

**Touchstones Faith in Action**

**In-Reach / Out-Reach / Justice-Making**

**Harmony**

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**1.0: Introduction**

The greater the diversity in a country, the greater the need to cultivate social harmony. The Harmony Index developed by Daniel Bell, et. al. concerned four types of relationships: those within (1) families, (2) between citizens, (3) between countries, and (4) between humans and nature, as well as six indicators

1. trust between family members and citizens,
2. diversity of civic life,
3. inclusion of minorities,
4. integration into diverse kinds of international organizations,
5. peace within society and between countries, and
6. environmental performance.

The higher the score on these measurements, the more harmonious the country. (See <https://www.ft.com/content/0aa0a360-5049-11e3-9f0d-00144feabdc0> and <http://www.miqols.org/howb/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/Bell-Mo-2014-Harmony-in-the-world.pdf>)

While there was some attention to diversity in the index, it seemed insufficient. Still Canada, which is more diverse that the United States, ranked 12th on the Harmony Index, while the United States, ranked 42nd.

Since 1999, Australia has celebrated Harmony Day to lift up the reality of significant multicultural diversity in the country. In 2016, a census survey reported that 85% of respondents agreed that multiculturalism has been good for Australia. (see <https://www.harmony.gov.au/>). That census also reported that 300 separately identified languages were spoken in Australian homes. Australia ranked 26th on the Harmony Index.

In the province of Ontario, Canada, the Harmony Movement (see <https://www.harmony.ca/>) was formed in 1994 to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion, all aspects of social harmony. It operated through 2019, until it lost funding from the government.

*World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development*, a day (May 21st) set aside by the United Nations as an opportunity to deepen our understanding of the values of cultural diversity and to learn to live together in harmony. (see <https://www.un.org/en/observances/cultural-diversity-day>) It was established in

*World Interfaith Harmony Week* (see <https://www.un.org/en/observances/interfaith-harmony-week> and <https://worldinterfaithharmonyweek.com/>) was initiated by the United Nations in 2010. It is observed during the first week of February.

If there is a day to observe/cultivate harmony in the United States, it should be July 4th given the fact that there was a dream of social harmony implied in the Declaration of Independence: “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.” While the “truth” of this statement has yet to be realized, it is both a foundation of and an aspiration for harmony.

Canada Day, July 1st, is also a candidate for the celebration of harmony in Canada. It marks “the formation of the union of the British North America provinces in a federation under the name of Canada on July 1, 1867.”

The observance of Canada Day (which was called Dominion Day until 1982) is an opportunity to reflect on what it means to be Canadian. Jared Milne writes,

“John Ralston Saul said that we are a ‘Metis’ [a person of mixed indigenous and Euro-American ancestry] society, not in the sense that everyone is Metis, but that we are influenced in part by the British, French and Indigenous roots. Richard Gwyn said that Canada is the world’s first ‘post-modern’ country, one that is not centered on a particular ethnocultural identity, but whose identity is actually flexible and adaptable. An unknown author claimed that a Canadian was someone who ‘drank Brazilian coffee from an English teacup, while eating French pastry, sitting on Danish furniture after driving home from an Italian movie in their German car.’

“All of this led Irving Layton to quip that a Canadian is someone who keeps asking the question, ‘what is a Canadian?’

“That said, there may in fact be a common thread running through all this, a fundamental truth about what Canada is: Namely, that Canada is a country where many different groups have had to learn together and recognize each other’s differences, while building a greater common identity out of it.” (See <https://medium.com/@Jared_Milne/reflections-on-canada-day-2017-what-does-it-mean-to-be-canadian-e5d6cb765f95>)

While harmony is highly valued in Asian countries, individualism is stressed in the West. Sociologist Robert Bellah (who addressed the 1998 GA, see <https://www.uua.org/sites/live-new.uua.org/files/documents/bellahrobert/980627_uu_societal_perspective.pdf>) suggested that a focus worthy of consideration is individual-in-community, which attempts to stress the value of community, and thus balance individualism. A way of doing this is offered by *Weave: The Social Fabric Project* led by David Brooks and sponsored by the Aspen Institute (see below). The project has grown out of his 2019 book, *The Second Mountain:* *The Quest for a Moral Life.* As Brooks writes,**“The Weaver movement is repairing our country’s social fabric, which is badly frayed by distrust, division and exclusion. People are quietly working across America to end loneliness and isolation and weave inclusive communities. Join us in shifting our culture from hyper-individualism that is all about personal success, to relationalism that puts relationships at the center of our lives.” *Weave* appears to be a powerful way of cultivating harmony.**

**2.0: Observances & Resources**

**2.1: Observances**

**2.1.1:** *Canada Day*—July 1st

Explore what social harmony means in Canada and how it can be strengthened.

**2.1.2:** *Independence Day—*July 4th

Explore what social harmony means in America and how it can be strengthened, especially in the wake of ongoing protests about racism.

**2.2: Resources** for*Weave: The Social Fabric Project*

**2.2.1:** Website at<https://weareweavers.org/> and <https://www.aspeninstitute.org/programs/weave-the-social-fabric-initiative/> and Facebook Page at <https://www.facebook.com/Weavesocialfabric/>

**2.2.2:** Tools, Organizations & Articles at <https://www.aspeninstitute.org/programs/weave-the-social-fabric-initiative/tools-for-weavers/>

**2.2.3:** Videosabout *Weave: The Social Fabric Project*

* *The lies our culture tells us about what matters—and a better way to live* by David Brooks Ted Talk (2019) at <https://www.ted.com/talks/david_brooks_the_lies_our_culture_tells_us_about_what_matters_and_a_better_way_to_live?language=en> (14:33)
* *David Brooks on Weave: The Social Fabric Project* at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uKcrGvQXJII> (2:18)
* Weave: The Social Fabric Project Opening Session (2019) at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VumCfoUU6fw> (31:56)
* Weave׃ The Social Fabric Project Day 1 (2019) at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0WJdwB1xhcA> (3:29:14)
* Weave׃ The Social Fabric Project—All Videos at
* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0WJdwB1xhcA&list=PLaL2K5EdjGNnWtyRaERZvCXcAkbFdVsS9> (16 videos)

**2.2.4:** *Have You Had your Annunciation Moment Yet* by David Brooks, a book excerpt from The Second Mountain at<https://ideas.ted.com/have-you-had-your-annunciation-moment-yet/>

**2.2.5:** *The Relationist Manifesto* at <https://www.aspeninstitute.org/blog-posts/the-relationalist-manifesto/> or as a pdf at <https://assets.aspeninstitute.org/content/uploads/2019/02/Weave-Relationalist-Manifesto.pdf>

**2.2.6:** *The Second Mountain:* *The Quest for a Moral Life* (2019) by David Brooks / Four Book Reviews

* <https://www.washingtonpost.com/outlook/david-brooks-on-the-importance-of-connection-in-life-and-society/2019/04/19/8221f5e8-54a2-11e9-814f-e2f46684196e_story.html>
* <https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2019/05/second-mountain-brooks-discusses-his-faith/588766/>
* <https://www.nyjournalofbooks.com/book-review/second-mountain>
* <https://spectrummagazine.org/arts-essays/2019/book-review-second-mountain-quest-moral-life>