

'Statue of Responsibility:' Urban Legend or Reality?

by Dave Eberhart

Dr. Viktor E. Frankl proposed back in the 1960s that the "Statue of Liberty on the east coast be supplemented by a Statue of Responsibility on the west coast." Ever since, his grand scheme has been mulled and evaluated.

The native Austrian's notion was that in order for freedom to endure, liberty must be joined with responsibility.

Now, in the centennial year of the birth of the author of the celebrated "Man's Search for Meaning," and only a decade after his death, an organization is on its way to bring Frankl's vision to reality.

Daniel L. Boltz, president and CEO of the Statue of Responsibility Foundation, is in the process of sending out letters to no fewer than six organizations and individuals that have been independently working to make Frankl's statue rise up on the West Coast — a classic bookend to the storied Statue of Liberty on the East Coast. The offer: Join us and together let's get it built.

The foundation has quietly hit the ground running. Boltz tells NewsMax that he already has a \$30 million pledge toward an anticipated cost of \$300 million. That sum will buy a statue that stands 300 feet above ground level — the height of the Statue of Liberty.

The Austrian Connection

Another standout feature of Boltz's organization is formal approval by the Frankl family. This past summer, Boltz led a team to Vienna, the home of the Viktor Frankl Institute, to visit with Frankl's survivors and obtain their blessing for the project.

Meanwhile, the foundation and members of its board are getting ready to meet with California Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger, another native Austrian. Among the locations being considered for the monument, three are in The Governor's state — San Diego, Los Angeles and San Francisco — with Seattle, Wash., also in the running.

"We'll not only be asking for the governor's support for the project, but [also] for help in getting the project introduced to President Bush," Boltz says.

The bottom line: Have the president appoint a national fund-raising figurehead — similar to what was done with the successful Statue of Liberty refurbishment project under the guidance of former Chrysler chief Lee Iacocca.

Boltz is hopeful that the Schwarzenegger White House connection will eventually result in the naming of "a national spokesmen team," consisting of the four living former U.S. presidents — Bill Clinton, George Bush Sr., Jimmy Carter and Gerald Ford.

Failing that dream team of spokesmen, Boltz says that Colin Powell would be the ideal backup. Boltz and his foundation are also reaching overseas, endeavoring to add to the foundation's "international board" the famed Polish Solidarity leader Lech Walesa and President Vaclav Klaus of the Czech Republic.

Directing all these far-reaching projects is the New York City public relations firm of Coltrin and Associates. The foundation is on the cusp of releasing its specially produced DVD on the project, along with a bound and detailed case for support. Both will be available via the Web site www.statueofresponsibility-foundation.org.

Competition?

Meanwhile, NewsMax chatted with one of those other pro-statue organizations that the foundation is hopeful of roping in.

The Statue of Responsibility Endowment was formally established in 2003



Sculptor Gary Lee Price works on a prototype of the "Statue of Responsibility."

by Dr. Jeff Finnegan of Olympia, Wash. He has been trying for two decades to figure out how to design, finance and complete a Statue of Responsibility on the West Coast, which has become his life's mission.

"The project is still in force," Finnegan told NewsMax. "Money and pledges are arriving. We are a few years from groundbreaking. We are still considering sites on the West Coast from San Diego to Seattle."

Boltz says he has been negotiating with Finnegan. Finnegan had no comment.

Whys and Wherefores

Why does America need a companion monument to Lady Liberty?

"We take great pride in our *liberty*, but often neglect to see that it brings a corresponding *responsibility* with it," Boltz replies. "The Statue of Responsibility, as a companion monument to Lady Liberty, would spark a national dialogue on the intrinsic worth of both."

The hope, Boltz says, is that such open dialogue will lead to greater awareness of responsible choices that will, in time, benefit all segments of society.

"It will result in more responsible actions, personally and collectively, toward each other, our neighbors on the planet, and our common home — the Earth," Boltz concludes.

Sounds like something of which Victor Frankl would approve.

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