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Forsake attempts to destroy America's history and identity

By Steve Bakke  January 4, 2021



As I recently worked on booting 2020 out my door, I was reminded of some thoughts and comments I've expressed during the last year.

We live in confusing times. Many words and messages don't deliver the meaning they once did, and new terms and phrases must be sorted out. Go back a few years and imagine trying to make sense of these new concepts. It soon would become apparent that they fit neatly into a new faux cultural continuum.

Not long ago, a new emphasis on political correctness pushed onto the scene. Recent versions of identity politics and intolerance soon followed. Trigger warnings, safe spaces, cultural appropriation, and microaggression sprouted from these ideas. Led by a new and angrier version of intolerance we've arrived at a point in the continuum that seems dominated by what's been dubbed the "cancel culture."

Martin Luther King advised us to stop judging people based on skin color. But with today's new emphasis on identity politics, MLK's idea is considered racist. Consider the term "tolerance." I remember when being tolerant meant genuine acceptance but didn't require agreement or approval. Today, "the left" is likely to classify peaceful acceptance, without agreement and vocal support, as blatant intolerance. That reaction exemplifies the leftists' new and developing reality.

Keeping that reality in mind, and in the name of "racial justice," 2020 will be forever associated with destruction or desecration of statues and other historical sites, including those of revered historical figures. Included were National Anthem composer Francis Scott Key, former slave and abolitionist Frederick Douglass, Union General Ulysses S. Grant, and President George Washington. Even abolitionist President Lincoln's name is being removed from schools and public places. We're now seeing this radical ideal being enforced through unbridled, uncontrolled, and violently enforced change.

And who could ever have imagined that Americans would be arguing about the importance of enforcing law and order on our city streets. Many leftist governors and mayors believed the best way to react to this violent destruction was to "stand down," thereby giving permission to continue the destruction. As expected, this violence spread to other cities.

I'm quite emotional about what we've lost through this process of "cancellation." I'm saddened by the fact that some feel this destruction serves a meaningful purpose. That's just wrong. Any hint of meaningful purpose was destroyed when the anarchists and terrorists stole the public stage from legitimate, purposeful, peaceful demonstrators. Those anarchists and thugs are the ones now leading what started out as valid attempts to deal with society's issues.

I'm sad about the destruction of white and minority owned businesses, and the homes of Americans of all races. I'm sad about the loss of lives in the turmoil that eventually outnumbered the lost lives originally being protested. The permanence of the destruction deepens my sadness.

There are too many shocking examples of a developing radicalism. Numerous city councils have seriously considered eliminating or defunding police departments. A "woke" math professor explained that the concept of $2+2=4$ is cultural – a product of western imperialism and colonialism. Even cancelling Trump's presidency was in the script, and a leftist group called the "Trump Accountability Project" is identifying those who supported and worked for Trump – an archive to be used for future "punishment." How, and when does this end?

In his dystopic novel "1984," George Orwell expressed well some of my frustrations: "Every record has been destroyed or falsified, every book rewritten, every picture has been repainted, every statue and street building has been renamed, every date has been altered...those who control the past, control the future."

I referred earlier to "a new cultural continuum." But do these practices deserve the title of "culture"? I reject the idea that "culture" applies to all so-called societies. It seems to me that a true culture must possess some level of philosophical consistency, with moral and ethical absolutes. There's nothing resembling my definition of culture at the end of this leftist rainbow. Considering America's fragile condition, permitting these developments to continue is cultural suicide.

America must now push back, fix the many things that need fixing, and forsake attempts to cancel our sense of history and identity. We can, and must, take ownership in our flaws without denying history, even that which fits into the definition of "legend." We must work to restore intellectual honesty and reverse the destructive power of intolerant political correctness. People must be confident they don't need to be afraid to offer their opinions.

We must ask God to keep this country together in spite of ourselves, and in spite of the foolish utopian intentions of those trying to fundamentally change America.