

If you don't regularly receive my reports, request a free subscription at steve_bakke@comcast.net !
Visit my website at <http://www.myslantonthings.com> !

 **History and math:
Some say they're
disposable**

$$2 + 2 \neq 4$$

Steve Bakke  *February 24, 2021*

In a previous article I discussed “The 1619 Project” (“1619”) and its the conclusion that America was fraudulently created in 1776, and that the history of our country started in 1619, the year slaves were first brought to America’s shore. And let’s not forget its claim that the Revolutionary War and our Constitution were motivated by a desire to perpetuate slavery. This collision of competing versions of history prompted President Trump to form The 1776 Commission (“1776”). Was its purpose simply to refute the 1619 report itself, or was there something more?

The 1619 Report is remarkably interesting, and I have no objection to its opinions being considered and scrutinized in the context of our nation’s history. If this perspective can shine a light on important events and individuals that should be added to our history books, we’d be better for it. And there’s nothing wrong with expecting America to live up to its ideals.

The authors of “1619” assert their intention is to add to the existing narrative, not replace existing history. However, accepting intentions is far different from being satisfied with the result. We should evaluate the Project not only based on its report, but also on how the report is being used by others to influence our education system.

Critical Race Theory (CRT), having drawn emotional energy and historical justification from “1619,” is an aggressive and influential source for school curricula. It’s an ideology that encourages history books, and other alleged “relics” such as the U.S. Constitution, to be disregarded – cancelled.

Concerns abound regarding how “1619” is being applied. Political commentator Armstrong Williams warns us that curricula inspired by “1619” push the narrative that all whites are villains, and all blacks are victims. Williams, a black man, resents this self-fulfilling message.

Robert L. Woodson, a revered black civil rights activist, bemoans “1619” because it insinuates blacks “are born inherently damaged by an all-prevailing racism, and that their future prospects are determined by the whims of whites.” Again, this is a destructive, self-fulfilling message. Woodson supports “1776” as an “aspirational and inspirational” alternative to The 1619 Project.

CRT’s influence isn’t limited to history books. Imagine this: the Oregon Department of Education trains its math teachers to follow the premise that “white supremacy manifests itself in the focus on finding the right answer.” How can that be changed other than by

reducing standards? Another example is that some educators advance the theory that “the idea of 2+2 equaling 4 is cultural,” a product of “western imperialism and colonialism.” It’s tough to make these things up.

Here’s another. With “whiteness” defined as “a crime of the time,” there was a short-lived CRT exhibit at the Smithsonian’s National Museum of African American History. A series of charts identified characteristics of whiteness, e.g.: rugged individualism; nuclear family structure; emphasis on scientific method; objective thinking; and protestant work ethic. There were several more, not all of which were equally admirable, but those mentioned would strike many of us as being accurately reflective of our national values, not something blamed for causing racial conflict.

The Founders should be given voice in this debate. Were they motivated to perpetuate slavery, as “1619” and CRT claim? Their voices respond loudly. Ben Franklin clearly expressed his disdain for slavery by describing it as “...an atrocious debasement of human nature.” Consider George Washington’s private words to Robert Morris in 1786: “...there is not a man living who wishes more sincerely than I do, to see a plan adopted for the abolition of [slavery].”

While our Constitution didn’t manage to immediately eliminate slavery, it did provide a pathway for its demise. It took a while, but Lincoln eventually forced the issue almost “four score and seven” years later. And more than 100,000 Union soldiers lost their lives in a war to free slaves and unify the country. Critics can’t dodge those realities. And we owe the world acknowledgement that the job isn’t complete.

The question I posed earlier seems answered. The 1776 Commission wasn’t established to limit the number of scholarly voices in the debate, nor to forever guard our history books from criticism. Rather, its goal is to oppose and contradict how our education system is being influenced and manipulated by controversial theories that seek to dispose of our historical underpinnings and our form of government.

Unfortunately, President Biden banished Trump’s 1776 Commission. And he reauthorized federal government use of “1619” and Critical Race Theory sourced training, something President Trump had terminated.

We’re left with the task of pulling back on the reigns of these destructive influences, and to oppose those who pretend our Founders and history books got it all wrong. At the same time, let’s agree there’s infinitely more we can learn before we fully understand who we are and how we got here.