

Re-establishing Indigenous Culture And Prosperity

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CAID

Preface:

Re-establishing Indigenous Culture and Prosperity was written to provide a very simplistic explanation to non-Aboriginal people of the importance of land and traditional law in developing sustainable solutions for Indigenous people.

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Introduction:

In an extreme oversimplification of the world's people, there were two groups of people on the planet historically, those that lived on the land and those that lived off the people that lived on the land. To keep this discussion simple, we will refer to people that lived on the land as indigenous people; an indigenous tribe as a grouping of indigenous people; and, a group of indigenous tribes sharing common land, ancestry, and values as an indigenous culture. All indigenous cultures survived and flourished according to their understanding and respect of the land. Every tribe in every culture had to respect their tribe's role on the land. There are three basic groups of roles; agricultural, pastoral, and hunter-gatherer. Depending on the land and its seasons, many tribes and cultures had a combination of these three basic roles.

Indigenous Roles:

A tribe's role with the land developed over time so that the tribe was as much a part of the balance of the land as any of the indigenous plants and animals; they became indigenous people. The balance of the land can be represented in the simple equation of **Land = Nature + Roles** where nature can be indigenous minerals, plants, animals, or people. In this equation everything is involved in maintaining the dynamic balance of the land, especially people. The truth about a tribe's role with the land was carried by the Elders and passed on by oral traditional law. Truth carried by the Elders encompassed all that was needed to survive as a people in that role, on that land, with those animals, with those plants, and in contact with neighbouring indigenous people and their land. Roles for contact with neighbouring indigenous peoples and lands included trade. An indigenous people that understood their role with the land could flourish in good years and survive through bad years. The truth of the Elders was time tested. To disregard the Elders would ultimately result in famine and poverty.

Loss of Indigenous Roles

Western Society and culture has spread at an alarming rate across the globe as a result of advanced technology and their need for resources. Unfortunately, Western Society, as a group, is very prone to being a people who live off the people who live on the land. As a result, they have ignored indigenous peoples and their Elders as colonization extended in search of riches. In many regions, indigenous roles were replaced by jobs. Truths carried by the Elders were set aside, sometimes lost. Unfortunately, despite its arrogance, Western Society, does not have the solution for every problem encountered by remnant indigenous people in every land they have colonized. In fact, Western Society's positive global influence may have already peaked. Regardless, indigenous people are now left looking for solutions while facing the overwhelming force of the "global economy".

Rebuilding Indigenous Culture and Roles

Starting with a remnant, indigenous people want to rebuild their indigenous culture. They have their land, their customs, and their Elders. The first key to rebuilding is the Elders. Remember that Elders carry traditional law and the tribe's traditional role with the land.

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There is a simple equation that shows **Culture = Law + Custom**. If indigenous people want to rebuild indigenous culture, they need traditional customs, which they have, and traditional law, which is carried by their Elders. The word culture can be interchanged with the word "nation". *(The word nation here is used in a historic context to reflect a group of indigenous tribes sharing common land, ancestry, and values. It is not meant in the modern definition of a political or military government that has claim to sovereignty over a geographical area.)* We all know that a nation has many different parts that make up the nation as a whole. These parts are referred to as infrastructures. So, if we want to rebuild indigenous culture, then we start by rebuilding its infrastructure parts. We do this by consulting Elders on traditional law and then combining the consultation response with current customs for each infrastructure needed within the culture.

We have already seen the **Land = Nature + Roles** equation. If indigenous people want to re-establish their role with the land, they need their traditional land, which they live on, and their traditional role for the land, which is carried by their Elders. However, part of the indigenous role on the land involved living in contact with neighbouring indigenous people and their land. Neighbours have changed to now include modern regional, national, and international governments with their regulatory systems; and, the global economy. Re-established traditional roles on the land, including trade, must harmonize with these "new neighbouring lands and peoples". This harmonization is the second key to rebuilding.

Finally, we need to do the actual physical work of rebuilding after indigenous culture, roles and infrastructure framework have been defined and harmonized with the global system. The third and final key to rebuilding is perseverance.

Starting Point

Probably the most important indigenous infrastructure to begin the rebuilding process with is sustainable economic development. Sustainable economic development based on traditional roles will provide the economic base to harmonize into the global system; and, with that in place, Indigenous People can choose their own destiny. However, economic development is based on other more basic (core) infrastructures such as resource management and trade. So, to begin sustainable development, we rebuild core infrastructure. Core infrastructures include, trade and commerce, education, resource management, traditional food, health, justice, governance and community.