

Will Removing Confederate Symbols Promote Social Peace? Of Course Not.

Category: Mike Scruggs' Column

Published: Tuesday, 16 June 2020 21:17

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Hits: 5450

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Confederate Major General Patrick Cleburne, KIA November 30, 1864, Franklin, TN, Irish born

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"Stonewall of the West" Column
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Will removing Confederate flags, monuments, and names promote social peace or racial healing?

By Mike Scruggs
How long would a peace based on suppression of a people's cherished heritage last? How long

would a peace built upon suppressing the memory, valor, and virtue of the revered forebears of a great number of the Southern people last? What could possibly be a surer cause of immense strife, bitterness, and economic and political turmoil? Does anyone outside of a madhouse believe that peace and prosperity can be achieved by discarding the heritage of a numerous people to gain the political favor of another? It is more likely to shatter all hope of peace. Can a society set itself against tolerance and mutual respect and have peace? No fair-minded person can accept such corrupt reasoning.

I believe we can all be glad that slavery is behind us, but dragging it out year after year to manipulate voters, both black and white, has a strong chance of destroying us. Destroying cherished symbols of Southern and American heritage to placate lawless mobs is not sound judgment. Appeasing one group by disrespecting the heritage of another is not the road to justice. The flames of manipulated hatred do not produce peace but endless insecurity and national destruction.

Maj. General Patrick R. Cleburne, CSA, an Irish immigrant, who opposed slavery but found fault with Northern policies that ignored the Constitution and laid harsh and ruinous economic policies on Southern agriculture to enrich Northern manufacturers, warned his men in January 1864 that:

"Every man should endeavor to understand the meaning of subjugation before it is too late...It means the history of this heroic struggle will be written by the enemy; that our youth will be trained by Northern schoolteachers; will learn from Northern school books their version of the war; will be impressed by the influences of history and education to regard our gallant dead as traitors, and our maimed veterans as fit objects of derision...It is said slavery is all we are fighting for, and if we give it up, we give up all. Even if this were true, which we deny, slavery is not all our enemies are fighting for. It is merely the pretense to establish sectional superiority and a more centralized form of government, and to deprive us of our rights and liberties."

Henry Carey, Lincoln's Chief Economist, promoter of the "American System" of Developmental Capitalism and Government Intervention, in a letter to House Speaker Schuyler Colfax in March 1865, wrote:

"To British Free-Trade it is, as I have shown, that we stand indebted for the present Civil War."

The British pretty much saw right through the phony Northern claim to moral superiority. This was summarized by famous English author, Charles Dickens, an opponent of slavery:

"The Northern onslaught upon slavery is no more than a piece of specious humbug designed to

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conceal its desire for economic control of the Southern states.”

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Slavery was an issue but not in the moral sense most people have been made to believe. Northern armies did not march south to free slaves. The 1860 Lincoln and Republican election campaign clearly indicated that Tariff issues were the most important. The slavery issue was second and was simply to limit slavery to the South. This will be shocking to those who only know enough about the war for phony political virtue-signaling, but many Northern State laws (especially Illinois) strongly discouraged bringing blacks into their states. Much of this was just a natural law of labor economics. American workers do not like to see their jobs taken or wages suppressed by cheap foreign or slave labor. The religious division between North and South was also much more important than people realize. It was related to the slavery issue, but more importantly, Southern clergy and congregations strongly believed that the Northern churches were fast falling away from the infallible truths of the Bible and were being taken over by anti-Biblical isms, replacing Biblical truth and values with purely human wisdom and politicized “higher” values.

The right of State secession was built into our Declaration of Independence. The Revolutionary War was a secession of 13 American colonies from British rule. Both Southern, British, and many Northern leaders saw the clear analogy. The right of secession was taught at West Point. Even Lincoln agreed in 1848. Two days before Lincoln’s election in November 1860, the *Charleston Mercury* summed up Southern feeling:

“The real causes of dissatisfaction in the South with the North are in the unjust taxation and expenditure of the taxes by the Government of the United States, and the revolution the North has effected in this government, from a confederated republic, to a national sectional despotism.”

President Woodrow Wilson, in his multi-volume *History of the American People*, offered this explanation as to why the issue of slavery was so exaggerated during and after the war:

“It was necessary to put the South at a moral disadvantage by transforming the contest from a war waged against states fighting for their independence into a war waged against states fighting for the maintenance and extension of slavery.”

Removing Confederate symbols does not meet four basic ethics rules. It is not based on the truth. It is based on many years of slanderous propaganda, agitation, and racial political pandering. Is it fair to all concerned? No, it is a distribution of political spoils based on mendacious agitation and bullying. Americans reject the monstrous concepts of punitive collective justice and inherited guilt as unfair and socially destructive. Will it build goodwill and better friendships? Do misrepresenting, slandering, and degrading the Confederate cause, Confederate soldiers, and their descendents create goodwill and solid friendships? Will it be beneficial to all concerned? It would probably benefit only those who seek power, money, and fame by unconscionable means, promoting and excusing lies, hatred, spite, and vengeance. Stepping on somebody else’s heritage is never the way to peace and seldom the road to lasting prosperity. Furthermore, it is an extremely dangerous precedent with a high probability of multiplying enormous unanticipated regrettable consequences.

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Causing and bulging is the way of the Marxist Left and those who build their houses on sand.

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I find it remarkable how many political, media, business, academic, and religious leaders respond to tragedy or bullying by powerful special interest agitators with unfounded and hysterical condemnations of long-honored traditions and institutions. Moreover, I find it disturbing that such condemnations and proclamations are increasingly made without a lick of serious homework on the issues involved. In this hysterical state, truth and logical reasoning seem always to be trumped by shaky emotional perceptions. Emotional anecdotes dominate all communications, and facts and statistics are ignored. Little thought is given to logical primary or secondary consequences or the possibility of serious insult and injustices resulting from hurried emotional decisions.

Political Correctness always reminds me of the hysteria surrounding the Salem Witch Trials of 1692, where innocent people were executed on the basis of visions or dreams of their accusers. Many were condemned to death because an accuser had testified to seeing the "specter" of the accused doing harm or witchcraft. Hysterical young girls pointed a finger at whoever they claimed was a witch, and it was taken as credible evidence. Many of the accused were tortured until they confessed to witchcraft. For much of 1692, lies ruled in Salem. Historical perspective later showed that many of the 19 alleged witches hanged and one tortured to death in Salem were not only innocent but among the most godly in the community. A substantial number of the accusers had unsavory reputations or were suffering acute mental illness. Other analysis indicates that envy and long-standing grudges in Salem society played an important role in this tragic miscarriage of justice. What has Salem in 1692 got to do with Washington or Minneapolis? Politically correct lies and moral cowardice seldom result in just government and often result in totalitarian government.

In our modern culture, the lies usually come as politically correct falsehoods that must be embraced as "truth" to avoid social condemnation and its likely economic penalties. Those who strive hard to meet the truth-conflicting standards of political correctness are especially prone to hysterical condemnation of the innocent. The scapegoat is condemned to avoid offending the sacred cow, which is often an important but false historical narrative. "Civil War" history has always suffered from a high dose of Union propagandism about the causes of the war, but the current dominance of cultural Marxism (political correctness) in American history and especially the "Civil War" has served to hinder any profitable discussion of many important and easily substantiated truths that strongly contradict the politically correct narrative.

The Reverend James Power Smith, the last surviving member of Stonewall Jackson's staff had this to say in 1907:

"No cowardice on any battlefield could be as base and shameful as the silent acquiescence in the scheme which was teaching the children in their homes and schools that the commercial value of slavery was the cause of the war, that prisoners of war held in the South were starved and treated with barbarous inhumanity, that Jefferson Davis and Robert E. Lee were traitors to their country and false to their oaths, that the young men who left everything to resist invasion, and climbed the slopes of Gettysburg and died willingly on a hundred fields were rebels against a righteous

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This was also addressed by Reverend Robert L. Dabney at the Annual Commencement address delivered on June 15, 1882, at Hampden Sidney College in Virginia. It was entitled “The New South.” Dabney was one of the most prominent theologians, scholars, and social and political commentators of his era, who had served as a Confederate Chaplain and as Stonewall Jackson’s Chief of Staff during the war:

“It behooves the New South, in dismissing the animosities of the past, to see to it that they retain all that was true in its principles or ennobling in its example. There are those pretending to belong to this company who exclaim: ‘Let us bury the dead past. Its issues are all antiquated, and of no more practical significance. Let us forget the passions of the past. We are in a new world. Its new questions alone concern us.’ I rejoin: Be sure that the former issues are dead before you really bury them! There are issues that cannot die without the death of the people, of their honor, their civilization and their greatness. Take care that you do not bury too much, while burying the dead past: that you do not bury the inspiring memories of great patriots, whose actions, whether successful or not, are the eternal glory of your race and section; the influence of their virtues, the guiding precedents of their histories. Will you bury the names and memories of a Jackson and Lee, and their noble army of martyrs? Will you bury true history whose years are those of the God of Truth?”

We now live in an age where unfashionable truths, reason, and plain common sense are powerfully suppressed by vicious forms of political correctness and economic coercion. Orchestrated lies permeate and contaminate academia, the media—lately even Fox--and the internet, manipulating or burying even the facts of history. Manipulated mobs exalt demagogic nonsense and shun reality and clear thinking. Whom the gods would destroy, they first make “woke.” Evil is called good and good evil. Dabney closed his 1882 speech at Hamden Sidney with:

“ Even if the memory of the defeated had no rights; if historical truth had no prerogatives; if it were the same to you that the sires whose blood fills your veins, and whose names you bear, be written down as traitors by the pen of slanderous history, still it is essential to your own future that you shall learn the history of the past truly.”

Those who advance their cause by injuring the heritage of others build their house on sand.