

Doris Kearns Goodwin, the historian, wrote about President Johnson's vision of "*The Great Society*" which he introduced in 1964 as his solution to the "*irrational discontent*"¹ that was spreading like wild fire. The conflagrations that blazed literally across the nation symbolized a society burning. Injustices against blacks and women were then as undeniable as they were unjust. "*The May riots,*" opined Michel de Certeau in August 1968, "*had left in their wake the sense of a cultural trauma and the explicit feeling of powerlessness.*"²

We were the counterculture generation opposed to more things than just the war in Vietnam. We became the voice of civil rights, and a freedom of expression that knew no bounds. Ours was also a sexual revolution. This was what Goodwin called "*gradually emerging currents in American awareness—the sense that we were losing control of our own society.*"³

In 1970–1971, one-third of America's college-age population felt that marriage had become obsolete. Many young Americans no longer saw any reason to heed established conventions about sex, drugs, authority. Our generation was severing the bond with the past.. ...And that was then.

Jon Meacham, the historian and CNN contributor, just a few years ago wrote⁴ "*Extremism, racism, ... driven by fear of the unknown, tend to spike in periods of ... social stress—a period like ours [My underline]."* What's worse is that both

¹ Doris Kearns Goodwin. *Lyndon Johnson and the American Dream* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1976), Chapter 8. p.210.

² Graham Ward. *Postmodern Theology* (University of Manchester: Blackwell Publishing Ltd. 2008), xvi.

³ Doris Kearns Goodwin. *Lyndon Johnson and the American Dream*. Chapter 8. p.212.

⁴ Jon Meacham. *The Soul of America: The Battle for Our Better Angles*. (New York, NY: Random House, 2018), 4ff.

sides of the political divide feel the same way. Meacham called us an *"imperfect union."*⁵

Historically, yesteryear's leaders spoke about voting rights and citizenship according to the 14th & 15th amendments but never, at the time, including blacks. Plessy v. Ferguson was a landmark 1896 U.S. Supreme Court decision that upheld the constitutionality of racial segregation under the "separate but equal" doctrine. Semantics in the service of hate! The Declaration of Independence spoke of *"all men .. created equal,"* ..And maybe they really meant only all *white men*? And now we mean everyone *but*? You'll have to read Meacham for yourself but it explains a lot about a society flailing, helplessly drowning in its own hate.

But just by mentioning this stuff I am stoking the flames, and helping to keep a divided nation divided—which is the last thing I want. While we dream of an evolutionary utopia we find ourselves supporting an Orwellian dystopia.

And then Covid and masks took away our smiles—as if they were not important!!

But believers getting together for worship, praise, Bible study and prayer over coffee and whatever—fellowship—is the needed *Balm of Gilead* that heals. [Jeremiah 8:22]. Jesus is not racist, and if He is extreme it is an extreme love! Peter instructed us , *"Finally, all of you be like-minded and sympathetic, love one another, and be compassionate and humble."*⁶ And James, our Lord's brother, said it this way: *"But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peace-loving, gentle, compliant, full of mercy and good fruits, unwavering, without pretense."*⁷

⁵ Ibid. 15

⁶ 1 Peter 3:8

⁷ James 3:17

Let's get back in Church—back together, and may our Lord use our example to reunite a country.