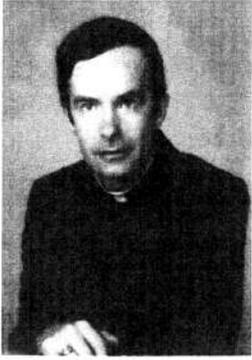


Chaplain's Corner, Hughes Camp Chaplain Richard W Rudd



Edward Hale of Massachusetts was a grandnephew of Nathan Hale. As a Unitarian clergyman, he served as a chaplain in the US Senate. His claim to fame was a book he wrote in 1863 entitled *The Man Without A Country*. The book was written to bolster support for the North during the WBTS and to

discourage the election of Clement Vallandigham, a Confederate Sympathizer seeking office in Ohio while living in exile in Canada. In the story, army Lt. Nolan renounces his US citizenship during a trial for treason and is sentenced to spend the rest of his life at sea living on ships.

In reality, the story of Confederates is a tragedy about a people who found themselves without a country. Having declared its independence in 1861, the CSA was a nation of people with a geographical location, an organized government, constitution, elected officials, military, currency, postal service, etc. After the war, the form of the nation, its land and government, was decimated and lay in ruins. However, its people, the spirit and soul of the CSA, remained and continue to exist through their progeny. Today, we who are their descendants are simultaneously citizens of the US and a people without a country, continuing to preserve our own beliefs, values, and identity.

In 1965, the Beatles composed a song called Yesterday, the lyrics of which lament:

Yesterday
All my troubles seemed so far away
Now it looks as though they're here to stay
Oh, I believe in yesterday.

A haunting tune on the theme of unrequited love between a boy and a girl, love can also be sentimental about objects, places, and periods of time. We tend to think of the progression of time along a horizontal line. The Aztec concept was a spiral in which time and events go round and round, up and up, faster and faster, like the flow of electricity around the coils of a transformer, transforming lives into new dimensions. Last month's article

dealt with how technology is increasing the volume and expediting the flow of information, influencing our beliefs and habits, overwhelming our thought processes, and preventing an orderly transition in how we live. The traumatic and concurrent flow of events such as the rise of Islamic militancy, the infectious spread of viruses like AIDS and Wuhan, the war in the Ukraine and threats of war in the Middle-East are changing our world into an unfamiliar landscape. In the US we are experiencing the effects of inflation, a porous boarder allowing the influx of aliens from different cultures with different beliefs and values, internal secular militancy against our Judaeo-Christian foundation, and chaos produced by relativism replacing social order. Although hate and violence are becoming more prevalent, we are also currently engaged in a different conflict, not a war in conventional terms, but nevertheless a conflict on multiple fronts which if lost will make us aliens in our own land. Our memories take us back to yesterday when all our troubles seemed so far away and we wonder if they are here to stay. The disparity between yesterday and today makes us feel like aliens in the world in which we now live.

Most of the world's major religions are associated with a particular land. Islam is concentrated in the Middle East and Indonesia, Taoism and Confucianism in China, Hinduism and Buddhism in India and other Asian nations, Shinto in Japan, Mormons in the US, and Judaeism in Israel. God told Abram, "Go from your country...to the land that I will show you." (Gen. 12:1) Four times the Israelites have been a people without a land: during their sojourn in Egypt, the exile of the northern kingdom of Israel by Nineveh, the exile of the southern kingdom of Judah by Babylon, and the diaspora resulting from the Roman invasion lasting from AD 70 until 1948. During all of these times, Jews retained their religion, language, and identity as a nation of people without a land.

Unlike all of the aforementioned religions, Christians are a people without a land in this world. Although Christianity originated in Israel, that land belongs eternally to the Jews. On earth, Christianity's influence is global. Christ commanded, "Go into all the world and preach the Gospel..." (Mk. 16:15) "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations..."

(Matt. 28:19) Unlike the followers of other religions, Christians' mission is not to claim land; it is to claim souls. Concerning Christians' homeland, Christ said that "...you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world..." (Jn. 15:19) New Testament saints are like Old Testament saints who "...were strangers and exiles on the earth." We, like them, ".... desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one." (Heb. 11:13, 16) As St. Paul said, "... (W)e would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord." (II Cor. 5:8) As Christians, our belief is not in yesterday. We are not to look back wistfully to the past, but ahead with hope to the future, to Heaven, to that "...undiscovered country from whose bourn (shore) no traveler returns..." (Shakespeare; Hamlet, Act 3, Sc. 1) Only then will all of our troubles be far away.

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