

Keep Your Paddle in the Water



By Coach Dave Daubenmire

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If you are anything like me, you would have to admit that the last 55 months have been a pretty rocky ride. There have been many times when I simply looked out my living room window and wondered where in the heck did my country go.

The election of Donald Trump to a third term...and the second term he gets to serve...has been a splash of cool water in the face of many a wearied soul.

From 2020 to 2024 we all witnessed an acceleration of wickedness like America has not seen since the dark days of our War Between the States. Everything I had come to believe America was about seemed to be under assault. The oldest trick in the book is "divide and conquer" and it sure seemed as if we were receiving a Master's Degree in Dystopia as the battle over TRUTH raged like a California wild fire.

I often wondered if, in fact, America would survive. Although my hopes are a little bit higher than they were this time last year, the survival of the America we all grew up in still seems to be hanging in the balance. Perhaps it is just my stage in life, but I still long for the days of "baseball, hot dogs, apple pie, and Chevrolet." I want those days for my 10 grandbabies.

What kind of Grandpa would leave this mess of America as an inheritance to his grandkids?

I honestly believe that, at the end of the day, most Americans want the same things for their progeny. Love, joy, peace, security. and happiness would certainly be at the top of most Americans' wish list.

You know, the gospel of Rodney King. "*Why can't we all get along...?*" I wish it was that simple.

The Bible asks a very simple question. "[Can two walk together except they agree?](#)" Can America survive when we can no longer agree on the basic truths of life?

Most Americans are good people. If the Truth were to be told they simply want to be left alone to live their lives in peace. But there is an anti-liberty spirit that has enveloped this nation, and that spirit has written on it's chest DIVIDE AND CONQUER. One Nation, Under God has become nothing more than a slogan on a T-shirt.

We have been here before. America survived one Civil War. I don't know if we can survive another.

No matter which political team you find yourself rooting for it is time both sides stopped using Government as a weapon. "Government" was intended to be a verb...but we have turned it into a noun.

Most Americans couldn't care less about race. Weary of struggling, both sides long for a return to normalcy. But there is the rub, we can no longer agree on exactly what it is that is normal.

The battle lines are drawn, and the dukes are up. The 50 year-long "cultural war" is heading to the modern version of Gettysburg.

So, where does that leave us? What if we don't want to be on either the Republican or the Democrat team? What if our desire is to once again live as "***one nation, under God,***

indivisible, with liberty and justice for all?" Is that really impossible to achieve?

I recently had a discussion with a buddy of mine who earns his living as a builder. We were discussing a remodeling project I was considering, and I was surprised at how high his estimate came in. When I questioned him about it, he responded, "*Coach Dave, **reconstruction** is always more complicated than **new construction.***"

The road ahead will not be easy. The future of Western Civilization hangs in the balance.

As many of you know, I lived my previous life as a High School Football Coach. One of the most difficult things to do is to take a group of young men from diverse backgrounds and mold them towards a unified goal. ONE HEARTBEAT was what we called it.

To build team comradery we always took the Seniors on a pre-season white-water rafting trip. It was a great way to build team unity. Riding the rapids of the New River in West Virginia was always a great start to the season.

Each raft carried 8 men and a tour guide. Before they let us get into the raft and out onto the water our guide took us through the do's and don'ts to ensure a safe and enjoyable time. One of the rules that he shared with us has served me well throughout my life. It was a simple phrase...but appropriate today.

"Men!" He would say with every eye looking at him. *"Here is the most important thing I can instruct you on today. It is imperative that you follow this rule. When we head into the rapids, and as long as we remain in the rapids, KEEP YOUR PADDLE IN THE WATER. Pushin' against the waves will keep you in the boat."*

There are rough rapids ahead for all Americans and I offer you

the same advice I received 30 years ago in the hills of West Virginia.

“If you wanna stay in the boat...keep your paddle in the water.”

Reconstruction is harder than new construction. Grab a paddle. It is time to get to work.

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