

Chronicles of Diversity



Your Leadership Journal

Red, Blue & White?

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Chronicles of Diversity

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Red states, Blue states, a divided
country.

What does white have to do with it?
Honestly I don't know for sure. But
after this year's publishing vacation
it must fit somewhere other than the
headline.

The red and the
blue of course
come from
descriptions
during the
recent Democrat
Convention about
the country, in
the last election,
being equally
divided between red and blue states.
Red, of course, referred to those states
that voted for George W. Bush and the
Blue states that voted for Al Gore.

If I remember the maps correctly

however, they were not only state
maps, but also national county maps.
The great so called divide had to do
with the county maps. Red's were
rural, conservative, and Republican.
Blue's were urban, liberal, and
Democrat.

Rather than
go into this
so called
divide, in the
sense that it is
described in
the election
and the post
9/11/2001
era, I would
point you to

a long but excellent article by David
Brooks: [http://www.theatlantic.com/
issues/2001/12/brooks.htm](http://www.theatlantic.com/issues/2001/12/brooks.htm)

I have spent most of the last month
traveling between the red and the blue



“ **What this country really
needs at this time is some
serious understanding of
the present reality of the
world.** ”

*Orient, Washington from
Huckleberry Ridge*

land. For some reason that makes no sense to my blue neighbors in Seattle, I have this urge to move back to the red land of my birth, there to work and to preach, God willing. To my red neighbors they can not understand how I can live in the blue land at all.

The interesting thing in these red conversations, is it really has nothing to do with the people, it has most to do with vehicles (rigs), and traffic. (As a side line, I did find the traffic in Spokane to be worse than in Seattle.) However, I do know ways in Seattle to get around most of the freeway congestion. Seattle drivers, as individuals, are completely self absorbed in their vehicles whether that be SUVs, SYHs (Sorry you hapless), or their SESs (Save the earth Sedans). Traffic aside, the fundamental needs to provide for that move from the blue to red still have not manifest their presence.

The election however will be determined, at least in the eyes of the politicians and the news media, on differences much more philosophical and subtle than whether one drives a thirty thousand dollar plus three letter "S" rig.

In this interlude between the two political party infomercials, what has really struck me so far is the mediocrity of it all. As one who has adopted for their personal motto, "Only the mediocre are always at their best." this country is quickly sinking to new levels of entropy, that even I could not have perceived a few years ago. The question the rest of this article hopes to address, its "White Paper" (See, I now have the white covered.) is this degradation of society, something that can be altered, for the good, or the bad, or is it just going to get ugly.

Then again, maybe I was just thinking all along about white sandy beaches, it's much easier that way. As I watched floaters on the Kettle River a week ago, one man who looked to be in his mid fifties, remarked to another. "This is as good as it gets!"

Now for some perspective for all the red, blue, and white readers not familiar with Northeastern Washington. Floating the Kettle River is in some mysterious way, the rite of summer. The Kettle River enters the United States for its final time near the crossing at Laurier. It flows about twenty miles generally south to the mouth on the Columbia River.

About fifteen miles of this are free flowing, the last five miles or so are influenced by Lake Roosevelt and the Grand Coulee Dam. The vast majority of the float trips however, are about four miles in length from the village of Orient to "I" Beach, an abbreviated take out place which received its name for sexual highlights. This journey takes about two hours or more depending on stops, beer, and the river flow. And this is as good as it gets.

This man was in a group of thirty three people. As they were resting on the white beach across the river, another group of fifteen or more floated into and through this group. So almost sixty people in a period of a quarter hour or so experienced this excellent slice of life. My thoughts were, "How sad, if this is as good as life gets."

Now, this I suppose, is my learned blue perspective, but I doubt this would have changed that much if I had never ventured to live in blue country. But in blue country, I could hold an event and invite enough people so that 60 blue people would attend. How many invitations would that take, 100, 200, 300 or more? The only way you can get 60 people together in the blue counties of this country, for any reason, is there is something in it for them. That reason, may be political, religious, for a higher cause, or probably economic, but at least for blue county adults, it wouldn't be just to "hang with your friends in the sun."

With fat hanging over your bathing suit, in a cheap Wal-Mart floating tube or small plastic boat, you probably won't impress your friends with the price you paid for your Lexus. So it is, different to a degree, than standing around the pool with your Haggard slacks and the three button shirt, grilling brats on your stainless steel grill, drinking designer beer and cork bottled wine, all of which you bought at Costco.

A pool and no one swimming, or a whole God given river, free for the using. Such a dilemma. So what if you don't what to be challenged to use more than four miles. On the Kettle the beer and pop will be in cans, around the pool it will be in bottles, or glasses, but by in large it will still be made by the same company, which is probably a corporate conglomerate.

The Viet Nam war records of both John Kerry and George Bush also point to this mediocre state of affairs.

Whom, who had all their marbles in a bag, would volunteer to be in charge of a Swift Boat during a shooting war. Military service was the right thing to do during the height of Viet Nam, but volunteering to face the horror of war first hand, shows to me, a vision of not understanding war as a brutal life or death struggle, or even real life itself, definitely a blue county thing. Once having experienced that horror, one should never be put into the position to ever again make the difficult decisions required to subject others to this abhorrent nightmare. War heroes are formed from necessity, not from self determination.

It seems much more sane to me to use my political connections to see if I could avoid the whole thing. Few during the height of Viet Nam had that option. If being well connected preppie, I could also go to flight school for the Texas National Guard, that would be a definite plus. I could play top gun, and never ever have to experience the truth that all war is hell on earth, even the just ones.

Whether Viet Nam was a just war, we now are told was just government propaganda. These thoughts were really not an option that could be entertained back then, when your future depended only on the grace of God as expressed through your local draft board.

I wasn't a well connected preppie, therefore I knew about fifty people who's names are inscribed on the Viet Nam Memorial. That is for someone who never has been any closer to Viet Nam than Kauai. Some were from my high school days in the red counties. Most were from my ROTC fellows, also from the conservative areas. Knowing the leadership skill imparted by our ROTC cadre, I have wondered many times how many of these casualties were the result of friendly fire, specifically an M-16 round from behind.

My commanding officer in Germany, who considered Viet Nam, "The only war we had." expletive deleting the first sentence, required us wanna be elsewhere officers, to read not only the weekly top secret intelligence briefings from the Warsaw Pact, but also those from Viet Nam. As an Infantry Second Lieutenant who "rode across Europe in a box car" during WWII this now Bird Colonel wanted is charges to get the best information and training they could on all aspects of warfare.

It is claimed that this country is now at war. A war against terrorism, a war in Iraq, and to a lesser degree

in Afghanistan. But this is a war in which no one is called upon to sacrifice, except the members of our "All Voluntary Military." This military organizational debacle, while at the same time making the armed services gender friendly, has provided an excuse for the blue counties to retreat from any responsibility for providing for the national defense.

Except, of course, for those of the inner city, who really are not much positive good, other than for cannon fodder. While at the same time the blue counties alone are susceptible to a serious, and pretty much unstoppable terrorist threat. But if this is really a war, by definition and positive illusions aside, sacrifice will be shared by the whole nation, physically, or psychologically.

Leadership is the ability to make tough decisions, based on truthful information, unswayed by personal, political, economic, governmental, or other bias.

The United States faces a future in this election in which the incumbent President has the ability and the desire to make the tough decisions and ride his F-102 until it runs out of gas. We get to go along for the ride and hope and pray we don't crash and burn. Beyond that, the truthful facts are hidden in the obscurity of faulty strategic intelligence and a bias of a rosy future for all Americans. Shooting from a fighter jet, or from the hip is a red county type of masculinity.

On the other side of this election we have a war hero, who really has never made any subsequent decisions of consequence, other than to take an active role in promoting the value of peace (and appeasement) whenever possible. As a consequence of that action, it is questionable if he can decide to put others into harms way, or even to confront evil as a reality in the world. Then also we have those same limitations on intelligence and bias. Peace is good karma in the blue counties. It is just a state of mind, even if there are people out there determined to destroy our Jewish-Christian infidelity in the name of Allah. It's just another (name for) god after all.

So my fellow Americans and world citizens, from both the red and blue persuasions, join me as we float the mediocre stretch of the Kettle River and American history for the next few months. "It doesn't



get any better than this?” Actually, we could continue beyond “I Beach” down to the Barstow Bridge for a little excitement. But that would require we would have to deal with “the falls.”

The falls is a short area with a large undercut rock and moderate rapids. We would have to portage around this area. That would mean we need to get out of our tubes and plastic boats, carry them over the sharp rocks, return for our coolers of beer and soda, and continue our drifting journey until we near the slack water of Lake Roosevelt.

Therefore, my fellow citizens are we really up to that task? I hope by the grace of God we are. For if we aren't, the mediocrity of this journey may lull us into thinking the rapids don't exist, believe that the map is wrong, and just pop the top on another can a Busch Light, as the rocks of an evil world puncture our Wal-Mart floating device, and we are swept into the turbulence of the falls with no life jacket.

“Life jacket, what's a life jacket? I don't need no restricting life jacket, I'm an American. Life's just a beach somewhere south of Orient. Oh, yes, God, bless America, not with your grace, I don't really want that, but bless us because we earn it.” (Present tense.)

What this country really needs at this time is some serious understanding of the present reality of the world. What we have been given, in both the red and blue counties, is a distorted vision or dream, and all that red, white, and blue junk made in China. “Is it going to get better than this? It just depends on what you definition of is, is!”

It's great to be back. You can only spend so much time praying, thinking, and enjoying white sandy beaches.

