

The Solution to the Cultural Madness Surrounding the Berkeley Protests of Ben Shapiro

The city of Berkeley was on alert. Barriers were erected to stop violent protesters. Bank of America boarded up windows. Police were authorized to use pepper spray if merited. Traumatized UC Berkeley students were offered counseling if needed. A campus crowd chanted, "Hey, hey, ho, ho, white supremacists have got to go." And a large sign read, "We say no to white supremacist [obscenity]."

What was causing this disturbance? Why the massive disruption? As tweeted by Tariq Nasheed, "Suspected white supremacist Ben Shapiro, who tries to mask his racist rhetoric by claiming to be jewish, is in Berkeley now #BenAtBerkeley."



Yes, the well-known, physically intimidating, white supremacist, Ben Shapiro, had invaded the formerly safe confines of Berkeley to deliver a hate-filled, Trump-lauding, neo-Nazi, racist screed that would doubtless lead to an orgy of on-campus violence. Oh, the thought of it! And those poor, terrified students! What did they do to deserve such a fate?

Unfortunately for the radical left, none of this is true – except that Ben Shapiro gave a talk at Berkeley on Thursday night, speaking against "campus thuggery" and violence in political discourse. Everything else in this description is complete fantasy –oh yes, other than that many students were no doubt traumatized by Ben's presence, having been whipped into hysteria by and the lies and propaganda of the radical-left misinformation machine.

To be sure, I enhanced some of the anti-Shapiro rhetoric a little, just to round out the picture. But the substance of it is what many now believe. And that is a scary thought.

A brilliant, articulate and fair-minded conservative Millennial has been turned into a monster by the hate-spewing, violence-inciting left. Who will be next on their list? Who will be the next target of radical-left hysteria? And does this hysteria have even the slightest interest in truth?

For the record, Ben Shapiro is an Orthodox Jewish, 33-year-old, very-well-accomplished lawyer, journalist, radio host and *New York Times* best-selling author. He's the editor in chief of the Daily Wire, and to my knowledge, he has never uttered a racist, white-supremacist syllable in his life. He has been one of Donald Trump's consistent critics, and he abhors everything neo-Nazis and the alt-right stand for.

But in the realm of radical-left fantasy, articulated so well in the Tariq Nasheed tweet, Ben is a "suspected white supremacist" who "claims" to be Jewish. How nefarious indeed. Not only is he dangerous, but he is deceitful as well, cloaking his racism in a bogus claim to be Jewish.

And people actually believe this drivel, to the point of sparking protests and mass upheaval.

Does it matter that Ben is a constant target of the alt-right? Does it matter that he exposes the bankruptcy of both antifa (anti-fascists) and white supremacists? Does it matter that even a *New York Times* op-ed spoke up in his defense? And does it matter that he gave a talk at UC Berkeley in April, 2016, without major incident? What changed between then and now?

Not Ben Shapiro. Not the facts.

What changed was the atmosphere at Berkeley, an atmosphere charged with hostility, intolerance and hatred, the vast majority of it coming from the radical left.

Is it true that, across the country, a dangerous spirit of white nationalism is on the rise? Absolutely, and it has helped trigger an equally ugly response from the left (along with a dangerous black nationalism). Again, all of these are ugly and to be denounced.

Is it true that Ben's rhetoric can sometimes be acerbic, as he ridicules his ideological opponents in strongly derogatory terms? Yes, that is certainly his style, which I do not defend.

But that is not the primary reason he is being attacked. Rather, it is his ideas that pose such a threat—his conservative, sometimes even-biblically inspired ideas. And he is right to expose the “snowflake” mentality of many of our college students today.

How did we reach this extremely low point? How did the older generation fail to prepare the younger generation for handling the challenges of life and the diversity of worldviews? How did we create such a self-centered, “You hurt my feelings!” mindset? How did “tolerance” become so intolerant and “inclusivism” become so exclusive? How did “love” become so hateful?

I took a long hard look at these questions when writing *Saving a Sick America: A Prescription for Moral and Cultural Transformation*, with chapters including, “Reclaiming Our Schools and Learning How to Think Again” and “Putting an End to the Blame Game and Saying Goodbye to the Entitlement Mentality.”

And as I prayerfully analyzed some of our nation's biggest problems, problems that cut across generational lines, it became clear that our greatest challenges are not just abortion and pornography and extreme debt and social injustice and family breakdown and compromise in the church. Instead, some of our greatest challenges are internal, many of them

traced back to the mindset that “It’s all about me.”

That’s why the second to last chapter of the book is titled, “The Universe Does Not Revolve Around Me.” And that’s why I also address the culpability of Christian leaders who have fed into this self-exalting mentality by preaching a “What’s in it for me?” gospel message—which is no gospel at all.

Put another way, what we saw at Berkeley last night is just a symptom of a much bigger cultural ill, one that infects both the right and the left. But as I argue in *Saving a Sick America*, offering specific details and guidelines, the cure for this ill is found in the Bible in particular, in the words and example of Jesus.

That’s the good news.

The bad news—or should I say, the sobering news—is that the cure is quite radical. How many will dare even try it?

I personally hope that many millions of Americans will make the effort to “taste and see” that God’s ways are best. Yes, the radical, Jesus-based cure to our self-centered, narcissistic mentality is life-giving, liberating and even culture-transforming.

Can we afford not to fill the prescription?