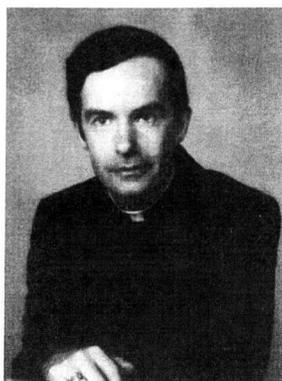


Chaplain's Corner, Hughes Camp Chaplain Richard W Rudd...



A contagious infection called relativism and its fatal consequences are rapidly spreading throughout the corporate body of America. All of us are encountering it through the media, schools, government, places of work, and ordinary associations with other people in our daily lives. This philosophical way of life teaches that there

is no universal absolute truth; truth varies between cultures and people. Therefore, each one is free to determine what is right and wrong or true as well as the purpose and meaning of life, if one decides there is one, according to their own personal feelings, sentiments, tastes, preferences, and biases. This denial of truth and absolute moral standards and the need to discover, accept, and conform to them as individuals and as a nation leaves nothing to control our behavior except our own will. Relativism calls this freedom. It also claims that absolute standards foment intolerance and division among people; their abrogation makes unity for all mankind possible. Scientific discoveries, practical and common-sense observations, and reason are optional and negotiable. The identity one attributes to themselves and others, the meanings of symbols, current events and history have no factual basis. Empirical data and mental perceptions are disconnected. Facts of reality can be edited and transformed to suit each one's personal stereotypes, misconceptions, and agenda. The end result is life in a surreal world where reality is only an imaginary state of mind.

Recent examples of the effects of relativism on history and personal identities involve Robert Edward Lee and Martin Luther King. Until this century, Lee has been admired both in the North and South. Lincoln respected Lee enough to ask him to lead the Union army. In the 1950's and '60's, many schools were still being named after Confederate heroes, especially Lee. Now, relativism has tarnished the sterling reputation of Lee as a true officer and southern gentleman with spurious accusations of being a traitor and defender of slavery.

Debates have erupted in many school districts over their schools' names and dozens have been changed. In Texas, Robert E. Lee High School was renamed Legacy Educational Excellence at a cost to taxpayers of \$300,000 diverted from educational purposes. Washington-Lee High School in Virginia was changed to Washington-Liberty at a cost of \$224,000. The cost of what is being lost extends beyond money and is no figment of the imagination.

David Garrow is a respected historian and Pulitzer biographer. His personal views are said to be aligned with those of the Democratic socialist left and he is considered to be an admirer of King. Garrow wrote a biographical study of King based on verifiable evidence, not rumor or his personal opinions, gathered from newly released FBI audiotapes. FBI director Hoover had bugged King's hotel rooms; King's voice can be clearly heard on the tapes. A 1977 Justice Department report confirmed the accuracy of the transcripts. To his credit, Garrow faithfully went where the facts led him. For this, relativists have called him a racist. (This has become the derogatory term liberals carelessly overuse to slander everybody who dares to disagree with them.) and, to their discredit, no American publisher would accept his work. Consequently, Garrow resorted to British publishers to make his findings available to the public.

What did Garrow discover that was so disturbing to relativists? The focus of his work concentrated on events that transpired in the 1960's and revealed two contradictory and irreconcilable sides of King. One side was the publicized image used by King's admirers to canonize him as a civil rights leader for Negroes and Baptist clergyman. The other side of King concerned allegations that he not only plagiarized work for his doctoral degree, but also engaged in promiscuous activity with over 40 single and married women he referred to as "parishioners." According to the tapes, some of the encounters were orgies that included some of his fellow clergymen and political allies to whom he gave sexual advice and later boasted about when intoxicated. Journalists were said to know of

King's escapades but, as was reportedly done with JFK, joked about it among themselves and refused to reveal the dirty little secret to the public. Relativists only see and want others to see what they choose to believe. King's defenders wink at his faults and excuse him as one who lived a complex life and lost his life for a cause. They contend that he should receive automatic forgiveness without being held responsible for his actions. Why is this attitude of tolerance not extended to men like Booker T. Washington and George W. Carver, who made constructive contributions to society, or to Lee, who was never proved guilty or convicted of the unsubstantiated allegations made against him?

(To be continued next month)

Deo Vindice

Father Richard Rudd

Hughes Camp Chaplain