

Calls for American Unity Are Either Dishonest or Naïve

Just about all candidates for president regularly announce their intent to unite Americans, to “bring us together.”

It’s a gimmick.

If they are sincere, they are profoundly naïve; if they are just muttering sweet nothings in order to seduce Americans to vote for them, they are manipulative.

In his acceptance speech at the 2004 Democratic National Convention, John Kerry, one of the most polarizing figures in modern American political history, said, “Maybe some just see us divided into those red states and blue states, but I see us as one America: red, white and blue.”

And President Barack Obama, who has disunited Americans by race, class and gender perhaps more than any president since the beginning of the 20th century, regularly campaigned on the theme of uniting Americans.

In his 2008 victory speech, President-elect Barack Obama said: “We have never been just a collection of ... red states and blue states. We are, and always will be, the United States of America.”

In their current campaigns for president, Republican Gov. John Kasich and Democrat Hillary Clinton regularly proclaim their intention to bring Americans together. He, one suspects, because he is naïve, and she, because she will say pretzels come from Neptune if it will garner votes.

Bringing people together is actually the theme of John Kasich’s entire campaign.

One headline on the “Meet John” page of his website says,

“BRINGING PEOPLE TOGETHER, LIFTING PEOPLE UP.”

Senator Rob Portman said of Kasich on Feb. 1, 2016, “I am endorsing John Kasich because I believe he is the person our country needs to bring Americans together.”

And Clinton, who, according to CNN, is tied with Trump for the most negatives in presidential polling for either Republicans or Democrats since 1984, also speaks repeatedly about her ability and desire to bring Americans together.

The “Hillary Clinton for President Supporters” Facebook page has even said, “We’re in the business of bringing people together.”

What’s more, on April 6, 2016, CNN posted a YouTube video titled: “Hillary Clinton – We need a president who can bring people together.”

Lanny Davis, who served as special counsel to former President Bill Clinton, wrote on The Hill website that “Clinton wants to bring us together.”

Beyond Kasich and Clinton, Sen. Bernie Sanders made this a major theme in one of his ads called “Together,” which begins with Sanders saying, “Our job is to bring people together.”

Even Trump, who divides Republicans – not to mention other Americans – like no Republican ever has, uses this mantra.

A January article on The Hill site quoted Trump saying, “I can really bring people together.”

Gov. Chris Christie introduced Trump on Super Tuesday, and a NJ.com column released that night was titled, “Christie on Super Tuesday: Trump is ‘bringing the country together.’”

For the record, Sen. Ted Cruz speaks about uniting Republicans, but not often about uniting all Americans.

All calls for unity by Democrats are particularly fraudulent. Dividing Americans by race, gender and class is how the left views America and how Democratic candidates seek to win elections.

But calls for unity are meaningless no matter who makes them, because no one who calls for unity tells you what they really mean. What they really mean is that they want to unite Americans around their values – and around their values only.

Would Clinton be willing to unite all Americans around recognizing the human rights of the unborn? Would she be willing to unite all Americans around support for widespread gun ownership?

Of course not.

She is willing to unite Americans provided they adopt her views.

Would Sanders like to “bring people together” in support of reducing corporate and individual income taxes in order to spur the economy?

Would Kasich be in favor of “bringing Americans together” by having them all support increasing the size of government and the national debt? One hopes not.

I first realized the dishonesty of just about all calls for unity during a 10-year period in which I engaged in weekly dialogues with clergy of all faiths. Protestant and Catholic clergymen and women would routinely call for Christian unity. When I asked Protestants if they would support such unity if it entailed them adopting the sacraments of the Catholic Church and recognizing the pope as the Vicar of Christ on Earth, the discussion ended. Similarly, when I asked Catholic priests if they would give up the sacraments and the papacy in order to achieve unity with Protestant Christians, all talk of unity stopped. And, of course, the same would hold true for

both Orthodox and non-Orthodox Jews who routinely call for Jewish unity.

Even more absurd are the calls of naive Christians and Jews to have all the “children of Abraham” – Jewish, Christian and Muslim – unite.

The calls themselves can even be dangerous. One would be hard-pressed to name a single free society that was ever united outside of wartime. The only truly united countries are totalitarian states.

So, why do presidential candidates repeat this nonsense every four years? Because Americans fall for it every four years.

But it's time to grow up. The gap between the left and right is unbridgeable. Their worldviews are mutually exclusive.

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