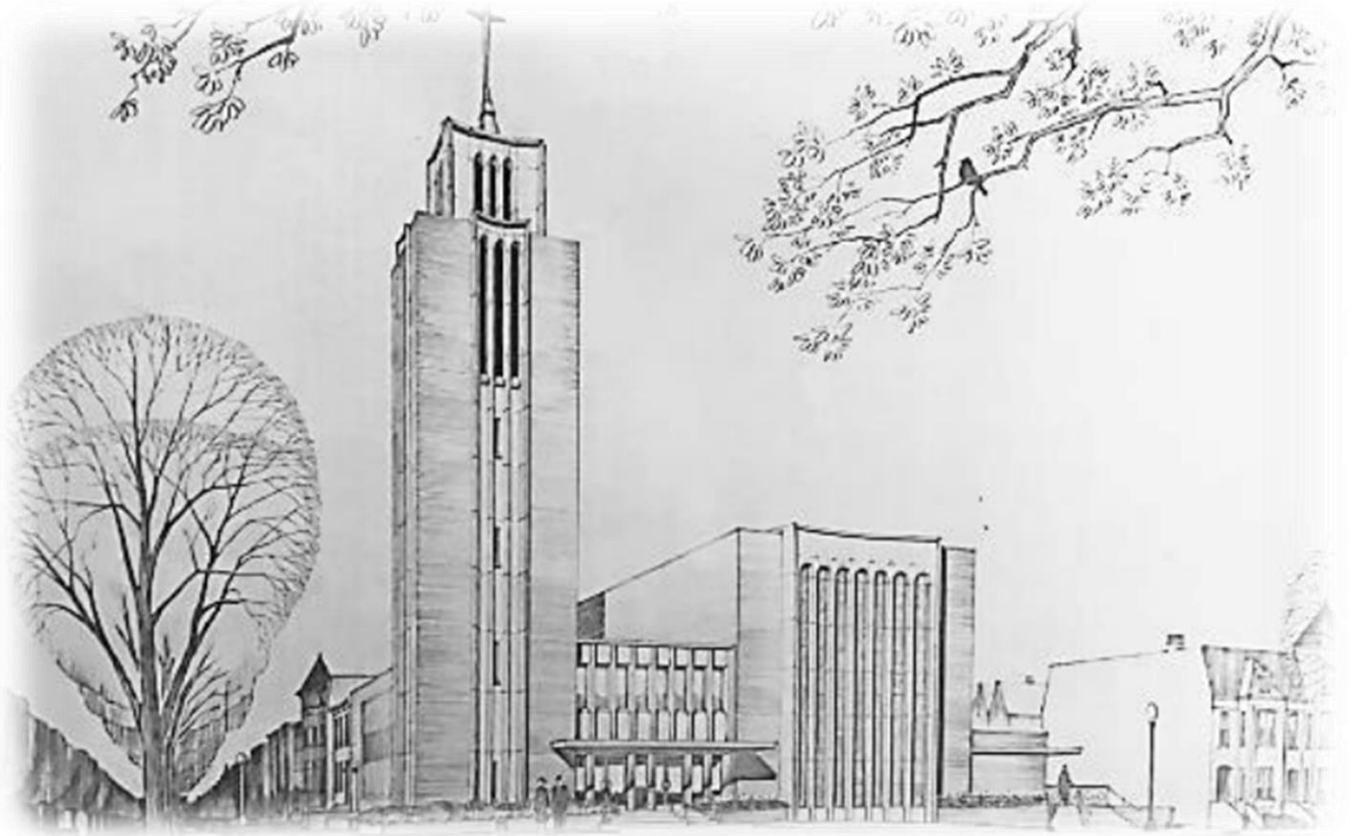


J. Edgar Hoover Memorial Plaque & Restorative History



Please note that principles of restorative history in this talk are from **The Center for Restorative History** at the National Museum of American History, Smithsonian,

<https://americanhistory.si.edu/about/centers/restorative-history/resources>

STATESMANSHIP
THROUGH THE CHRISTIAN VIRTUES
THE J. EDGAR HOOVER WINDOW

THIS WINDOW WAS DEDICATED ON JUNE 26, 1966, TO
J. EDGAR HOOVER, DIRECTOR, FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION
WHO WAS BORN ON THIS SITE ON JANUARY 1, 1895

GIVEN BY
MR. L. A. BEEGHLY AND MR. W. E. BLISS
OF
YOUNGSTOWN, OHIO

J. Edgar Hoover

- Was popular in 1966. Almost 80% of White Americans approved of his work.
- Worked hard to bring down Martin Luther King, Jr. and the modern Civil Rights movement which he equated with communism and “anti-Americanism”
- Used illegal means and even defied the FBI’s internal rules in deploying surveillance against King and others.

Note: For more on Hoover, see the histories done by Gale Monroe and CHUMC and also Beverly Gage, *G-Man: J. Edgar Hoover and the Making of the American Century* (2022).



Historical Context for the J. Edgar Hoover Memorial

- **1963** Dr. Martin Luther King Jr delivers “I have a Dream” speech at The March on Washington
- **1964** President Johnson signs Civil Rights Act
- **1964** FBI, led by J. Edgar Hoover, sends blackmail letter to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. after prolonged and illegal surveillance
- **1966** Howard Jones leads Beltway March around D.C. to end racial segregation in D.C. and its suburbs
- **1966** Capitol Hill United Methodist dedicates plaque to J. Edgar Hoover naming him an icon of Christian virtues

FBI letter sent to Dr. Martin Luther King in 1964

Preserved among Hoover's papers at the National Archives

www.archives.gov/research/investigations/fbi/other-records,
National Archives and Records Administration

KING,

In view of your low grade, abnormal personal behavior I will not dignify your name with either a Mr. or a Reverend or a Dr. And, your last name calls to mind only the type of King such as King Henry the VIII and his countless acts of adultery and immoral conduct lower than that of a beast.

King, look into your heart. You know you are a complete fraud and a great liability to all of us Negroes. White people in this country have enough frauds of their own but I am sure they don't have one at this time that is any where near your equal. You are no clergyman and you know it. I repeat you are a colossal fraud and an evil, vicious one at that. You could not believe in God and act as you do. Clearly you don't believe in any personal moral principles.

King, like all frauds your end is approaching. You could have been our greatest leader. You, even at an early age have turned out to be not a leader but a dissolute, abnormal moral imbecile. We will now have to depend on our older leaders like Wilkins a man of character and thank God we have others like him. But you are done. Your "honorary" degrees, your Nobel Prize (what a grim farce) and other awards will not save you. King, I repeat you are done.

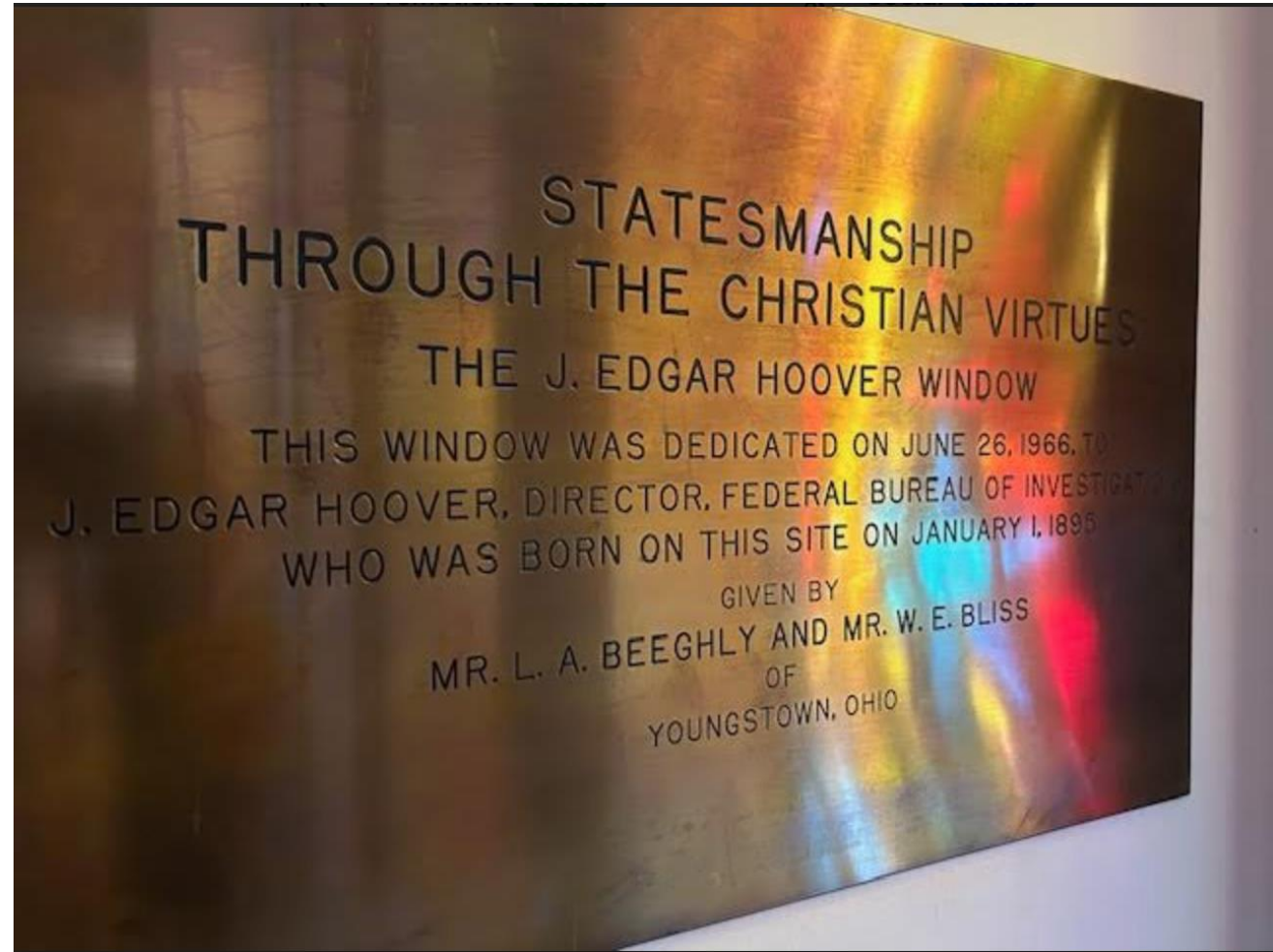
No person can overcome facts, not even a fraud like yourself. Lend your sexually psychotic ear to the enclosure. You will find yourself and in all your dirt, filth, evil and moronic talk exposed on the record for all time. I repeat - no person can argue successfully against facts. You are finished. You will find on the record for all time your filthy, dirty, evil companions, male and females giving expression with you to your hideous abnormalities. And some of them to pretend to be ministers of the Gospel. Satan could not do more. What incredible evilness. It is all there on the record, your sexual orgies. Listen to yourself you filthy, abnormal animal. You are on the record. You have been on the record - all your adulterous acts, your sexual orgies extending far into the past. This one is but a tiny sample. You will understand this. Yes, from your various evil playmates on the east coast to and others on the west coast and outside the country you are on the record. King you are done.

The American public, the church organizations that have been helping - Protestant, Catholic and Jews will know you for what you are - an evil, abnormal beast. So will others who have backed you. You are done.

King, there is only one thing left for you to do. You know what it is. You have just 34 days in which to do (this exact number has been selected for a specific reason, it has definite practical significance. You are done. There is but one way out for you. You better take it before your filthy, abnormal fraudulent self is bared to the nation.

Public Memorials Make History

- Try to “fix the memory of the absent thing.”
- Tell us who made history and why they should be lauded for it.
- Stake out public space for their particular heroes and causes.
- Link “Christian Virtues” to a particular person. Make J. Edgar Hoover an icon of Christianity.



Public Memorials Do Cultural Work

- Exclude individuals and communities with counter experiences or opposing views
- Silence counter narratives
- Cause harm by maintaining a history that supports white supremacy
- Continue to do cultural work as long as the memorials are present and speaking

Resistance & Iconoclasm

We can resist and overturn the messages of public memorials

We can engage in acts of resistance and iconoclasm to "deface," disrupt, and change the icons of history

Dr. King, Andrew Young and members of the movement in front of Jeff Davis memorial at March Against Fear rally in Grenada, MS, June 14, 1966. Photograph by Charmain Reading, an artist hired by SNCC to document Black protests in the South in front of Confederate memorials.




Restorative History

RESTORATIVE HISTORY...

- makes history a practical tool for justice
- privileges community knowledge to expose truths silenced in historical narratives
- creates partnerships based on mutual capacity building
- confronts legacies of injustices that our institutions have perpetuated

Restorative History calls on individuals and institutions to cede authority and to center communities as experts on their own history. This framework grounds its collaborative work in the following four questions:



What harm has been done?

Restorative history collaborates with impacted communities to investigate historical harms that result in ongoing systemic oppression. Identifying harms also means examining how public history institutions may continue to perpetuate harm by overlooking, minimizing, or excluding certain communities from historical narratives.

What are the community's stated needs?

By developing deep and long-term relationships, Restorative History creates space for communities to identify their needs. Importantly, Restorative History understands that only those who have experienced harm can define those needs.

What are the institution's obligations to meet those needs?

Restorative History acknowledges that some wrongs can never be fully repaired. In consultation with community partners, Restorative History highlights institutional obligations to redress historical harms and meet the community's stated needs.

What are the root causes of that harm?

Restorative History works directly with harmed communities to investigate the root causes of historical harm. In this way, Restorative History is a systemic intervention, concerned with both structural root causes of harm and future systemic changes needed within public history institutions. Through this approach, history can become a practical tool for justice.

Tell the truth about the past

- **Document past harms**
- **Ask who was silenced**
- **Ask who was harmed**
- **Record these experiences**
- **Restore the voices of the silenced in the historical record**

Center the harmed community and let them lead the process and make the decisions about what would begin to repair the harm

Continuing Obligation

The institution (CHUMC) needs to continue the work of restorative justice that goes beyond the plaque and seeks reconciliation in all areas of the church.

To Read More

- CHUMC resources
 - <https://www.chumc.net/hoverwindowproject>
 - <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/642f766c0dde212d93ab2734/t/64ad874e616dc722fec4c4b3/1689093968819/Hoover+Window+Basic+History+Brochure+2023.pdf>
- The Center for Restorative History at the National Museum of American History, Smithsonian,
<https://americanhistory.si.edu/about/centers/restorative-history/resources>
- National Archives and Records Administration
www.archives.gov/research/investigations/fbi/other-records,
- Beverly Gage, *G-Man: J. Edgar Hoover and the Making of the American Century* (2022).
- Karen Cox, *No Common Ground: Confederate Monuments and the Ongoing Fight for Racial Justice* (2021).
- Lerone A. Martin, *The Gospel of J. Edgar Hoover, How the FBI Aided and Abetted the Rise of White Christian Nationalism* (2023).