

Why History Matters pt.1

by Ted Byfield

The sermon emphasizes the importance of history, particularly Christian history, in understanding the present and shaping the future, and warns against the threats to Western civilization posed by technological change and the erosion of traditional values.

Scripture: Deuteronomy 32:7, Proverbs 22:28, 1 Corinthians 15:33, Ephesians 6:4, Colossians 2:8

Topics: "Christian History", "Moral Values"

Description

Ted Byfield emphasizes the importance of history, particularly Christian history, in shaping civilizations and societies. He highlights the essentiality of simple moral rules in maintaining the well-being of a civilization, drawing from ancient Israelites, Greeks, and Romans. Byfield warns against the erosion of these rules, pointing out the threats of technological advancements and ideological influences that seek to undermine traditional values. He delves into the impact of John Dewey's educational philosophy on society, revealing the deliberate efforts to reshape future generations through the education system, ultimately challenging the traditional concepts of morality, reason, and authority.

Transcript

WHY HISTORY MATTERS

AND WHY CHRISTIAN HISTORY MATTERS IN PARTICULAR

By Ted Byfield

General Editor

The Christian History Project

© Ted Byfield, 2008

Any part of this booklet may be reprinted

without permission but with attribution

to the author and publisher

Published by SEARCH - the Society to Explore and

Record Christian History. Address: 203, 10441 178
Street, Edmonton, AB Canada. T5S 1R5

Copies of this booklet may be ordered from the
publisher by telephoning the toll free line
1-888-234-4478, or through the publisher's
website: www.christianhistoryproject.com

The price is \$7 per copy. The text may be
downloaded free through the website.

"The democracies are losing the freedom
which gives meaning to democracy, because
they are losing that sense of direction which
gives meaning to freedom."

- Hilda Neatby

"When men stop believing in God, they don't
believe in nothing. They believe in anything."

-G.K. Chesterton

"Beware of false prophets, which come to
you in sheep's clothing but inwardly they
are ravening wolves. Ye shall know
them by their fruits."

--Jesus Christ (Matthew 7:15)

To John E. Hokanson

Friend, Benefactor, and Believer

~~~~~

THE 'SIMPLE RULES,' WITHOUT  
WHICH WE PERISH

Please examine carefully the following five statements. They

represent the kind of thing that may be heard any day in any office or job site, living room, board room, kitchen or pub, spoken by wealthy people or street people, literate people or illiterate, men or women, children or adults.

"Okay, so we'll meet there at five o'clock."

"I've got to return this shovel. It's Charlie's."

"She's been in hospital for a week and I haven't even visited her."

"No twelve-year-old should be out this late."

"But that's what he said happened."

The point to note is that each of these statements implies a kind of expectation. The other person is expected to be there at five o'clock. If you borrow a shovel, you're expected to return it. Just as people are expected to visit the sick, to control the whereabouts of their children, and to tell the truth. All five statements, that is, take for granted a kind of code of conduct, or standard of behaviour, that everybody can be assumed to recognize and respect.

Simple morality, one might say. Simple perhaps, but also indispensable.

A world in which no one could be expected to keep promises, to return what they borrow, to comfort the sick, to care for their children and to tell the truth would be a world that could not function. In the long run, these rules of conduct are as essential to our well-being as the food we eat and the air we breathe.

They are the glue or thread that holds a civilization together. Sustaining them, which means sustaining their authority to guide and govern what we do, is necessary if the civilization is to survive.

Something else is noteworthy. No previous civilization ever has survived; all past civilizations have perished. And the chief symptom of

impending collapse was that respect for the rules began eroding. The glue failed, the thread broke, and they were gone.

The rules of our own civilization--usually referred to as "the West" - originate in the ancient world. From the ancient Israelites, we derived our ideas about God. From the ancient Greeks, we derived our ideas about government. And from the ancient Romans we derived our concept of the civil law.<sup>1</sup> These three strains were combined by the Christians into a unified whole known as Western civilization. Though certainly not without flaw, it has produced the most just, the most technologically proficient, the most compassionate, and the most prosperous society the world has ever known. And while it has become intellectually fashionable to deplore and denounce it, especially by critics living comfortably within it, the rest of the world seeks fervidly to emulate it or, better still, to move into it.

However, this influx of other peoples does not pose the threat to the West that is sometimes voiced. Indeed, Western society has been receiving and accommodating peoples from without ever since it began. Rather, it faces two other stresses, both of which could destroy it, though the second is much more insidious than the first.

The first has come as the product of its success. Technological change, almost all of it innovated by the West, has been so astonishing, so swift and so sweeping over the last two centuries of the second Christian millennium that it threatens to sweep away everything that went before as obsolete, including many of the old rules for human behaviour.

And yet they are as essential as they ever were. People must still

be expected to do what they say they're going to do, whether they're running a biochemical experiment or a trap line. They are still expected to return what they borrow, whether it's a shovel or a digital recording device. Their responsibility to the stricken is as imperative as it ever was, and so is the expectation that they can be relied upon to care for their family, and to tell the truth.

So the necessity for the old rules is still very much there. In fact, a case can be made that it is more pressing than ever. The very complexity of our new technological world makes it much more vulnerable to subversive attack than was the old world. Knock out several major power plants and you could paralyze much of twenty-first century eastern North America. Computers would stop. Airports would stop. Subways would stop. Elevators would stop. Gasoline pumps would stop. Furnaces would stop. Lights would go out. In northern cities in a severe winter, thousands would soon be in danger of freezing to death. Such swift and vast devastation would have been impossible in the nineteenth century. Technological society, that is, depends for its very survival on a high degree of behavioural conformity among the citizenry, something that terrorist movements have discovered and effectively exploited.

But the other strain on "the rules" has proven far more lethal. For it strains them, not as an incidental effect of its activity, but because straining them, indeed effectually abolishing their foundation, is one of its central goals, what from the beginning it set out to do.

What am I implying? Some kind of secret conspiracy to destroy our society? Not at all. No secret, no conspiracy. For what it has sought to do, it has been utterly candid about from the beginning. Moreover,

it has taken over most of the levers that control the social machine, recruiting to its cause some of our best minds and most effective communicators. Curiously, however, very few of the latter seem to realize what they are actually communicating. And as the more astute among them become vaguely aware of this, their acute discomfort becomes evident. They tend to push the thought aside as something they do not wish to contemplate.

---

[1. See. W.G. de Burgh, The Legacy of the Ancient World, Oxford, 1924.]

A DECEPTIVELY

UNSPECTACULAR REVOLUTIONARY

To ascribe all this mischief to one man is, of course, excessive.

Yet one man undeniably played a major role in the social and cultural revolution of America in the twentieth century. True, he was powerfully influenced by others who came before him--Rousseau, Hobbes, Darwin, Spencer--and helped by a coterie of like-minded revolutionaries who worked diligently alongside him. As in all revolutions, his message was carried by thousands of disciples who often went beyond anything the original visionary had proposed, though what they were doing was derived directly from what he taught. To most of these, however, he is today little more than a name. Very few have actually read what he wrote, let alone approve of what he was setting out to do, though they have often strenuously, if unwittingly, helped him do it.

The man in question is the educator and philosopher John Dewey.

The bare facts of his curriculum vitae are deceptively unspectacular.

From a family of modest income, he graduated Phi Beta Kappa from

the University of Vermont in 1879, taught three years in high school and quit, received a doctorate from Johns Hopkins in 1884, taught at the University of Michigan, then became a faculty member of the University of Chicago in 1894, soon after it opened, and established there experimental elementary and high schools. After a clash with the university administration he left for Columbia University in 1904 where he taught philosophy until his death in 1952.

Creditable enough, but hardly the track record of a man who would more profoundly affect the culture and thinking of Americans than any twentieth-century president. However, that was because he knew something that no president since Thomas Jefferson has ever fully understood, namely that the way to fundamentally reshape a society is not by changing its citizens, but by changing their children--more specifically, by radically changing those who teach their children. For the teachers could change the children, and the children would become the citizens and voters of tomorrow.

Dewey's agenda was not, in its ultimate goal, educational. It was political. Like the founders of America, indeed of all the Western democracies, he was obsessed with the idea of freedom. But his object was to establish a new kind of freedom. While people were free to vote and many were free to choose paths that could lead them to wealth and comfort, they were not in Dewey's view truly free.

All but a few advanced thinkers were prisoners of traditionalist thought and morality that prevented them from achieving genuine freedom and becoming their "true selves." It was this kind of freedom that he sought for all. He had achieved it himself; he wanted

to confer it on everyone. He envisioned a new civilization, liberated from its ancient taboos and enslavement to outdated creeds and codes of conduct.

Once delivered from this old morality, humanity would reach through science destinies vastly beyond present human imagination, he said. And the road to this nirvana lay not through some Marxist or Fascist revolution, but through an educational one. To Dewey, you didn't need the politicians. If you could change the way the people thought, the politicians would have no choice but to go along with the new order. Over his lifetime he published some sixteen books, enunciating convulsive changes in education that would render the new schools unrecognizable to those who had attended the old. His vision was embraced, indeed devoured, not initially by teachers, but by "educators"--those who teach teachers--a species that Dewey's era virtually brought into existence. Decade after decade a torrent of Deweyite disciples poured forth from Columbia University Teachers College, skilfully administered by Dewey's senior lieutenant in the revolution, W.H. Kilpatrick. What could be more impressive than an education degree from Columbia? They rapidly infused his ideas into the new "faculties of education," themselves largely a product of Deweyism. These gradually supplanted the old and hopelessly hidebound "normal schools."

Meanwhile, Dewey himself carried his ideas to the world in what he saw as personal "missions." He favoured such biblical terms, sometimes referring to his message as "the gospel." It proved a gospel eagerly embraced in the Soviet Union.

Its principles became the foundational assumption of the new educators.

2 The schools, they knew, must be used to work a wholesale rejection of all the old ideas about human nature. The concept of good and evil must be abolished, wrote Dewey. Such qualities as honesty, courage, industry and chastity must no longer be cherished, while things like malice, vindictiveness and irresponsibility need no longer be deplored. Such conduct is merely the response of the individual to the conditions around him. Indeed nothing should be transmitted to students from the legacy of previous generations. Whatever moral conclusions the student may reach, he must reach solely on the basis of his own experience. Most important, he must not see himself as somehow "judged" by what he does or doesn't do. The idea of individual "blame" must be eradicated. He must regard himself as part of a community, part of "the public." If a crime is committed, the criminal must not be considered responsible. The community as a whole must have somehow failed him. So too must the idea of the "will" be abolished. The concept that the individual "chooses" between good and evil leads only to the defeat of "self hood." There is no such thing as the human "will," he said, and the old moral boundaries between good and evil have become obsolete and invalid. Moreover, gender stereotyping must be stopped. There must be no such thing as boys' books and girls' books, or boys' games and girls' games, because such distinctions serve to perpetuate the old order. His ideas would "destroy many things once cherished," Dewey allowed, but that was the unfortunate price of human progress.

---

[2. A comprehensive and understandable critique of Dewey's work was written by Henry T. Edmondson, professor of political science and public administration at Georgia State University and director of the

Center for Transatlantic Studies. It is entitled John Dewey and the Decline of American Education, published by Intercollegiate Studies Institute, Wilmington, Delaware, in 2006.]

## THE CONVULSIVE CHANGE

### IN THE SCHOOLS

As the 20th century unfolded, these concepts began taking deep root in the education faculties and appearing in the schools. Gradually, the teacher ceased being an authority figure in the classroom. She must instead become a guide, a counsellor, a friend, said Dewey. Student desks must be rearranged in such a way as to overcome any suggestion of managerial leadership.

The students must learn to lead themselves. Any attempt by a teacher to impose structure--pass/fail, good/bad, right/wrong-- must be viewed as a form of "pedagogical abuse."

Indeed, all semblance of superiority or inferiority must vanish.

Report cards must no longer carry grade standings. Anything that suggests standards of performance must not appear. Children must not be criticized for making "mistakes," nor be admonished to "sit still" because this may thwart their inner impulses. Checking those impulses must be considered another form of "abuse," for they are the means by which the child expresses creativity.

No student should be singled out for a distinctly good performance, nor certainly for a distinctly bad one, because the whole idea of good and bad must be removed from the child's mind. "Self-esteem" must be encouraged in every possible way, but never predicated on actual performance. The student should esteem himself because he is a self, not because he has actually accomplished anything.

Learning to read must be considered a useful thing, but not a primary essential. What ultimately matters is not what skills the

child acquires, but whether he is becoming a "social being."

Similarly, in the higher grades "critical thinking" must be fostered, but it consisted of encouraging the student to question and challenge the assumptions of the old order, especially those of his parents. A young adult who had learned to challenge the qualities and morality revered by his parents was deemed to be "thinking critically."

One who continued to respect and adhere to them was not thinking critically. His education had plainly failed him.<sup>3</sup>

In the 1940s, an unforeseen development sharply checked the educational revolution, notably the Second World War. Suddenly qualities like honour, courage, duty, tradition and responsibility became not only praiseworthy, but crucial. Without them, the Western democracies would certainly lose. By the 'fifties, however, the war was safely over, and the revolution in the schools resumed with full vigour. Old teachers resisted. Indeed, some courageously continued to battle the Deweyite revolution for the next half century. But such opposition was soon swept aside by the tens of thousands of young teachers pouring forth from the new faculties of education. These saw themselves as the harbingers of a new kind of society, with a new kind of citizen, that they were commissioned to bring into being. Entire school systems embraced the new ideas. Dewey himself, before he died, became a hallowed figure, the man who had liberated America from the narrow intolerance and vicious bigotry of its past. At his ninetieth birthday, tributes came in from all over the world, for by now his works had been translated into eight other languages.

As the American public system embraced the new "progressive"

aims and methods, Canadian educators were at first nervous. They feared that Canada's natural conservatism would sharply resist such innovations. They soon discovered, however, that Canada's supposed commitment to conservatism was actually a commitment to conformity. Canadians would do whatever respectable authority approved. When it became evident "reputable educators" were urging these changes, that's all they needed to know.

---

[3. Lest anyone conclude that children today are no longer under such influence, he should observe the current books for young people by Neale Donald Walsch, regularly on the New York Times best seller list, with such titles as *Conversations With God* and *Conversations with God for Teens*. Typically, "God" is represented as approving pre-marital sex, sexual deviation, and whatever other sexual conduct commends itself. In one instance, a girl asks about God's forgiveness of sin. Walsch portrays "God" as replying: "I do not forgive anyone because there is nothing to forgive. There is no such thing as right or wrong and that is what I have been trying to tell everyone." However dubious the Divine credentials, it's certainly what John Dewey was trying to tell everyone. *Conversations With God* is currently being made into a Hollywood movie.]

#### PLEASANT YOUNG MEN OF MEDIOCRE INTELLIGENCE

From the start, it is true, there were discordant voices in the U.S., some of them authoritative. Parents and students, said one, "must be induced to abandon the educational path that, rather blindly, they have been following as a result of John Dewey's teachings." That voice belonged to President Dwight D. Eisenhower.

A more raucous note was sounded by the acerbic Christian novelist Flannery O'Connor: "My advice to parents is...Anything that Wm. Heard Kilpatrick & Jhn. Dewey say to do, don't do."

Canada produced its critics too, first and foremost among them a notable historian, Dr. Hilda Neatby of the University of Saskatchewan whose critique of Deweyism, *So Little for the*

Mind, (Clarke, Irwin, Toronto, 1953) stirred rage across the Deweyite establishment, already securely ensconcing itself in various provincial departments of education.

Dewey, wrote Professor Neatby, "is not only unintentionally anti-intellectual, he is, it seems, quite deliberately anti-cultural...even ferociously amoral in his method and discipline." Deweyism "is not liberation; it is indoctrination both intellectual and moral." Dewey had translated the mantra "education is life" into "an injunction to the school to take over every part of a child's life and every function of society. The family and church are ignored or patronized."

Moreover, she continued, there is strong evidence that Deweyism is being ruthlessly forced into the school system, and any challenge to it is harshly rejected in the education faculties. She quoted one Canadian student's impression: "The atmosphere there curiously prefigured the authoritarian state. Any independent thought, any deviation from the Moscow line (for Moscow read, Teachers' College, Columbia) is criminal non-cooperativeness and sabotage...

Native common sense has no validity, and the candidate for certification who attempts to use it is warned of the consequences with a candour and directness which Molotov (a senior Stalinist lieutenant) could not have improved on."

The result, said Professor Neatby, was that the most competent students were discouraged from the teaching profession: "The soldier, the doctor, the business executive and the technician who wish to get on can do so by continued study and practice in the field which they have chosen. This is not true of the teacher. He must bid farewell to culture and genuine intellectual

pursuits, and concentrate upon the endless minutiae and jargons which we dignify with the name of pedagogical studies."

The result was sadly evident in the departments of education:

"The stars of the educational firmament today are too often bright young men of neat appearance, pleasant personality and mediocre intelligence."

Her book was studiously ignored in education circles, where she was personally shunned. Searching the Canadian news media of the day, she could find almost no interest in the changes being implemented in the schools - a couple of editorials in the Victoria Times Colonist, a protest from one columnist in the Globe and Mail, little more--the absence of criticism suggesting a general acquiescence with the new methods. Canadian newspapers would have grave cause to rue this 20 or so years later when their "penetration" of the market (meaning the percentage of the population who buy newspapers) began a slide which has never been arrested. They resignedly blame television. That was certainly one factor. But the other was the general illiteracy which the new schools were engendering and which the print media did nothing to resist. Too late, they discovered, people who can't read, can't read newspapers.

Fifteen years after the Neatby book, Deweyism made its greatest advance in Canada through an Ontario study co-chaired by Mr. Justice Emmett Hall 4 and a former Ontario high school teacher and Education Department consultant named Lloyd A Dennis.

The "Hall-Dennis Report," issued in 1968, became a Canadian beacon of Deweyite philosophy. Children are portrayed as invariably good; punishment as invariably bad. Poor performance

by children is the fault of the system or the teacher, not the child.

Learning should never be an unpleasant or arduous experience.

Democracy should begin in the classroom. The teacher's chief task is to understand the child, not to convey knowledge or skills.

Exams must go, grade standing must go, punishment must go, and the child himself should have a considerable voice in whether he passes or fails.

The report was thoroughly eviscerated by Dr. James Daly, an associate professor of history at McMaster University, who in his book, "Education or Molasses?" challenged nearly all its recommendations, concluding that it was founded on an astonishingly naïve view of human nature, that it evaded the central problems of teaching morality in a pluralistic society, and encouraged rebellion against existing authority, while offering nothing whatever to replace it.<sup>5</sup>

---

[4. Emmett Matthew Hall (1898-1995), one of Canada's foremost jurists and left wing reformers, was a socialist in conservative clothing. After a youth spent on a Saskatchewan dairy farm and a long career as a Saskatchewan lawyer, he became known as an admirer of rough frontier values and the spirit of free enterprise. Opponents of medicare rejoiced in 1964 therefore when he was appointed to head an inquiry into a possible state-run health care system for Canada. To their horror, he recommended that socialist Saskatchewan's system be extended to cover the whole country. Though certainly not without

its detractors and problems, Medicare has enjoyed substantial public support in

Canada ever since. Mr. Justice Hall's infatuation with Deweyism is harder to comprehend and would hasten the educational catastrophe.]

[5. Alberta had a parallel for the Hall-Dennis Report that emerged in 1971, the year the Conservative government of Peter Lougheed took office. Written by the University of Alberta's dean of education, Walter Holmes Worth, the "Worth Report" directed the new government's education policy for several years until, it was said, one of Lougheed's children brought home from high school a book on "The Future." Examining it, Lougheed asked his son what it was. "It's about the future," came the reply. "We're studying the future." "The future?" gasped Lougheed. "You hardly know anything about the past!" Inquiring, he found the book had been chosen to help fulfill the recommendations of the Worth Report. So for the first time, he actually read this document. Concluding it was "sheer nonsense," he ordered changes in Alberta's education policy, and the province was soon leading the country in efforts to repair the chaos created by its venture

into Deweyist education.]

## THE INCONVENIENT OBSTINACY

### OF MATHEMATICS

Such negativity was, of course, dismissed as the death moans of a dying culture. Not so easily dismissed was the system's inability to cope with such formidable obstacles as reading, spelling, English grammar and mathematics. Spelling was particularly distasteful to the Deweyite because it suggested a "right way" (and therefore "wrong ways") to compose a word. There were such things, that is, as spelling "mistakes." These, said the Deweyites, should be either overlooked by the teacher or observed in passing but not "judgmentally."<sup>6</sup> The new kind of citizen didn't need to bother about spelling, even if what he sometimes wrote began to resemble gibberish.

Grammar posed a further challenge. Ostensibly, it was taught to enable a student to write confidently. He knew the rules so well that they became habitual. But to Dewey, a student's confidence should not require such a prop. Grammatical rules were part of the past and could be ignored. The objective, remember, was to cleanse the youthful mind of the whole concept of "rules."

But grammar had always been taught for another reason. It was analytical. It required the student to know whether a group of words was or was not a sentence. It required him to break sentences into their component parts, to detect the function of each word, to discern how it worked with the other words to create a rational whole, the sentence. Its function, that is, was to introduce the process of reason. But to Dewey this kind of exercise was destructive.

It conveyed the idea that there was a valid structure, the rational, to which acceptable human thought must conform. Irrational thought must be rejected. In other words, reason and the rules of reason were in fact authoritarian--to the Deweyites a very bad thing. So the study of logic was abolished from the post-secondary curriculum, and grammar, its introductory discipline, all but disappeared from elementary and secondary schools. Which left mathematics. For the Deweyites, this was an awkward area because it was difficult to teach without allowing for the concept of "the mistake," or even more dastardly, "the wrong answer." Five times-five would equal twenty-five, however much Johnny would prefer that it equal something else, and even the Deweyites could see that Johnny might get into serious trouble later with his own personally developed multiplication table. So it was finally resolved that the child must himself "experience" the multiplication table, discovering that when he multiplied five times five, things generally turned out better for him if he took the answer to be twenty-five. However, great care must be taken to assure that some other answer was not in any sense "wrong" because "right" and "wrong" did not exist. Beyond all these problematic areas there remained one other "subject" which, unless very carefully manipulated, had within itself the power to undermine the entire Deweyite construct. That subject was history. Though in the past it had often been taught badly -often limited to the laborious memorization of dates, names and dull data-Dewey knew that history could also be taught with such compelling effect upon the student that it would renew in his mind all the pernicious old ideas (as Dewey saw them) that must be destroyed.

"It is possible to employ it as a kind of reservoir of anecdotes to be drawn on to inculcate moral lessons on this virtue or that vice," he wrote. "But such a teaching is not so much an ethical use of history as it is an effort to create moral impressions by means of more or less authentic material. At best it produces a temporary emotional glow."

Notice the implication. It is possible to use historical films on, say, the Nazi Holocaust to "create the moral impression" that such things ought not to happen. Or in Canada to tell the story of Vimy Ridge or the building of the Canadian Pacific Railway to inspire admiration for courage or human enterprise and ingenuity. But this is "the practice of an earlier age." Since it "is not useful to contribute to the development of the social intelligence," it is pointless.

History, however, could not be simply dropped wholly from the curriculum. Its absence would be noticed and this would have to be explained to an audience that might not understand. So instead it was amalgamated into "social studies" and restricted to what Dewey called "the relevant." Thus fragments of it could be summoned here and there to reinforce a social cause<sup>8</sup>. But it must not be taught as a coherent story, unfolding era by era across time, because this would confer on it a dangerous credibility, in other words an authority. So a coherent presentation of the history must be discouraged. Above all, History's uncertainties must be emphasized. Since all the existing records were ultimately somebody's viewpoint, biased, subjective, essentially fictional, we can learn little from the past. That was the message.<sup>9</sup>

---

[6. It's interesting to examine the way the Dewey era has changed the moral value placed on two English verbs - "to judge" and "to discriminate." Where we once commended a man "of judgment," we now

denounce "judgmental" people. Where we once admired a "discriminating" person, we now deplore and even prosecute "discrimination." Behind this philological change, of course, lies the Dewey doctrine that good and bad, true and false, right and wrong do not exist.]

[7. Dewey opposed the entire concept of "subjects" in education. Learning, he said, must be "a whole," and things experienced rather than taught. "Subjects" were purely a man made and man-imposed contrivance to establish a "structure" to knowledge. But knowledge is best conveyed without structure, he said.]

[8. When I taught in a boys' school, I remember asking an applicant student: "Who was Sir John A. Macdonald?" The boy replied, "Why, he's the man who ordered the hanging of Louis Riel." Did he know anything else about Macdonald, I asked. No, replied the boy, he did not. This puzzled me. Macdonald was the chief architect of the Canadian confederation, and our first prime minister, who spread the country from the Atlantic to the Pacific and largely achieved its independence

from Britain. Why did the boy not know any of this, yet did know of Macdonald's decision to execute a convicted insurrectionist leader in the West? The boy had a ready explanation. Riel led a minority group, the Metis, he said, "and we studied minorities in social studies."]

[9. The contention that all historical records are somebody's "viewpoint" has been used to discredit history as a criterion of established fact. However, the contention is flawed. Here are four historical statements: 1. "Martin Luther King died." 2. "Martin Luther King was killed." 3. "Martin Luther King was assassinated." 4. "Martin Luther King was martyred." The fourth may be a viewpoint; the other three are not. The contention that since the fourth is a viewpoint, they must all be mere viewpoints is irrational. The historical record, like our memory, is certainly subject to error. What we recall happening and what actually happened can differ. But we can scarcely go from there to conclude that our memory is therefore useless and we're all no better than amnesiacs.] Cont.

---

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/ted-byfield/why-history-matters-pt1/>

# *Grow in Your Walk with Christ*

---

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

**[www.sermonindex.net](http://www.sermonindex.net)**