

# Roots in Ripon

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Chuck Roots

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## I'm Back

Many of you have contacted me over the past three months to inquire about my weekly column, *Roots in Ripon*. In mid-April I decided to take a break from writing the articles since my brother, John, was coming out from Virginia for a visit and a lot of golf. This included a jaunt to Nampa, Idaho to connect with out cousin Jimmy. I wanted to enjoy the time with them without the ever-encroaching demand of another article.

However, the primary reason for not writing my articles had to do with the newspaper that was carrying my column. For a not-yet-explained reason, despite my numerous inquiries, the paper made it plain to me that they wanted me gone. For 15 years I have written this column, first for the Ripon Record, which folded in 2015, and then with the Manteca Bulletin for two years. During those fifteen years I never once failed to submit an article. This included my two years being recalled for the Iraq War, flying over the Pacific, Atlantic and most major continents. I served at Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton (California); Camp Commando, Kuwait; I MEF Headquarters, Babylon, Iraq; and Camp Lemonnier, Djibouti, Africa.

In the current environment of our nation, I'm led to believe that my conservative views politically, and my religious views as an Evangelical Christian, are no longer welcomed within the print media, or few other places for that matter. I am dismayed by this as it is clearly a sign of the times. Not so many years back, we could have healthy debates and dialogue, engaging in the give-and-take of differing points of view, yet coming away as friends despite our differences. Not so today! The attitude seems to be, "If you don't agree with me, then you're the enemy!"

Think about it! Sarah Huckabee Sanders, the White House Press Secretary, was having a quiet dinner a few weeks ago with her husband and extended family in a local restaurant. Because she works directly with and for President Trump, Sarah was told she was not welcome in the restaurant, The Red Hen. She and her husband left, driving home. The rest of the family adjourned to another restaurant across the street. They were followed by staff of the Red Hen and harassed there as well!

Pam Bondi, Florida's Attorney General, was confronted by several belligerent men while she and her boyfriend were attempting to enter a movie theater. This was an effort to intimidate. These goons taunted her boyfriend, calling him out to defend her. This went on for several minutes, with the men even spitting on her

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because she is politically conservative and is a Trump supporter. The foul language they used was revolting.

Department of Homeland Security, Kirstjen Nielsen, was having a working dinner with her staff at a Washington, DC Mexican Restaurant. A band of protestors heckled her for her supposed position on illegal immigration.

Then there was the seventeen-year-old kid who was approached in a fast-food restaurant by a middle-aged man who ripped the kids red MAGA (Make America Great Again) hat off his head, and then threw the contents of his soda cup in the kids face. The man walked away taunting the kid and stealing his hat. The good news is, someone videoed the encounter, so when it went viral, his bosses at the bar where he works as a bartender, fired him.

Congresswoman Maxine Waters, has been on a rant, publicly calling for her constituents in her Los Angeles district to harass, harangue, and in every way confront and badger anyone who voted for or supports President Trump. She exhorted these followers to surround the homes of these Conservatives, chanting and creating havoc so they could not get any sleep. In essence, there is no place in her world for those with differing views.

Civil Discourse seems to be a thing of the past. The rudeness and abusiveness of those who think differently makes the possibility of the old saying, "Let's agree to disagree," no longer viable. In the 1980s during the eight years of the presidency of Ronald Reagan, it was well known that he and Tip O'Neil, 47<sup>th</sup> Speaker of the House of Representatives, though on different sides of the fence politically, nonetheless, were good friends, often getting together in the evening to share a drink.

I am reminded of what the Bible says about our speech and the power of the tongue. One of my favorite translations of the Bible is called, *The Message*. It is quite contemporary in its use of the language. Speaking of the dangers of that funny little muscle that lives tucked away in our mouths – the tongue – James writes, *"This is scary: You can tame a tiger, but you can't tame a tongue – it's never been done. The tongue runs wild, a wanton killer. With our tongues we bless God our Father; with the same tongues we curse the very men and women he made in his image. Curses and blessings out of the same mouth!"*

We are admonished by Paul in his letter to the church in Colossae to *"Be gracious in your speech. The goal is to bring out the best in others in a conversation, not put them down, not cut them up."*

Let's agree to push back against the viciousness that permeates today's discourse. Let's do it God's way. Be gracious and civil. King David perhaps said it best in Psalm 141:3, *"Set a guard over my mouth, O Lord; Keep watch over the door of my lips."*