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Bill Muehlenberg's commentary on issues of the day...

Nelson Mandela

It was not my intention to say anything about this subject, but with so much hagiography and historical revisionism taking place already, even by Christians, it seems a piece to help bring a bit of balance here might be in order. The impression we are getting from many is this: not only was Nelson Mandela messianic in nature, but he is now in the bosom of heaven.

It seems we have warrant for neither conviction however. I do not claim to be an authority on the man, but whether he was a genuine Christian who repented of his sins and was reconciled to God through Christ is not clear. I hope he was, and those who have proof of this are welcome to bring it forward.

If he were such a great Christian, plenty of Christians suffered under him, as South African missionary Dr Peter Hammond has said. As one article states, "Mandela was deeply involved in terrorist activity and is responsible for promoting wickedness in the land. 'I wouldn't generally want to celebrate somebody who made his position in life by blowing people up,' he stated on a recent broadcast...."

"Hammond outlined that Mandela was the head of the military wing of the African National Committee (ANC), which Hammond also referred to as 'the abortion, necklacing and corruption party.' He said that 1,000 Africans were killed by necklacing in the country through the ANC, an act where terrorists would 'put an automobile tire over someone, pour petrol over them [and] set them alight.'

"Hammond also described numerous other acts of violence that he alleges were committed by the ANC under the order or oversight of Mandela. 'Missionaries and their kids [were] murdered, bayoneted on the fields—whole families killed by landmines planted in the roads,' he said. The South African missionary stated that Mandela's wife Winnie also participated in violent acts. 'Winnie Mandela actually was found guilty in court of the murder of a 12-year-old boy,' he explained. 'And it was upheld on appeal. She was sentenced to five years in prison, [but] she hasn't served a day'."

I hope that he was in fact a true believer. But it is just not clear it seems. However I wish here to mainly look at some more political and historical issues. The truth is, to say he was a great man is misleading in many respects. Sure, he was charming and gracious, and his moves for national reconciliation were to be applauded.

No one is denying that. But that is not all there is to the man. Simply put, he also was a Marxist and a terrorist who was imprisoned after being found guilty of committing 156 acts of violence and terrorism. Consider some more detail here.

Mandela was imprisoned for involvement in these terrorist attacks. The guerrilla force, uMkhonto we Sizwe (MK, or 'Spear of the Nation'), the terrorist wing of the ANC and South African Communist Party, was

founded in 1961 by him and his advisor, the Lithuanian-born communist Joe Slovo, who was secretary general of the South African Communist Party in 1986.

Slovo planned many of the ANC terrorist attacks. In 1962, Mandela was arrested along with 19 others, many of whom were communists, in a police raid on ANC headquarters at a farm in Rivonia, a Johannesburg suburb. In the Rivonia Trial of 1963-1964 the defendants were 'tried for 221 acts of sabotage designed to overthrow the government and conspiring to aid foreign military units'.

Does anyone remember the Pretoria Church Street bombing? As one write up puts it: "The Church Street attack on May 20, 1983 killed 19 and injured more than 200 people when a car with 40kg of explosives was detonated outside the SAAF headquarters. Two MK cadres, who were in the car at the time, were also killed because the bomb exploded two minutes early.

"A huge pall of smoke rose hundreds of feet into the air as debris and bodies were strewn around the scene of the explosion. It exploded at the height of the city's rush-hour as hundreds of people were leaving work for the weekend. Glass and metal were catapulted into the air as shop-fronts and windows were blown out. Many passers-by had limbs amputated by the flying debris. Others bled to death.

"In his book *Long Walk to Freedom*, Nelson Mandela wrote that as a leading member of the ANC's executive committee, he had 'personally signed off' in approving these acts of terrorism. This is the horror which Mandela had 'signed off' for while he was in prison – convicted for other acts of terrorism after the Rivonia trial. The late SA president PW Botha told Mandela in 1985 that he could be a free man as long as he did just one thing: 'publicly renounce violence'. Mandela refused."

And as Lee Jenkins also notes, "Tellingly, not only did Mandela refuse to renounce violence, Amnesty refused to take his case stating '[the] movement recorded that it could not give the name of "Prisoner of Conscience" to anyone associated with violence, even though as in "conventional warfare" a degree of restraint may be exercised'."

He continues, "Despite being synonymous with freedom and democracy, Mandela was never afraid to glad hand the thugs and tyrants of the international arena. General Sani Abacha seized power in Nigeria in a military coup in November 1993. From the start of his presidency, in May 1994, Nelson Mandela refrained from publicly condemning Abacha's actions. Up until the Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting in November 1995 the ANC government vigorously opposed the imposition of sanctions against Nigeria..."

"Two of the ANC's biggest donors, in the 1990s, were Colonel Muammar Gaddafi of Libya and President Suharto of Indonesia. Not only did Mandela refrain from criticising their lamentable human rights records but he interceded diplomatically on their behalf, and awarded them South Africa's highest honour. Suharto was awarded a state visit, a 21-gun salute, and The Order of Good Hope (gold class)."

He also lists some of the other attacks 'signed off' by Mandela:

- Amanzimtoti Shopping complex KZN, 23 December 1985
- Krugersdorp Magistrate's Court, 17 March 1988
- Durban Pick 'n Pay shopping complex, 1 September 1986
- Pretoria Sterland movie complex 16 April 1988 – limpet mine killed ANC terrorist M O Maponya instead
- Johannesburg Magistrate's Court, 20 May 1987
- Roodepoort Standard Bank 3 June, 1988

Surprisingly both Christians and conservatives have been getting involved in the hagiographies and the rewriting of history – even at this early stage after his passing. But as Peter Hammond reminds us, there is no reason to canonise the man, since Mandela was hardly a conservative or Christian icon: “There’s a lot of Christians out there who idolize Nelson Mandela because they’ve been given false, misleading and incomplete information,” he said. “He has pushed for the legalization of abortion, pornography [and] homosexual relationships. ... [He was] trying to legalize prostitution. He’s a radical liberal.”

While we again can praise his moves for reconciliation and his willingness to forgive and not remain embittered, as I say, we have far too many other areas that we must also assess, both in the man and in his fruit. David Horowitz offers a somewhat balanced account by way of summary:

“Mandela began as a terrorist and never turned his back on monsters like Arafat and Castro, whom he considered brothers in arms. When he was released from prison by deKlerk, he showed unexpected statesmanship, counseling reconciliation rather than revenge, no small achievement in a country in which the ‘liberation’ movement (led by Mandela’s wife and party) placed oil filled inner tubes around the necks of former comrades and set them on fire.

“But if a leader should be judged by his works, the country Mandela left behind is an indictment of his political career, not an achievement worthy of praise – let alone the unhinged adoration he is currently receiving across the political spectrum. South Africa today is the murder capital of the world, a nation where a woman is raped every 30 seconds, often by AIDs carriers who go unpunished, and where whites are anything but the citizens of a democratic country, which honors the principles of equality and freedom. Liberated South Africa is one of those epic messes the left created and promptly forgot about.”

Much more can be said about the man and his legacy. And as I said, it was not my intention to even weigh into all this – at least not so early, but when I saw the flood of hero-worship, iconography, hagiography, and historical revisionism, I felt moved to at least offer a few inconvenient truths to help set the record straight.

Mandela was a great man in some respects, but he was also an evil man in some respects. Whether he died a genuine Christian or not seems a moot point. But given how our secular left MSM and elites have a tendency to worship and turn into messiahs people like this, it is vital that a few more facts are thrown into the overall assessment.

And BTW, please do not denounce me and what I have written by foolishly claiming I am somehow just an apartheid proponent. Jenkins answered this best this way: “The apartheid regime was a crime against humanity; as illogical as it was cruel. It is tempting, therefore, to simplify the subject by declaring that all who opposed it were wholly and unswervingly good. It’s important to remember, however, that Mandela has been the first to hold his hands up to his shortcomings and mistakes. In books and speeches, he goes to great length to admit his errors. The real tragedy is that too many in the West can’t bring themselves to see what the great man himself has said all along; that he’s just as flawed as the rest of us, and should not be put on a pedestal.”

And that basically is all I have been trying to do here.

Finally, I strongly urge all of you to watch these two very important videos which only total 11 minutes all up:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=cTFhaUYmzV0

www.youtube.com/watch?v=HKO7MmJ60zY

christiannews.net/2013/11/26/south-african-missionary-cautions-against-new-film-praising-life-of-nelson-mandela/
frontline.org.za/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1675%3Amandela-long-walk-to-freedom&catid=18%3Amovie-reviews-cat&Itemid=199
www.southafricaproject.info/rememering_the_church_street_bombing.html
thebackbencher.co.uk/3-things-you-didnt-want-to-know-about-nelson-mandela/
www.independent.co.uk/news/world/mandela-signs-abortion-bill-1314157.html
www.frontpagemag.com/2013/david-horowitz/nelson-mandela-1918-2013/

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1. [Jo D](#) 6.12.13 / 8pm

Thanks, most enlightening! I had no idea.

Jo Deller

2. *Antonia 6.12.13 / 9pm*

Well done, Bill. I was wondering if you'd say anything.

I've also been irritated that none of the adoring media have mentioned the violence and murder committed under Mandela's watch. It's fine to laud his achievements in the reconciliation movement, but there's no doubt that South Africa is a far more dangerous and murderous country today than it ever was during the apartheid era.

Antonia Feitz

3. [Ron and Barbara](#) 6.12.13 / 9pm

Nelson Mandela first married in 1944. He and his wife Evelyn had 2 children and divorced in 1957.

A year later, he married Winnie Madikizela-Mandela. Their marriage survived his 27 years in prison, but ended in divorce in 1996.

Shortly after his release from prison, Mandela met Graca Machel, the widow of former Mozambican president, Samora Machel. The couple decided to tie the knot on Nelson Mandela's 80th birthday. Their marriage was announced at his birthday celebration, which was attended by 2,000 international guests.

The Word of God:

“And this is the second thing you do: you cover the altar of the Lord with tears, with weeping and crying; so He does not regard the offering anymore, nor receive it with goodwill from your hands. Yet you say, ‘For what reason?’ Because the Lord has been witness between you and the wife of your youth, with whom you have dealt treacherously; yet she is your companion and your wife by covenant. But did He not make them one, having a remnant of the Spirit? And why one? He seeks Godly offspring. Therefore take heed to your spirit, and let none deal treacherously with the wife of his youth”.

“For the Lord God of Israel says that He hates divorce, for it covers one's garment with VIOLENCE,” says the Lord of hosts. “Therefore take heed to your spirit, that you do not deal treacherously.” (Malachi Ch. 2: 13-16 – please see full context in Malachi)

“But from the beginning of the creation, God made them male and female. ‘For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh’, so then they are no longer two but one flesh. “Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate.”

In the house His disciples also asked Him again about the same matter. So He said to them, “Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery against her. And if a woman divorces her husband and marries another, she commits adultery.” (Mark Ch. 10: 6-12 – please see full context in Mark's Gospel)

Shalom and the Father's love,
Ron and Barbara Pirie.

4. *Dee Graf 6.12.13 / 10pm*

Great, informative article, Bill. You can pretty much say that if the world loves a person as much as they love Mandela, that person can't have been a sold out follower of Jesus. Because sold out followers of Jesus will never be loved by this world. I do think the evils of Apartheid set the stage for bloodthirsty killers like the ANC however. If the West had brought real Christianity with them when they colonized Africa, the world may have been a far different place today and so much pain and bloodshed could have been avoided. Real Christianity would never have tolerated a system like Apartheid but would have revolutionized and brought the Christian worldview to the continent, which, in turn would have taught equality, compassion and one new man where there is no black or white. Nelson Mandela may have been just another face in the crowd.

Dee Graf

5. [Bill Muehlenberg](#) 6.12.13 / 10pm

Yes Dee it is a good rule of thumb that if the secular left MSM and our elites gush over someone in this fashion, we may need to be a bit suspicious.

Bill Muehlenberg, CultureWatch

6. [Andrew Campbell](#) 6.12.13 / 11pm

G'day Bill,

It is worth noting that when the ABC has no less than 14 articles and photos of Nelson Mandela on it's website, that it is likely that something is Not Quite Right. I'm not a betting man but I doubt that the ABC won't present the facts as you have, Bill. Thanks.

Andrew Campbell

7. [malcom witney](#) 7.12.13 / 12am

I have got a golden rule and up till now it has not let me down – “When the World gets excited about something or somebody – be suspicious... very suspicious”.

Malcom Witney

8. [Luke McKee](#) 7.12.13 / 1am

I agree with Malcom!

There is always an esoteric agenda. The occupy movement for example was always planned to be hijacked by the far left.

Luke McKee

9. [Nathan](#) 7.12.13 / 1am

What I really hate is when the marxist's present such a far left view of things, that we have to then counterbalance with some real world facts and then get branded extreme right wing. If only the real story could be presented without the propaganda then the conversation could be more balanced and productive

rather than divisive, but then... that's the intent isn't it. We could recognise some of the good decisions he made whilst understanding the violence that marked his earlier life, gaining inspiration from a change of heart and direction. Perhaps the hero worship might inspire others to greater good but there is certainly lots of legacy to overcome. Where to now for SA can only be observed over time to come. They have a lot to overcome!

Nathan Ellery

10. *Paul Connelly 7.12.13 / 2am*

Hi Bill,

I had the misfortune of having my regular Friday Mass today presided over by a highly placed cleric.

His homily concerned Mandela. It was very concerning as it ignored much of the troubling historical truth about Mandela's violent history and his personal values.

At one stage the congregation were even told that Mandela should be made a saint of the Church!

Evidently the values advocated by Mandela in respect to apartheid give him a free pass to sainthood not withstanding his views on abortion, gay marriage, state theft, political murder, terrorism, etc. etc.)

It is more evidence that, for most Christians, leftist values almost always trump traditional Christian values.

Paul Connelly

11. *Pamela Bartlett 7.12.13 / 3am*

Thank you for this article, Bill. It's about time SOMEBODY stopped singing his praises! I'm glad YOU are among the (few) voices of reason when it comes to telling the REAL story of Nelson Mandela!

Pamela Bartlett

12. [Joe Ruisi](#) 7.12.13 / 7am

This article was not only excellent in its even-handed treatment, but it provided me with reinforcement; that I wasn't imagining things in my memory about his terrorism.

It opened many eyes as I shared it with friends who regarded him as an iconic hero.

Joe Ruisi

13. *Alison Stanley 7.12.13 / 10am*

Thanks Bill for a great article. I too had wondered about all the adulation being given to him. I couldn't help compare Nelson Mandela's passing to the time (a few years ago now) when David Wilkerson died. Hardly a word about it.

Alison Stanley

14. [Rob Mellen](#) 7.12.13 / 11am

Bill,

Thanks for setting the record straight as the FAIR blog (Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting) has also done by calling out CNN and the NYT for glossing over Mandela's past. I'm not sure, however, that it is fair to criticize him for not agreeing to Botha's offer of freedom in exchange for allowing apartheid to continue unabated.

Fairness requires pointing out that grievous acts were committed by all sides. Ronald Reagan vetoed sanctions against Botha's white supremacist government, the South African government killed thousands of blacks and other 'lesser' people in the name of racial segregation, and violence was widespread all around. In the effort to point out Mandela's flaws it is only accurate to point out what he was fighting against. That is not to justify violence or his actions, only to understand them.

Our own nation was born of a violent uprising against an oppressive government and many of our patriotic heroes engaged in what would today be called acts of terrorism. The modern state of Israel, which most of us Christians support, was born as a result of terrorist acts by former leaders such as Ariel Sharon. We should demand full accounting for all immoral and ungodly acts.

Thanks again for bringing up what others have glossed over.

Rob Mellen

15. *Katrina 7.12.13 / 11am*

I understand what you are saying Bill and in many respects I agree with you. Something worth mentioning also is that many of the missionaries in SA at that time either condoned or did nothing to support the blatant racism and violence towards black South Africans. This of course in no way condones the violence that was sanctioned by Mandela. I think the point though is that this is a complex part of our history and we need to face the reality of what happened in our history not gloss over it.

Katrina Yassi

16. [Bill Muehlenberg](#) 7.12.13 / 12pm

Thanks guys. Well, my first piece on Mandela stirred up a hornet's nest, and the hate is already pouring in big time. So I might as well stick my neck out again and receive even more blows. That is because truth really does matter, and the hagiography needs to be balanced out:

www.billmuehlenberg.com/2013/12/07/nelson-mandela-more-inconvenient-truths/

Bill Muehlenberg, CultureWatch

17. *Arthur Hartwig 7.12.13 / 3pm*

Time might prove Shakespeare correct: "The evil that men do lives after them; the good is oft interred with their bones".

With the Media as it is, I would not bet on it.

Arthur Hartwig

18. *Liz Gee* 7.12.13 / 4pm

Thanks Bill, I was deceived but I love the truth and want to learn that! Thank you so much for daring to put this out there.

Liz Gee

19. *Alicia* 7.12.13 / 4pm

This was probably one of the most offensive, one-sided and illiterate articles I had the displeasure of having shared on my time line. The only thing that you say that actually makes sense is a quote from someone else.

Nice 'Christian' view and opinion.

Did you bother checking why the ANC had been labelled as 'radical' and 'terrorists' ? Probably not, just as you probably won't allow this comment to be put it to allow it to look like everyone just agrees with the nonsense you spout. Try coming to South Africa before you use a thinly veiled excuse of not being a rascist bigot to cover up the fact that it's exactly what you are.

Pity I'm less a person than Madiba. He would at least have brushed off your insult.

Alicia

20. [Bill Muehlenberg](#) 7.12.13 / 5pm

Thanks Alicia. But given that you have broken every one of my commenting rules, of course your comment deserves to go straight into the bin. But object lessons are important, so I have let you through. I state perfectly clearly that I require a full name here, and those coming as trolls to rant and rave and not deal with the discussion politely and in an intelligent manner are simply not welcome.

I write an article crammed full of facts, data, truths and evidence, and you don't deal with one iota of it. In fact you offer not one argument, not one bit of evidence – nothing. Instead, in true fashion as your side so often does, you come here attacking me. Your comment is only about name-calling, mud-slinging and ad hominem attack. That speaks volumes about how your side operates.

But better to let folks like you offer up real live examples of this than for me to seek to persuade people this is how you guys usually operate.

And BTW, I have plenty of black friends, so they would all be laughing now at your claim that I am just a "rascist [sic] bigot".

Oh, and I have noticed that most of the folks praising Mandela are non-South Africans, while so many of the folks criticising him are South Africans. Hmm...

Bill Muehlenberg, CultureWatch

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About



Bill Muehlenberg

We live in an age where we see evidence of cultural decline, the erosion of values, the decline of civility, the denial of truth and the elevation of unreason. Many people are asking, “Where is our culture heading?” This website is devoted to exploring the major cultural, social and political issues of the day. It offers reflection and commentary drawing upon the wealth of wisdom found in the Judeo-Christian tradition. It offers reflective and incisive commentary on a wide range of issues, helping to sort through the maze of competing opinions, worldviews, ideologies and value systems. It will discuss critically and soberly where our culture is heading. *Happy reading!*

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1. I reserve the right to edit or refuse comments.
2. This site is meant to express my point of view. If you are looking for a soapbox to promote your own views, create your own website or blog site.
3. Comments should be brief (preferably under 100 words), polite, constructive and informed.
4. Comments which are simply attacks on myself, or are done in bad taste, or use rude language, or are possibly defamatory will not be posted.
5. You must state your full name and city or state or country to have your comments posted.

6. I may reply to some of your comments but will not be able to respond to all.

If you are happy to abide by these rules, then by all means, send in your comments. *Happy writing!*

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Sections

- [Africa](#) (18)
- [Apologetics](#) (483)
 - [Theodicy](#) (32)
- [Article Reviews](#) (1294)
- [Asia](#) (22)
- [Book Reviews](#) (410)
- [Christianity](#) (1448)
 - [Notable Christians](#) (35)
 - [Persecution](#) (224)
- [Culture Wars](#) (963)
- [Economics](#) (108)
 - [Foreign Aid](#) (13)
- [Education](#) (91)
 - [Homeschooling](#) (6)
- [Ethics](#) (1045)
 - [Abortion](#) (230)
 - [Bioethics](#) (104)
 - [Capital Punishment](#) (13)
 - [Drugs](#) (22)
 - [Euthanasia](#) (35)
 - [Homosexuality](#) (482)
 - [Polyamory](#) (43)
 - [Pornography](#) (49)
 - [Prostitution](#) (16)
 - [Sex Education](#) (27)

- [Sexuality](#) (150)
- [Europe](#) (83)
- [Family](#) (564)
 - [Childcare](#) (16)
 - [Children and Young People](#) (215)
 - [Divorce](#) (23)
 - [Feminism](#) (55)
 - [Marriage](#) (238)
- [Health and Medical Issues](#) (101)
- [History](#) (131)
- [Interfaith Dialogue](#) (46)
- [International Relations](#) (144)
- [Islam](#) (274)
- [Israel and the Middle East](#) (46)
- [Law and Legal Issues](#) (223)
- [Literature, the Arts, and Entertainment](#) (70)
- [Marxism, Communism, Socialism](#) (64)
- [Media](#) (144)
- [Miscellany](#) (20)
- [Multiculturalism](#) (40)
- [New Age Movement and Eastern Religions](#) (20)
- [People](#) (104)
- [Philosophy](#) (79)
- [Political Correctness](#) (429)
- [Politics](#) (396)
- [Popular Culture](#) (67)
- [Population Issues](#) (41)
- [Postmodernism](#) (13)
- [Science and the Environment](#) (169)
 - [The Greens](#) (35)
- [Sermons and Devotionals](#) (321)
- [Social Issues](#) (797)
- [Terrorism](#) (136)
- [The Church](#) (608)
 - [The Emergent Church](#) (32)
- [Theology](#) (511)
 - [Difficult Bible Passages](#) (34)
 - [Dumb Theology Posters](#) (5)
 - [Scripture](#) (27)
 - [The Attributes of God](#) (27)
 - [The Health and Wealth Gospel](#) (37)
- [War and Peace](#) (51)
- [Worldviews](#) (273)



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