

## Pride and Shame on Dominion Day

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Canadians marked July 1<sup>st</sup> in a variety of ways. Many of Canada's indigenous peoples—still reeling from the emotional impact of the discovery of the buried remains of hundreds of children in what are now unmarked graves associated with several residential schools—spent the day in reflection and mourning for the deaths of these children who were separated from their parents and from their villages.

Other Canadians held more traditional Canada Day (or Dominion Day) services in gratitude and celebration of the existence and character of country we all share . . . in spite of the many shameful chapters of our history.

Both responses are understandable. In fact, both responses may be necessary for the healing of our nation. It is crucial that all Canadians recognize as legitimate, the pain our indigenous brothers and sisters are going through, as the wounds of the past are reopened. It's also essential that all Canadians remember that Canada's history—while marred with sinful acts against the first inhabitants of this land—also tells a story of a hardworking and energetic people from many ethnic backgrounds, including indigenous peoples, who built the railroads, the highways, the airports and harbours, the farms, villages, cities and factories that have made Canada a great nation and a model to many other nations in the world.

Canada's soldiers have placed their bodies on the line in two world wars, and some of them have left their bones in foreign graves, dying for the freedom of other peoples whom they did not even know. Canada's farmers continue to produce the crops that feed so many—not only in Canada but around the world.

This Canada Day / Dominion Day, some gathered in celebration of the loosening of COVID-19 restrictions. Others gathered to declare the restrictions were never needed in the first place and to warn their fellow Canadians of the dangers of giving up their freedoms; that to allow any government, at any time, to impose such restrictions on freedom of speech, freedom of worship, freedom of assembly, freedom of movement, freedom to own and operate a business, freedom to raise our children according to conscience . . . will ultimately lead to tyranny of the worst kind.

In the last century, after thousands of years of human development, the world was plunged into two world wars and saw the rise of a number of brutal, despotic regimes that we can scarcely believe possible today. Those who think mankind is “evolving” into a kinder, gentler species suffer from delusional optimism. The Bible says that the heart of mankind is desperately wicked . . . apart from God's saving grace. World events bear that out.

When we press for better laws to protect the vulnerable and to promote righteous behaviour between neighbours, it's not because we think every human being is naturally kind, considerate and caring. It's because we know the selfishness and egotistical pride of Adam's descendants. That's why we need laws

based on biblical morality and hearts that are submitted to the divine Lawgiver, if we are to have any hope of building and retaining a nation of peace, prosperity, justice and freedom.

Chris Sankey is an intergenerational survivor of the residential schools; he recently wrote an open letter to Sir John A MacDonald, published in the National Post. He said this: “. . . but I do know is this: tearing down your statue is not going to solve our problems. It only perpetuates division. I would rather see your statue stay so that my kids will know the history.”<sup>1</sup> Tearing down statues and burning churches can't bring back the lives that were lost. It only deepens the divide. In a lawless act, witnessed but not prevented by a number of police, the statue of Queen Victoria was recently toppled in broad daylight on the grounds of the Manitoba Legislature.<sup>2</sup> Two wrongs don't make a right . . . and many wrongs don't restore human rights.

Knowing the history of our nation is important for us, and all people, to learn of, and not repeat the sins of the past. As George Santayana said, “Those who do not remember the past are condemned to repeat it.”<sup>3</sup> Erasing our history, good and bad, is not the way forward.

So as this Canada Day / Dominion Day fades into history, we need to weep with those who weep (sincerely sharing in their sorrow) and rejoice with those who rejoice (purposing in our hearts to make Canada a better place with better laws, safer communities, stronger families and fewer reasons for regret in the future).

The Christian Heritage Party of Canada commits to working together with Canada's first peoples and all ethnic groups across this country . . . to face our past injustices, resolve current inequities and move forward, united in our resolve to find a path to justice and freedom.

Join us in making positive steps forward for the nation we all love.<sup>4</sup>

## **Footnotes**

<sup>1</sup> [nationalpost.com/opinion/dear-sir-john-a-macdonald-a-letter-from-an-intergenerational-residential-school-survivor](http://nationalpost.com/opinion/dear-sir-john-a-macdonald-a-letter-from-an-intergenerational-residential-school-survivor)

<sup>2</sup> [winnipeg.ctvnews.ca/investigation-ongoing-after-queen-victoria-queen-elizabeth-ii-statues-toppled-at-manitoba-legislature-1.5493852](http://winnipeg.ctvnews.ca/investigation-ongoing-after-queen-victoria-queen-elizabeth-ii-statues-toppled-at-manitoba-legislature-1.5493852)

<sup>3</sup> [www.brainyquote.com/authors/george-santayana-quotes](http://www.brainyquote.com/authors/george-santayana-quotes)

<sup>4</sup> [www.chp.ca/get-involved/](http://www.chp.ca/get-involved/)