

# Playing Favorites

## Big Thoughts in a COVID-19 World

Rev. Kevin D. Kriesel, Blue Mound UMC

To listen to the current public discourse (if one could really call it that) one would likely come away with the idea that one American political party is the home of true (Christian) religion, while the other is made up of crazed heathens. I imagine that there are a few folks nodding their heads in agreement. I disagree.

Now, I won't name names in this conversation, I trust that if you are reading this column, you are capable of filling in the blanks on your own, and if *you* fill in the blanks, I don't get into quite as much trouble (and with the country as polarized as it is along party lines, I'll avoid as much trouble as I can)!

So I grew up near the Mississippi River, which contributed to my development of an analogy that compares the political spectrum of our society to a river. Basically, it says that even though most of the visible action – the flooding and erosion - takes place along the banks – left and right – of a river, the vast majority of the water flows deep down the middle.

And so, even though the right and left, the conservative and the liberal if you will, extremes get all the attention, it is in the vast majority of the middle that the vast majority of the work of this nation gets done. It is this huge majority, that gets no real press coverage, that holds and preserves the values and the morals of this nation. The extremes may tug and pull at us to choose a side, the channel may wander to the left or the right at times, but the fact of the matter is that the current of time keeps flowing, and most of us find ourselves somewhere in the middle, most of the time.

We've spent a lot of time with the Apostle Paul lately at my church. I love Paul, I love his way with words, even though they can tie your tongue in knots if you try to read them 3 times fast out loud. In chapter 12 of his Letter to the Romans, Paul warns his readers (members of the early Christian church) not to behave like their non-believing neighbors, not to think too highly of themselves, and to think clearly – as clearly as they are able, anyway. And then he says we cannot possibly do it on our own, that we must depend on each other, and that dependence creates an equality that can't be denied.

Let's hear Paul's words from verses 4 and 5. "For as in one body we have many members (parts), and not all the (parts) have the same function, so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are (a part of) one of another" (paraphrased from the NRSV).

And so, when one side of our political system accuses the other of being evil, godless, lawless, radical - you name the epithet - understand that that person/party is not speaking on God's behalf. They do not hold a special place in God's heart. God created the river; God loves the river, not the right bank or the left. God created us; God loves us, all of us. Rather than mudslinging and fearmongering, perhaps we should pursue the things that please God: peace, justice, equality, and ensuring a fair chance for all to enjoy and appreciate the bounty that God has placed in this world. That is not a capitalistic approach to life, nor a socialistic approach, it is Godly.

God is not a Republican, nor is God a Democrat. I would venture to say that neither party holds any special significance in God's eyes. They are human constructs, of no value to the creator of all things. And as human institutions, they are flawed, and yet we cling to them. We can do better America. Stay well, think big. Amen. *Pastor Kevin may be reached at [kdsamk24@hotmail.com](mailto:kdsamk24@hotmail.com).*