



Canada's Proud History Is What Unites Us All

“It is the glue that holds us together. Without it, we are doomed.”

By Thomas S. Caldwell, C.M., Opinion in the National Post

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I am proud to be a Canadian. I always have been. I believe this is the greatest country in the world — with the possible exception of the weather.

Our history is incredibly positive. The things we have done in the world to help others, whether in war or in peace, have regularly shown that Canada defends freedom and human dignity. Canada has been a haven for people fleeing oppression for generations. That is not an accident. It is the result of choices made by men and women who came before us, often with very little, and built something lasting.

Yet, there is something wrong with this country today. There appears to be a concerted effort, subtle but consistent, to debase our past, make Canadians feel ashamed of who they are and where they come from, and to suggest that our history is mainly a story of oppression and failure.

That is not honest and it is not healthy.

Every nation draws strength from its past. Knowing what our predecessors accomplished gives us the confidence to face our own challenges and to strive to do better. Canada has grown because people tried to better themselves and their situations for their families. Canada is made up of stories of immigrants leaving hardship behind, farmers clearing land with hand tools and engineers designing bridges across impossible geography.

Were there flawed people along the way? Of course. All leaders, even the great ones, were flawed. That is no ground for cancelling them from history. They built a wonderful country with the tools and understanding they had in their times. Their execution may have been imperfect, but their intent was often noble, and their achievements are real.

Like it or not, we are in a kind of historical war. Our governments and many of our institutions are systematically debasing the foundations of our great country — a country that people worldwide still strive to be part of. Perhaps the goal is to make us look only to our politicians to solve our problems and build our future. I do not believe that is wise.

A good example of the need for recognizing our admirable history and the assurance it can provide us lies with our Jewish brothers and sisters. I posed the question to a Jewish friend at lunch recently: “If one removed the history of the Jews, where would you be?” My friend said, “It is memory that has sustained us, nurtured us and inspired us. It is our collective memory that we can pass onto our children which enables us to move forward with pride and confidence.”

The courage and resilience of the Jewish people through great persecution, rests on how history has guided and inspired them over thousands of years up until now. This illustration is also true of other nations and faiths, but the Jews are a powerful example of how tenacity and accomplishment are supported by their past.

As a practicing Christian and Catholic, I, too, have witnessed our government’s debasing of our wider history as well as our faith basis for years. A history of great sacrifice, steadfastness, contribution and accomplishment by all Canadians. Again, were there deeply flawed people along the way — yes. They were, thankfully, a small minority and should not dominate our historic memory.

In addition, our so-called efforts at inclusion are, in fact, exclusion and, as a consequence, they undercut our faith in Canada and its future. We are now “a house divided.”

If one were a conspiracy theorist, it would seem a long-term, organized effort has been at work. The above efforts have been continual and consistent. What’s being missed is what is replacing our history — negativity, self-entitlement, division and even hostility.

Sadly, the debasement effort seems to be succeeding as Canadians are losing some of the pride previous generations have felt for our country. Remember, they built the Canada we all now enjoy.

It seems the excuse of tolerance has, in fact, been a cover for intolerance and even bigotry throughout Canada’s officialdom. Canada is now fractured and is starting to appear less like a democracy than a tyranny of special interest groups.

Pride in one’s history is the glue that holds countries together and gives them the confidence to push forward. Without nurturing and preserving our history, Canada, as a nation, is doomed.

Canada is my home. But a home without memory is just a building. A nation without history is just a border on a map.

We can acknowledge mistakes without erasing achievements. We can be honest about the past without hating it. And we can be proud of Canada without being blind.

If we want a future worth building, we need a past worth remembering.

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