmative action and their various views and pushing them, 'Well, what about this and what about that, and what about this car—kind of argument? What would you say about this,' and pushing them for about 45 minutes in Socratic style.

I stopped and said, 'Wait. Wait. Stop. You all are terrible at this. You're terrible. I mean, I wouldn't want any of you representing my side of this argument at a cocktail party, terrible.' 'Why?' 'Well, one reason I think you're terrible at this is because you haven't practiced. This is very difficult. You haven't practiced doing it. If you're like me, most of the time when somebody comes up to me to talk about a very complicated issue like this or like abortion, I try to change the subject. I mean, I'm tired. Life is hard and then you die. And I'd just as soon change the subject. Thank you.'

Instead, when we talk about the subject, we usually do it with people who are relatively like-minded. We engage in what I call choir practice, right? We practice our melodies. We practice our harmonies. And it just sounds so good, feels so good. It's great, choir practice. And instead what we need to be doing is missionary practice, figuring out how to talk to people whose values and experiences are different, figuring out how to build a connection to peoples whose experiences and whose communities are different from ours.

So the fifth and final thing that Bill Clinton has to do, in speaking to the nation about this issue over the next year and ultimately in writing a report, is he has to recruit leaders and he has to give leaders the tools with which to

be effective missionaries. I'm done. Questions, or comments? I should—yes, sir.