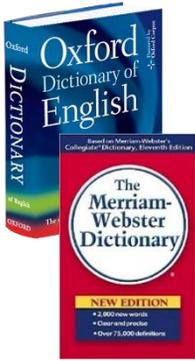


The Great Wall
by
Brian Campbell



During his 2016 campaign, President Donald Trump proudly claimed, “I will build a great wall and nobody builds walls better than me, believe me.” Now, after nearly 15 months of POTUS Donald Trump, I have to say that he has proven it to me beyond any doubt.

No, he has not yet built his promised wall between the USA and Mexico, but he has erected walls virtually everywhere he has gone, or even spoken about.



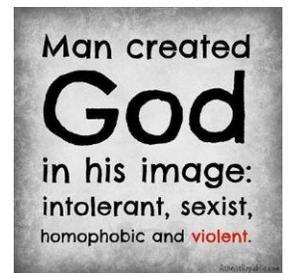
Oxford Dictionary has defined a wall as, “A thing regarded as a protective or restrictive barrier.” Merriam Webster defines it as, “Something that acts as a barrier or defense.” Dictionary.com says, “An immaterial or intangible barrier or obstruction.”

The online Free Dictionary defines it as either, “To divide or separate,” “To confine or seal,” or “To block or close.” And one definition from Cambridge Dictionary suggests, “A way of feeling or behaving that completely prevents two groups of people from communicating with or understanding each other.”



Yes, I know that these are not the number one definitions of wall from these dictionaries, but they are listed, not only in these publications, but similar definitions appear in many other dictionaries as well. And these are the kinds of wall that President Trump is building. He started by reinforcing and raising the barrier between the Republicans and the Democrats, making it virtually impossible for them to work together for the benefit of the people. His wall has made it difficult, if not impossible for supporters of either party to debate their opinions without resorting to threats and name calling. He may not have created the “Us against Them” attitude, but he certainly has reinforced and built on to it.

He has rebuilt formerly crumbling walls between black and white, North and South, rich and poor, gay and straight and male and female. Years of progress mending relationships and undoing past damage have been shredded in just over 400 days and fences have been replaced by solid walls of ignorance and narrowmindedness. President Trump has dragged out every elephant in every psyche and proudly claimed them as his own. Walls have been slammed down between US citizens and immigrants, totally forgetting that everyone without First Nations blood is the decedent of an immigrant. Walls of religion are growing daily between Christian and Muslim, even among those who have a pretty sketchy religious history.



Let us not forget about the wall he is building between the youth of America and the older generation, all in the name of supporting the 2nd Amendment. I know that many people do selective reading when it comes to what the 2nd Amendment says, much like many supposedly “Christian” people do when reading the Bible, so let me clear up this nonsense once and for all. The 2nd Amendment reads, "A well regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a free

State, the right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed." In case you don't understand what that means, simply put, since the newly formed United States of America had no standing army, the 2nd Amendment was created to make it easy to recruit people to serve in a militia and fight to defend the country. Now that the USA has one of the biggest standing armies in the world, this amendment is obsolete. But even if you wanted to stay true to the amendment, you could still regulate the types of firearms available, and create restrictions for where and how they can carry and use them without infringing the amendment.



But if you want to talk about amendments, why don't we talk about the 1st Amendment? In case you've forgotten about it, it reads, "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances." The Trump government has no love at for this amendment, especially when it comes to free speech or freedom of the press, in particular, the right of the press and the people to criticize the President. Ask the students of Stoneman Douglas what the government thinks about their right to free speech and assembly. President Trump is effectively building a wall right through the US constitution by supporting the 2nd Amendment while ruthlessly trashing the 1st.



President Trump is even building walls within his own congress. His cabinet has a revolving door as he fires anyone who disagrees with him. He treats the US government like his TV show The Apprentice. Even when it comes to the law, instead of fighting a legal battle fairly to prove his innocence of collusion with



Russia, he simply fires key members of the team investigating him, judges, FBI officers, whoever gets in his way. Apparently the US President is now above the law and this is ok with the government.

And those are only the walls he has built within the USA. Outside of the country, Trump has also done his best to isolate the USA from the rest of the world by building walls of hate and disrespect in the UK and Europe, in Asia, in Africa, and virtually everywhere he travels. And he does this in the name of "business." He breaks longstanding agreements with other countries and smashes through the United Nations like the proverbial bull in a china shop. He says it is to "Make America Great," but it is really only to feed his overinflated ego and line his pockets.

Some would say, "Why do you care what happens in the USA? You're Canadian!" And maybe I shouldn't care. But I see the effect of his wall-building on social media, on the News and right here at home. He is making narrowmindedness and selfishness the new normal. I see people being insulted and attacked simply because they are different. I see the new leader of our own NDP Party being trashed simply because he is a turban wearing Sikh. Now I don't know his policies, maybe he is not the right person



for the office. But that should be based upon his political agenda, not his religion nor the colour of his skin. Steve Tyler of Aerosmith once said (or sang) “If you can judge a wise man by the colour of his skin, then mister you’re a better man than I.”

Signs of Trump’s wall-building abound on social media. Memes with pictures of political figures, celebrities and other people who have appeared in the News are constantly popping up attached to quotes that they have supposedly made. Most of the time either the person has not made that quote or it has been taken completely out of context, created by someone with an opposing viewpoint, and designed to discredit the person and inflame people against them. This began during the 2016 US Election and was used by both sides, but now it is being used in Canada as well. Mudslinging has reached an all-time low and we, unfortunately, are getting dragged right into it. It is another wall being built to divide and separate people, and it is both widespread and effective.

I don’t know about other people, but personally I am tired of walls. Walls have never solved any long term goals. Just check past walls in our history to see how well they worked; the Berlin Wall, Hadrian’s Wall, The Great Wall of China, the walls of Babylon or the Walls of Troy, just to name a few. Think about how well they worked. For the short term, a wall may be useful, for instance to stop an invading army. But a wall used as a barrier never lasts the long haul and usually causes more damage than it prevents. As a people we are much better off building bridges rather than walls.

