

Why America Must Rid Itself of Tribalism

Has America ever felt more divided? Do Americans feel comfortable with the tribal culture which has evolved in the U.S.? Do they prefer varying, often divisive values to unity?

In 2018, a group known as More In Common launched a survey titled, "The Hidden Tribes of America," which focused on the divisions in the country. The survey revealed that most Americans had tired of the "us vs. them" approach and longed for reunification.

A national reunification calls for a social revival. The much-loved American anthem titled "The Star-Spangled Banner" should regain its ability to reflect a diverse but united country, and Emma Lazarus's sonnet titled "The New Colossus" that has for many years invited "the tired, the poor, the huddled masses yearning to be free," should again demonstrate unity in diversity. America needs a social awakening to regain its inner unity and global respect and influence.

A revival denotes an awakening or quickening, and the act of reviving occurs after a decline or discontinuance. Reviving means to 'bring back' and conveys the idea of 'living again.' The U.S. is crying for a reawakening so that it can reposition itself as a world model of democracy, serve as a representative of both cultural and biblical worldviews and strengthen its world leadership role.

The social bonding currently dominating American culture has long been known as tribalism, a social connection that binds an individual to a group even when personal relations may wear thin. The term tribal politics in the U.S. implies the possession of a set of strong political beliefs that separate an individual from one group and encourage membership in a

group with views like those held by the particular person.

Partisan political loyalties may encourage a group preference. Political tribalism may attest to a preference to function in a small rather than a mass society. Members of both the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives exhibit tribalism almost daily in their professional interactions; the disdain and lack of respect for opponents bring about a negative atmosphere and hinder, even block, progress.

A revival among political tribes must involve a return to veracity, a bow to civility and a display of tolerance. Social media should be organized and equipped to encourage shared political experiences and pursuits. Slanted news stories and self-aggrandizement should be deemphasized while individualism, rather than collectivism, should be emphasized. Multigroup discourse and interaction should take precedence over criticism and an emphasis on differences.

Inherent in tribalism is a particular "worldview" that encompasses a collection of attitudes, values, narratives and expectations about the world around an individual or group. The framework of the worldview encompasses both an inside and an outside view. To understand a particular tribal worldview one must first comprehend the inside view.

A worldview influences a person's or group's thoughts and actions. People express their worldview through their ethics, beliefs and philosophy of life. Different views of the world can contribute to prejudice, derogation and denial of alternative viewpoints.

The prejudice can result in the avoidance of outgroups and serve as a protection for accepted viewpoints. If not discussed and respected, differences in worldviews can result in social factions, a lack of interpersonal or intergroup respect and conflict.

The several religious worldviews display certain similarities,

including rituals, scriptures, locations for gathering and sacred days. Each religion is expected to provide its members a positive path regarding attitudes and behavior toward others. Various faiths traditionally instruct their followers how humans should interact. Leaders of the spiritual groups with the different worldviews agree that human spirituality or worldview is composed of three general elements: relationships, values and life purpose.

The overall level of religious worldview appears to be diminishing in the United States as in other Western countries. Individuals with weaker religious convictions are replacing people born in the early 20th century, many of whom demonstrated a strong religious worldview. Many children are being raised by less religious parents. Religious principles have become less important in many peoples lives.

What can be done to restore a religious worldview? How can a worldview revival that honors religious differences while pursuing national unification take place? How can vital and fervent spiritual relationships be restored along with interpersonal and intergroup relations? Answers to these questions require thought and communication.

The much-needed social revival in the United States demands a reduction of tribalism and the restoration of a social approach motivated by tolerance, understanding and acceptance. It calls for a recognition of other people as human beings. The revival process represents the development and application of alternative conceptual frameworks and the use of an inclusive set of stakeholders dedicated to broad issues.

Such a revival calls for the design of a social system that accounts for short comings, while promoting an inclusive social framework. It requires the training of teachers in the diversity of spiritual worldviews and how those views can complement each other and increase social unity. It also calls for inclusive seminars and programs in religious and business

establishments.

The revival can occur only with the support and efforts of diverse groups in American society.

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