

3 Things That Defeat The 'Tear Down' Movement Decisively and Dramatically

Momentum continues across America to purge the public square of symbols deemed distasteful reminders of America's past. Virginia Governor Terry McAuliffe, who formerly hailed Richmond statues as "part of our heritage," now lampoons them as "flash points for hatred, division and violence."

Protesters in the "Tear Down" movement say they are protesting past injustices. The memorials are "racist, painful reminders that must go!" They cite flaws of leaders to discredit them and as an indictment of an America "needing cultural cleansing."

Activists target not only Confederate displays but presidents, founders, patriots, explorers and religious figures deemed "offensive."

ESPN caved in by catapulting Robert Lee as a sportscaster due to his name. "Honest" Abe Lincoln's flaws were excavated so his 100-year-old bust was smashed, tarred and burned in Chicago. And Columbus's 225-year-old statue was smashed in Baltimore to say "Kaput!" to his "covered-up cruelties."

This is not just a "Slay the Southerners" stampede (where 75 percent of the people had no slaves).

In the North, Ivy League Yale, Princeton and Brown universities are in the crosshairs. Yale's Calhoun College sandblasted all references to their past president who supported slavery, as did Elihu Yale and the Brown family. And Princeton's president, Woodrow Wilson, a Democrat "racist," had his portrait pulled out of the dining hall.

Does this remind anyone of what happened in the Soviet Union and Chinese Cultural Revolutions? Any officials deemed politically incorrect vanished, airbrushed from history's stage. The tactic was to reject the country's heritage and replace it with a "fundamental transformation" brought about by elitists and activists committed to the cause.

What Triggered This?

What propelled this movement to the forefront and accelerated the activism? It was not a spontaneous uprising but a diabolically-inspired clash of angry malcontents and misguided morons of mayhem on both sides.

Dunce-capped, swastika-swinging racists indulging their tiki-torch tantrums shouted slogans to agitate antifa (anti-Fascist) counter protesters who came ready to rumble.

Here's the deal: we mustn't indulge carnal curiosity but rather distance ourselves from any incendiary assemblies of neo-Nazis, antifa, KKK, left-wing militants and white supremacists among others. These repugnant movements need to be avoided and lawbreakers arrested. And we need to discern evildoers on both sides engaged to divide us.

Here are the three essentials to navigate through this critical time and successfully see the defeat of "Tear-Downers" of all stripes in our nation.

1. Authenticity

I heard of a young man saving diligently so he could give his mother a long-desired suede jacket. Upon opening the gift, they noticed numerous flaws in the apparel, and aghast, he apologized profusely.

His mother smiled and comforted him by stating that it only would be flawless if it were synthetic. She pointed to the tag: "The flaws in the garment prove the authenticity of the

product.”

Over 45 years of vocational ministry, I’ve found effective sermons are ones where people humbly acknowledged failures and mistakes. Projecting an image of perfection rings hollow because all of us are broken and have “blown it.”

America is no different. Our authenticity is recognized by admitting our errors and learning from past mistakes. We teach our children about people and events that forged the fabric of our nation. “Those who fail to learn the lessons of history are condemned to repeat them.”

Former Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice expressed her disagreement with tearing down memorials with this wisdom, “Keep your history before you. Keep it in your line of sight. When you start wiping out your history, sanitizing your history to make you feel better, it’s a bad thing.”

Wall Street journalist Peggy Noonan concurred. “When a nation tears down its statues, it’s toppling more than brass and marble. It is in a way toppling itself—tearing down all the things, good, bad and inadequate, that made it. Or, rather, everyone. Not all of what made America is good—does anyone even think this?—but why try to hide from that?”

The Bible is transparent regarding people’s imperfections and lessons learned. It also reveals how God used memorials to remind us of both positives and negatives.

Joshua led God’s people out of the wilderness of sin and into the promised land. They went through the Jordan River, where God instructed men to take 12 stones and make a memorial on the bank as a reminder for future generations of His goodness (Josh. 4:6-7).

Later, God had them build another memorial of 12 stones in the middle of the river. It would be covered over by water, a picture of judgment in Scripture, never to be seen again. This

memorial was a sober warning to people who reject God's deliverance.

2. Consistency

Multitudes are currently being emotionally manipulated, piling on a president they dislike plus exploiting opportunities to deconstruct America as we've known it. A dishonest media is fueling the fire by distorting events, portraying Trump as a Russian agent or a Nazi sympathizer, misleading masses as they did in last year's election.

Former Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich, says, "History is more important than hysteria!" He points to a poll indicating 62 percent of Americans think monuments of Confederate leaders should remain as historical symbols, while only 28 percent said they should be removed. Even 44 percent of African-Americans say the statues should remain!

Unfortunately, what we're seeing is eerily similar to the ISIS strategy of decimating historic monuments and churches to shred Middle-Eastern heritage. Christianity is now on the edge of extinction in Iraq.

If you're being subtly influenced along this "Tear it down!" path, let me call you to consistency, not hypocrisy.

- For everyone rightly angry over the injustice of tens of thousands of enslaved blacks when all had the "right to life and liberty," who'll cast the first stone when tens of millions of babies (1/4 of them black) have been exterminated through what Dr. Alveda King calls the "genocide of abortion"?
- The Democratic Party was the main proponent and defender of slavery and segregation for decades. Abolish the party?
- . forced thousands of Japanese-Americans into prison camps plus put a Klansman on the Supreme Court. Erase

his memory?

- Democratic Senator Robert Byrd, W. Va., was a member/recruiter for the Ku Klux Klan and Democrat President Woodrow Wilson embraced a clearly retrograde view of blacks. Obliterate all references to them?
- W.E. DuBois, . cofounder, supported segregation and became a communist. Blot out his contributions?
- Margaret Sanger, Planned Parenthood's founder, was a eugenicist, racist and mentor to Hitler. Remove her statue from the Smithsonian?
- Robert E. Lee was first in his class at West Point, hero of the Mexican-American War and Lincoln's choice to lead the army. He chose to defend his family and home state of Virginia when it seceded. After the Civil War he served in the healing of the nation through racial reconciliation. Should we sandblast him off Georgia's Stone Mountain, remove his name from Washington and Lee University and eradicate his memory from countless places like Leesburg, Virginia? Or do we honor Democratic hero ., who said, "We recognize Robert E. Lee as one of our greatest American Christians and one of our greatest American gentlemen"?
- Remove all 10 statues of Confederate leaders from Statuary Hall as Nancy Pelosi declares?
- "Sledgehammer Bill Clinton's statue in South Dakota" as women allegedly assaulted by him demand?
- Remove all references to the Kennedys (Kennedy Center included?) for the sordid history of bootlegging, immorality, death at Chappaquiddick and as recent as this week's father-and-daughter drunken brawling with police, arrest and the traditional Kennedy ploy, "You don't know who you're messing with!"?

- Raze all Southern Baptist churches for aspects of racism in their history before a formal apology in 1995?
- Demand England show solidarity by toppling Oliver Cromwell's statue outside Parliament for oppressing Catholic Ireland?
- Put into storage all statues of Martin Luther for despising Jews, King David for murder, plus apostle Paul for religious persecution? A Saint Junipero Serra statue was recently spray painted with "Murder" for his supposed mistreatment of Native Americans, so is this the pattern to follow?
- Smash all statues of Rock 'n' Roll Hall of Famers who abused women and children, committed crimes and passed on drugs and sexually transmitted diseases to scores of youth?
- Should we push Putin to remove the statue/corpse of Lenin in Red Square? Communism killed 94 million people in the 20th century. His revolutionary tactics guided Fidel Castro and Che Guevara, whose images appear on T-shirts in today's protests.
- Illinois just declared an official state holiday to yearly honor Barack Obama. Should this be rescinded since his relatives were slaveowners? His spokesman said his ancestors were "representatives of America" but does he get a "pass" if we're to be consistent?
- What should we do with George Washington and Thomas Jefferson for having slaves, or Ben Franklin and John F. Kennedy for serial adulterous relationships? Do we acquiesce to current pressure to rename Columbus Circle in New York City and any universities, streets and towns which extremists find offensive? Should currency be reprinted and the Constitution be rewritten because some of our Founders had slaves? Where does it stop?

3. Clemency

Abraham Lincoln's Clemency was the famous 1910 film highlighting the trait that enabled America to heal after the Civil War. Shouldn't we recover this virtue in our current civil war?

George Orwell's epic novel, *1984*, predicted a time when unpopular facts of history are swept down the "memory hole" to be forgotten. The overwhelming majority of Americans who love this nation and cherish our heritage, imperfections and all, want to extend mercy and forgiveness to unite, not divide us.

Tear-Downers need to understand it is wrong to intimidate people with the choice: "Stand with us or be branded a bigot, racist or white supremacist, plus we'll go after your job and ruin your reputation!"

I choose to respect, not necessarily reverence, those who endeavored to serve us in fashioning America in earlier days while caring for their wives and children. Those who had glaring deficiencies and repeatedly acted shamefully can have their memory transferred to museums.

Our predecessors were a product of their times, sinned, made mistakes, had character deficiencies plus failed at times in their attempt to advance the American dream. Let's be magnanimous and extend forgiveness to those departed.

May we all sit down and listen up to the words of Jesus, the "Prince of Peace," who told us pointedly, "For if you forgive men for their sins, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men for their sins, neither will your Father forgive your sins" (Matt. 6:14-15).