

The Seven Faith Tribes

📖 By George Barna | BarnaBooks | hardcover | 256 pages | \$

Researcher and author George Barna addresses what he sees as a “critical moment” in the history of the U.S. in *The Seven Faith Tribes: Who They Are, What They Believe and Why They Matter*. Banking on American resilience and aiming to help turn the country toward a healthy future, Barna examines the various major groups—categorized by their faith or lack thereof—that could play a role in facilitating such change.

The author of *Revolution and Boiling Point* identifies and describes the seven different groups, or “faith tribes,” as captive Christians, casual Christians, Jews, Mormons, Muslims, pantheists and skeptics, and suggests strategies they could employ to work toward a better future for America.

Although the country is comprised of many faiths, these tribes—who share common backgrounds, beliefs and customs—are important in their size, influence or both, Barna says.

“When you run the numbers, you discover that there are indeed many faiths, but not many of those faiths attract many people, other than Christianity and atheism,” he said. “However, the tribes that have overt influence on America, despite their relatively tiny numbers—such as the Jews, Mormons, Muslims and pantheists—are worth identifying and understanding.”

Some of the book’s more sobering findings, Barna says, are the relatively small size of the captive Christians compared to the casual Christian population, the increasing media influence on Americans, the disintegration of unity based on religious worldviews and the lack of leadership, which “has put us in the hole we’re in today.”

Still, Barna believes there is hope for healing and restoration in America, which he sees as ravaged by division

and disrespect. That hope can be found as the tribes find commonality in their 20 “shared values,” values that are manifested when Americans “represent the truth well,” “seek peace with others,” “invest in young people” and “avoid harmful behavior.”

“The beauty of the research underlying this book was that the shared values do not require Christians—or any tribe—to abandon their essence,” he said. “The shared values give us some common ground for understanding each other and engaging in meaningful dialogue.”

However, the large size of the casual Christian constituency? million of the 255 million adults cited in the research—could be alarming to churches seeking to engage Christians in more active service and discipleship. With this in mind, Barna suggests churches should “intentionally and strategically” develop people’s worldviews through “strong, visionary leadership.”

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