

To Err is Human

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The standard by which we judge historical figures in Canada has reached new heights. Perfection...nothing less!

This year some living Canadians have decided that some former Canadians, with moral flaws, no longer deserve their place in history.

In January, the City of Halifax removed a statue of Governor Edward Cornwallis, founder of Halifax and fourth governor of the Colony of Nova Scotia; it is common knowledge today that Cornwallis at one time placed a bounty on Mi'kmaq who, as allies of the French, were waging war against English settlers. We do not today approve of his actions against the Mi'kmaq . . . but he still founded Halifax. Removing his statue, in a knee-jerk effort to dishonour the man for his failings, doesn't change the history of Halifax.

In August, the City of Victoria, BC, removed the statue of our first Prime Minister, Sir John A. MacDonald, a Father of Confederation, from its place of prominence in front of City Hall. His early support for the founding of the now-infamous residential schools has disqualified him in the eyes of some from being remembered as Canada's first Prime Minister. Rather than honouring the good that he did; rather than using his failings as a lesson, some history-effacing busybodies want to hide his statue in the bowels of some storage facility. Out of sight, out of mind.

So let's finish house cleaning. If we're going to eliminate any visible reminders of past leaders with their weaknesses and failings, let's finish the job.

Samuel Tilley, one of our founding fathers, began his political career in the temperance movement. Perhaps today's stoner generation should consider removing his name from the annals of history. They love their booze and drugs! He didn't! How narrow! Some may suggest that his statue be removed from the Saint John, NB, park where it now resides.

Sir Adams Archibald, another Father of Confederation, opposed universal male suffrage, believing that only male property owners should have the right to vote. Of course, women were not even considered at that time... don't you think we should consign his wood sculpture in Truro, NS, to the fire heap?

George Brown, another one of the Fathers of Confederation, reorganized the Liberal Party. Perhaps his statue should be removed from Queen's Park after the damage our past Provincial Liberal government did, along with what our current Liberal Prime Minister has done. I'm sure I can find thousands of people who would agree with me. Call in the moving trucks! Let's find some storage space.

Must I go on? What about others whose practices and beliefs at the time they lived would not pass muster today?

Prior to colonization, First Nations tribes, whose descendants are now Canadian citizens, were not free of the blemishes of racial discrimination and ethnic mistreatment. This does not disqualify them from their place in history. This does not mean their memory should be expunged. It does mean we should remember from where we all have come and be grateful for the changes in how we view our fellow men and women today, those who share our mixed Canadian heritage. European settlers had plenty of faults both after arriving on this continent and before leaving Europe. But it was not only Europeans who practised bloody wars of conquest and

insensitive treatment of other races. Some of Canada's aboriginal peoples also engaged in territorial battles. Evidence indicates some tribes practised torture of prisoners, slave-holding, and even cannibalism.

There was also cultural assimilation before Pierre Trudeau's White Paper. According to the Canadian Encyclopedia¹, some North American tribes-people felt "the only way to deal with war captives was either to kill them, enslave them or adopt them ritually and formally into their nations. Some slaves were treated cruelly, while others became family members." As a woman, I guess, I can be grateful that if I had been living then and captured in a raid, I would have been enslaved; it was male captives who provided the prestige. Some were tortured, some were killed. But many were "integrated" into the culture of their captors. The practice of "integrating" captives into their nation was so commonly practised that, "By the 1660s, more than 60 per cent of people in the Haudenosaunee (Iroquois) Confederacy were reportedly war captives who had been adopted into lineages and incorporated into their nations." In other words, their tribal customs were replaced with those of the conquering nation. Today, that's called genocide or ethnic cleansing. Still, we remember the nations who first settled in what is now Canada and we think their cultures are worth remembering.

One problem is judging past generations by what is acceptable in today's society; it was a different time and today's lens is inadequate for understanding the pressures on and the actions of people living long ago. We may cheer their accomplishments and bewail their moral failures . . . but we can't vote them out of office or change their decisions. By trying to micro-manage the past we risk misleading generations who want to learn from history.

The other problem is elevating today's injustices to the level of acceptable. Linda Gibbons, prisoner of conscience and Mary Wagner, prisoner of conscience, have both spent many years in prison for quietly objecting to the murder of unborn children. Abortion is a barbaric practice that is acceptable by many according to today's standards. Henry Morgentaler, the father of Canada's abortion industry, was even given the Order of Canada, which not only acknowledged his impact but honoured him for his ghastly achievement: 4 million dead and counting. How will future generations look at this infanticide? Will both father and son Trudeau's statues be removed? Will their names be erased from the annals of history? Will our future Prime Ministers offer apologies to women for the suffering women endured at the hands of a government that hid the truth about the mental and physical effects of abortion on women?

Will the compelled speech currently being required of Canadians through the "trans" movement be a matter for apology in the future to those who faced persecution for refusing to submit to government mandated words?

Time will tell. But individual freedom is essential for the well-being of civilized society. Group rights beget persecution of individuals.

CHP Canada recognizes that we are each image-bearers of God. We are all imperfect image-bearers. The future will judge under a different standard... a changing standard, unless we return to a defined standard of right and wrong. Our heritage gives us this defined standard. While we imperfectly apply that standard, we can count on the standard itself to be unchanging.

Join CHP Canada today¹... a breath of fresh air on the foul stench of political correctness.

Footnotes

¹ www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/slavery-of-indigenous-people-in-canada/

² www.chp.ca/get-involved

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