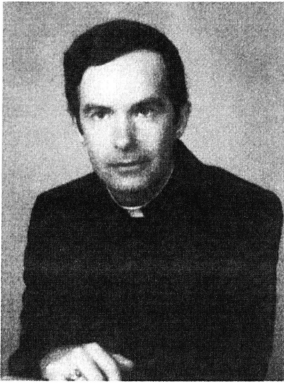


Chaplain's Corner, Hughes Camp Chaplain Richard W Rudd



Due to his account of the Peloponnesian War, Thucydides earned a reputation as one of the fathers of recorded history, a subject that is misunderstood, maligned, and the relevance of which is too often neglected. Joining the present and fu-

as a division of time, history is far from being static, cut and dried. It is kinetic, ever flowing and increasing, as controversial as current events, a practical, necessary, and worthwhile subject of our attention. We are admonished, "Study to show yourself approved to God, a workman who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth." (II Tim. 2:15) Paul wrote this instruction to Timothy and the early church to counteract the erroneous accounts of false teachers like Hymeneus and Philetus who distorted the truth and thereby misled many people. So today, revisionists, politically correct censors, and fabricators promote their biased agendas by mishandling the vital truths of history and continue to mislead many regarding our Lord and the saints, the Founding Fathers, and our Confederate ancestors.

Recently, a report by the American Council of Trustees and Alumni disclosed that few of the "best" colleges and universities require history majors to take courses in US history and the Constitution. Many courses labeled as US history fail to give a thorough understanding of the nation's past. This was accurately diagnosed as "a truly breathtaking abandonment of intellectual standards." An example is the chairman of one college history department, one that requires no US history courses for history majors, who gave the lame excuse that "we are committed to the idea that all histories are important and valuable in the culture of a robust civic consciousness." That sounds like the international globalists' agenda to sabotage nationalism.

When dealing with history, three aspects are to be considered: experience, perspective, and continuity. Experience involves the practical application of knowledge of prior events to build constructively on

the present and plan strategically for the future. But, our lives are consumed with so much change at rapidly increasing rates that it is difficult to make the connection between the past and present and to plan for the unexpected contingencies associated with the future. Consequently, too many people fail to make the effort and opt to live isolated in the present, stumbling down dead ends and uncharted rabbit trails. Life's joys and sorrows, successes and failures, cares and whims become a messy state of confused exploration, experimentation, and theorization. The result ultimately distills down to existentialism and nihilism. The former isolates each individual in a hostile and meaningless world with no sense of purpose. The latter rejects absolute truth and Judaeo-Christian morality, seeks the destruction of all political, economic, social, and religious institutions, and degenerates into the use of terror and force to foster revolution. To quell this chaos, freedom is lost to totalitarianism. Instead, we must base our experiences in the present and plans for the future on the foundation rock of a working knowledge of history "...like (the) wise man who built his house upon the rock..." not "...like (the) foolish man who built his house upon the sand..." When "...the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house..." the fool's house "...fell; and great was the fall of it." The wise man's house "...did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock." (Matt.7:24)

Perspective entails a panoramic view of life. To see the present more clearly, we must look into the past and have a vision for the future. Without perspective, we lose our sense of direction and orientation, our sense of identity, purpose, and place. We do not know where we have come from, where or who we are, or where we are going. The prophet Daniel is an example. He could not make the connection between the vision of the future he was given and his present state.

Richard Rudd continued... . Lacking such perspective, he declared, "I heard, but I did not understand." (Dan. 12:8) Likewise, failure to understand the past can create confusion in our present lives. As in childbirth when travail and anguish are replaced with joy (Jn. 16:21), so the labor of studying history produces a sense of accomplishment when its concepts and lessons are comprehended, enabling us to distinguish what is real, important, practical, and lasting. Perspective in time is summarized in the prayer Christ taught us 2000 years ago. Repeating these words from the past, we pray, "Thy kingdom come (referring to the future), Thy will be done, On earth as it is in Heaven (referring to the present)." (Matt. 6:10)

Continuity insures the communication and transfer of tradition, culture, and a sense of heritage to current and successive generations. Regarding the future state of Heaven, we are told that "...no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man conceived, what God has prepared for those who love Him..." (I Cor. 2:9) While our view into the future is limited and sometimes beyond our imagination, our view into the past is not. Our eyes can see and our ears can hear recorded scenes and voices from the past. But, ignorance of history can produce the debilitating effect of making us unable to relate to and share in the experiences of our predecessors. What is not known about the past cannot be conceived of now in the present or transferred to our successors later in the future. A conversation I recently had with some teenagers illustrates this point. They found it difficult to believe that only a few years ago prayer and instruction in Christian values were normal in public schools. Schools, courthouses, state capitols, federal buildings, and airports did not require passage through metal detectors and by armed guards. America was a free and civil society. When Judaeo-Christian morality is supplanted with arbitrary and relative judicial rulings and edicts, citizens cease to govern their own conduct and government becomes more intrusive in our lives. When the demonic Moslem ideology of hate, terror, conquest, and death is allowed to invade America, warfare erupts on our own soil. The result is that our traditions and culture of freedom and independence and the memory of them are lost.

In his letter to the church at Rome, St. Paul wrote, "Besides this (the preceding exposition of how we are to live in the present) you know what hour it is (we are to be fully aware of our present circumstances), how it is full time for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed (the future rapidly approaches); the night is far gone (current events recede into the past), the day is at hand. Let us then...conduct ourselves becomingly as in the day..." (Rom. 13:11) Thus, our view of the past and our vision for the future should influence how we live today. If we are smart, we will learn from our mistakes. That benefit comes from experience. If we are wise, we will learn from other's mistakes. That benefit comes from history. If we do know more and are wiser than our predecessors, we must not be so arrogant as to think that is all of our own doing. We only know more, understand better, and see more clearly because we are the beneficiaries of the bequeathal of their experiences and knowledge to us. The study of history should deepen our sense of gratitude, not pride.

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