

For Immediate Release

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Letter to the Editor: "Why We Must Work Together on Common Goals"

By Matthew Dowling

In a world of increasing political divisions, it is more important than ever to recognize the commonalities that connect us all as people. Despite our differences in beliefs and opinions, we all come from the same place: we are all God's children. This means that instead of being divided by our politics, we must come together to work on common goals.

Religion in Politics: and Vice-Versa

Now, let me start by saying this opinion piece may mention God more than my writings normally do. I'll start off by telling you why: when I ran for office several years ago, I was told not to mention God or my faith too often for fear that it may "turn off" those who have different views. Now that I am out of office, I have looked back and question that advice.

The public has been divided over the number of expressions of religious faith by politicians is appropriate. While some may feel that politicians should express their faith, others may feel it is inappropriate for religious leaders to be involved in politics. In the past decade, more Americans said political leaders express religious faith too little (37%) rather than too much (29%) according to the PEW Institute.

Religion and politics will never cease to be intertwined, no matter how divisive they can be. What we need to focus on is finding commonalities and drawing divine inspiration from our respective faiths. As we are all God's children, we must work together on common goals and understand that each person has the capacity for good. To quote Dolly Parton: "The way I see it, if you want the rainbow, you gotta put up with the rain."

The 118th Congress

The election of Kevin McCarthy as the speaker of the House of Representatives was a difficult one to watch showed a struggle to unify even Republicans. On the 12th ballot, 14 votes flipped in favor of McCarthy, and he picked up one more supporter on the 13th ballot.

It is through this process that America was able to celebrate a momentous event—the ushering in of a new Congress. The success of the new Congress relies upon an understanding that all citizens have inherent dignity, freedom, and humanity, and must be respected. Civility, cooperation and working towards common goals are essential to ensure that all God's children can enjoy their rights under the law.

Compromise is an integral part of American democracy, and it is an art form that must be practiced for us to move forward. Cooperation and civility are key ingredients in reaching a compromise, yet we have seen time and again that Congress fails to

achieve such a feat. The 118th Congress is no exception, and it seems that some of our representatives have completely abandoned the concept of compromise.

The Soundtrack Towards Common Ground

Music can be a powerful way to bring people together, reminding us of our shared humanity. Music is a great equalizer; it allows us to connect with people from different backgrounds and cultures who may share similar values and beliefs. Listening to music can also be an uplifting experience, providing us with divine inspiration. Whether it's gospel, classical, jazz, country, or hip hop, music has the power to bring us closer to each other and to our Creator.

We can find commonalities in music - it has the power to bridge gaps between diverse cultures and ideologies. Dolly Parton famously said, "you'd be surprised how much people have in common when they're open to really listening." This is true not only for music, but for our daily lives. Music can be a reminder to all of us that we are all connected, regardless of our political views or religious beliefs.

By taking a few moments out of our day to connect with music, we can take a step back from the pressures of everyday life and refocus our attention on what really matters: taking care of ourselves and each other, as God's children.

As if the world needed another reminder of how wonderful Dolly Parton is, the iconic singer and philanthropist released a new song, "Don't Make Me Have To Come Down There," on her 77th birthday. In an Instagram video, Parton said: "Somebody said, 'what are you gonna get for your birthday?' I said, I'm not gonna get, I'm gonna give."

Parton has made a career out of giving. Her nonprofit organization Imagination Library is dedicated to giving books to children who need them, and she recently donated \$1 million for COVID-19 vaccine research. Her latest release was inspired by a dream she had about God standing on a mountain, looking down on us and saying: "Don't make me have to come down there." It took Parton "weeks and months" to finish the song and now it's available for the world to listen to.

The lyrics that strike me most are:

*"I gave you a book, you didn't read it
I gave you my word, you didn't heed it
Gave you a map, you said you didn't need it
And now you've lost direction, and you're wandering aimlessly
Don't make me have to come down there
This is not a game of truth or dare"*

View the video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UQmX7jT2LEg>

Back to Politics

The idea of compromise has been a fundamental part of America's fabric since its inception. The founding fathers believed in the importance of protecting individual freedom while still providing the best outcome for the collective nation. They understood that this could only be achieved through compromise, which is why they wrote it into the Constitution.

However, as the 118th Congress begins, we are already starting to see the same old political gridlock that has plagued our nation for years. We are so used to politicians bickering and fighting over everything, while they get nothing done. It's disheartening and a source of frustration for so many of us.

But what if we took a different approach? What if we could work together on common goals and use our differences as a source of strength rather than division? All God's children should be able to recognize that, despite our differences, we share a common humanity and should strive for harmony (*see what I did there? Music = Harmony*).

On the day of Dolly Parton's birthday, we can remember her words and use them as a reminder of our responsibility to come together as All God's children and work towards a common goal.

No matter who we are or where we come from, we all share a human experience and must work together to create a better future. Let us come together and put aside our differences, remembering that we are all part of a larger community and are connected through love and acceptance. We must heed the words of Dolly Parton's new hymn and work together because we are all God's children.

We must find ways to compromise and come together in times of adversity and find ways to build bridges instead of barriers. Whether it be in our families, our communities, or our governments, we must work together and recognize that we are all in this together. When we remember that we are all God's children, we will find common ground and understanding, and we can begin to move forward towards a brighter future.

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