

Can the Church Actually Restore Civility to Our Culture?

The last decade ushered in a shift in how we relate to those of opposing views. Civility in the areas of politics, religion, and government is stretched thin.

This is certainly not the America we once knew. The cultural landscape in how we share opposing views is different than in former years.

Our nation is in disarray, and the political parties are polarized. We are hard-pressed to find a healthy, robust conversation with opposing views.

A lack of tolerance has created a barrage of negative feelings and adverse outcomes on both a local and national level.

The “Us” and “Them” mentality divides us and prevents us from finding common ground. Instead, we segregate and oppose those who view life differently.

Social media is connecting people around common passions, both positive and negative. The new name is “tribes.” Birds of a feather still flock together. That has not changed.

It is human nature to look for acceptance in belonging to a group or joining ourselves with an ideology that enforces our positions and solidifies our beliefs.

Genuine tolerance is healthy. But no tolerance for opposing views is unhealthy and inhibits our personal growth.

Seth Godin said, “But if everyone is demonizing the other, then everyone is the enemy to someone. We end up spending our time fighting each other instead of fighting for the things

that really matter. We end up focusing on the current thing while something more important shrinks away in the background.”

This reality is not only affecting individuals but entire movements and people groups. Religious groups have joined the negativity.

Christians are swayed by the constant bashing and social hatred, too. It is shocking how some Christians have bought into the vitriol.

This is disheartening. As believers, we must model our faith and stand against all vitriol and hatred.

“But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you,” (Matthew 5:44, NKJV)

The most difficult test for those of our Christian faith will be to love others that do not love us back.

Whether Christian or non-Christian, there was a time when we clearly knew that we could disagree with one another without disapproving.

Many great writers and orators have said in various ways that “we are more alike than we are different.”

It would serve us to remember that!