

Our Country's Need For An Attitude Adjustment

Recently I was watching TV flipping through the channels and I came across a program hosted by the author and TV personality Tavis Smiley called "America's Next Chapter." This program consisted of a panel of prominent Americans of all races that included Dr. Cornell West of Princeton University. As I battled over turning the channel believing at first this show to be another feel good session, which brings little result, I heard one of the participants say "America needs an attitude adjustment." As I heard these words my face lit up. My first thought was of course America needs an attitude adjustment. However not long after, I began to think has America ever have the right attitude? As my thoughts took me further I began thinking of one of my favorite books by Howard Zinn called *A People's History of the United States*. In this book there was a chapter called "As long as the grass grows or water runs," in this chapter Mr. Zinn spoke of the great pain during the early 1800's that many Indian tribes went through by the hands of white settlers looking to expand their frontiers. Thousands of Indians including the Creek and the Chickasaw all faced not only aggressive whites, but an equally aggressive government led by men who seemed not to care that Indians had been living in the lands that the whites wanted for hundreds of years. According to Mr. Zinn, the American president during this time, Andrew Jackson, decreed how this land was to be obtained and said "We encourage white squatters to move into Indian land, and told Indians that the government could not remove the whites so that they had better cede the land or be wiped out." Fast forward to 2011 and see that America still hasn't gotten her attitude all the way right. She still has millions of people who have corrupt morals that are exercised through many things including racism. Although America has a black president now, many of its economical, political, religious, and educational systems still have elements of poison which harms people mentally and physically everyday. For example, the housing crisis which began to spin out of control in 2009 that got its origins from aggressive Wall Street brokers shows us clearly that there is a need for an attitude adjustment in this country. Furthermore, there is a large group of people in America who still can't engage peacefully with people that they don't agree with; a fact which clearly one can see just by turning on any news outlet. A person with a clear conscious can see the potential for America to change her course of moral destruction. One doesn't have to look further than organizations like the Red Cross who spend millions of dollars every year to help homeless people with food and shelter; or the countless number of volunteers who help with anything from fighting fires to childcare. The question remains; can America get to a place where all live in harmony or will it stay on its destructive course? Some years ago during my college years I was told by an elder that in order to change ones negative attitude you must first realize why there is a negative attitude in the first place. Once a person realizes this, one can focus on the cure which will help America get to a place of love and compassion for all.