

... West of 98

(Continued from page 2)  
A white Christian leader from Texas wrote to Dr. King, "all Christians know that the colored people will receive equal rights eventually, but it is possible that you are in too great a religious hurry. It has taken Christianity almost two thousand years to accomplish what it has. The teachings of Christ take time to come to earth."

Dr. King found irrational (and correctly so) the idea that "something in the very flow of time [will] inevitably cure all ills." He wrote that:

"...time itself is neutral; it can be used either constructively or destructively...human progress never rolls in on wheels of inevitability; it comes through the tireless efforts of men willing to be co workers with God, and without this hard work, time itself becomes an ally of the forces of social stagnation. We must use time creatively, in the knowledge that the time is always ripe to do right."

Too often, I think we have the same idea as those white clergymen in 1963: if we are patient, things will work themselves out. But will they? Dr. King and his allies had spent years suffering at the hands of oppressors and time wasn't making them any less racist or oppressive. It was almost a full decade after the U.S. Supreme Court began striking down segregation laws and Southern leaders were arresting children for peaceably demonstrating. They were kicking old men and pushing down old women. They were turning their firehoses and attack dogs on demonstrators of all ages. Was time REALLY going to cure those ills?

As Dr. King correctly noted, it wasn't about time curing things. The clergymen and their allies just wanted to avoid controversy and difficulty. They preferred a "negative peace"—the absence of tension—to the positive peace of justice. Thankfully, our society has moved past the firehoses and attack dogs of Birmingham, but when it comes to difficult decisions, how often are we still like those white clergymen and their allies, the "white moderate" of Dr. King's letter?

How often do we remain silent to avoid rocking the boat? Smalltowns are small places, but true leadership requires a willingness to speak up when it matters. We might go to church or socialize with fellow members of an elected board, but that doesn't mean they're always right or that we're always right. Going along to get along makes life easier on us personally, but is it the right thing to do when every member of the community is affected by our decisions?

Dr. King was less frustrated with the Ku Klux Klan than he was with the white moderate. He knew that the Klansman would stand up and be counted, no matter how wrong they were. The moderate wouldn't stand up and be counted at all. When it comes to the future of our communities, if we truly want to change things, tough decisions must assuredly be made. It might require rocking the boat. Going along to get along might not work. Will we be true leaders who are willing to stand up and be counted?

James Decker is a lawyer, farmer, and mayor in Stamford, Texas, and the creator of the forthcoming "West of 98" podcast and website. He may be contacted through Facebook at facebook.com/james.decker.

ORDER OF ELECTION FOR OTHER POLITICAL SUBDIVISIONS

An election is hereby ordered to be held on Saturday, May 2, 2020 for the purpose of:  
Electing School Trustees (date)

Applications for a place on the ballot shall be filed by: Friday, February 14, 2020.  
(A deadline is required to be stated in the order for a special election.)

Early voting by personal appearance will be conducted each weekday at:

Coke County Clerk's Office - Coke County Courthouse- Robert Lee, TX  
(location)

between the hours of 8 a.m. and 1 p.m. beginning on Monday, April 20, 2020  
(date)

and ending on Tuesday, April 28, 2020  
(date)

Applications for ballot by mail shall be mailed to:

Monica Reyes, Coke County Clerk  
(Name of Early Voting Clerk)

Coke County Courthouse - 13 E 7th  
(Address)

Robert Lee, Texas 76945  
(City) (Zip Code)

Applications for ballots by mail must be received no later than the close of business on

Tuesday, April 21, 2020  
(date)

Additional early voting will be held as follows:

Location	Date	Hours
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Issued this the 16 day of January, 2020

Member

[Signature]  
Signature of Presiding Officer

ORDEN DE ELECCION PARA OTRA SUBDIVISION POLITICA

Por la presente se ordena que se llevará a cabo una elección el sábado, el 2 de mayo, 2020 con el propósito  
de: elegir fideicomisarios escolares  
(fecha)

Solicitudes para un lugar en la boleta serán presentadas por: Viernes, el 14 de febrero.  
(De acuerdo con la orden de elección especial se requiere una fecha límite)

La votación adelantada en persona se llevará a cabo de lunes a viernes en

Coke County Clerk's Office - Coke County Courthouse - Robert Lee, Texas

(sitio)

entre las 8 de la mañana y las 5 lunes-jueves 1 viernes de la tarde empezando el lunes, el 20 de abril, 2020  
(fecha)

y terminando el martes, el 28 de abril, 2020  
(fecha)

Las solicitudes para boletas que se votarán en ausencia por correo deberán enviarse a:

Monica Reyes, Coke County Clerk  
(Nombre del Secretario(a) de Votación Adelantada)

Coke County Courthouse, 13 E 7th  
(Dirección)

Robert Lee, Texas 76945  
(Ciudad) (Zona Postal)

Las solicitudes para boletas que se votarán en ausencia por correo deberán recibirse para el fin de las horas de las horas de negocio el martes, el 21 de abril, 2020  
(fecha)

La votación adelantada además se llevará a cabo de tal manera:

Sitio	Fecha	Horas
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Emitida este día 16 de enero, 2020

Miembro

[Signature]  
Firma del Oficial que Preside



**Russell Davis**  
Agent

611 Austin Street  
PO Box 1079  
Robert Lee, Texas 76945  
(325) 453-4505 office  
(325) 453-4524 fax  
(325) 650-1904 mobile  
TXFB-INS.COM



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