

written for the Door County Advocate—September 20, 2008

Like many of you, I'm thinking about bridges these days. The Interstate 35W Bridge over the Mississippi River in Minneapolis just opened, a little more than 13 months after the stunning collapse of the old bridge during rush hour. The new bridge opened on budget and three months early. Years ago, I drove across the old bridge almost every day. God willing, I'll drive across the new one later this month.

Before that, I'll drive across the new bridge in Sturgeon Bay, another wonderful structure coming in on budget and ahead of schedule. For the past year, I've driven by it almost every day and watched it take shape. It will be a great improvement over the old steel bridge for anyone wanting to get across the bay in a car or on bike or by foot. So I am thinking about bridges these days.

And I got to wondering about bridges in the Bible. I couldn't think of any explicit use of the word, but I did a little research, too. The word "bridge" does not appear in the Bible. Did you know that? You won't find it in the KJV or the RSV or the NIV, and it won't show up in the NKJV, the NRSV, or the TNIV. It's not in the NASB, the HCSB, or "the best version out there", the ESV. No "bridge" in the Bible.

There were bridges around in Bible times. Long before Jesus walked the Holy Land, the Greeks and Romans were walking on bridges over all sorts of great divides. The apostle Paul would have seen bridges in Athens and Rome, and his missionary journeys in Asia Minor (what is today southwestern Turkey) would have almost certainly taken him over several bridges built by the Roman Caesars.

But we don't find the word "bridge" in the Bible. Unless you spell it "J-e-s-u-s". Because there is a great divide between God in heaven and humanity on earth, and it cannot be crossed in any way except Jesus, the bridge between heaven and earth. Our sin separates us from God. Sin creates a chasm between God and mankind, and nothing enables us to get to God except the way God created for us, and that way is by the Son of God, Jesus of Nazareth.

God sent his Son to be our Savior, and Jesus is called Christ (the "Greek way" to say the name for the anointed, promised one referred to as "messiah" in Hebrew). As the apostle Paul puts it in a letter to Timothy: *there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.* And Jesus himself said this in the Gospel of John: *"I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."*

There is a great divide between heaven and earth, a canyon which cannot be crossed except by the love of God and the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. A popular song in contemporary Christian music a while back put it this way: *There's a bridge to cross the great divide; a way was made to reach the other side. The mercy of the Father cost his Son his life; his love is deep, his love is wide – there's a cross to bridge the great divide.* ("The Great Divide"; lyrics by Grant Cunningham and Matt Huesmann).

I am glad for The Bridge. How about you?

Cory Dahl is pastor of First Baptist Church of Sturgeon Bay. His e-mail is fbcb@sturgeon-bay.com
Bible verses are from [The Holy Bible, English Standard Version](#) (ESV).