

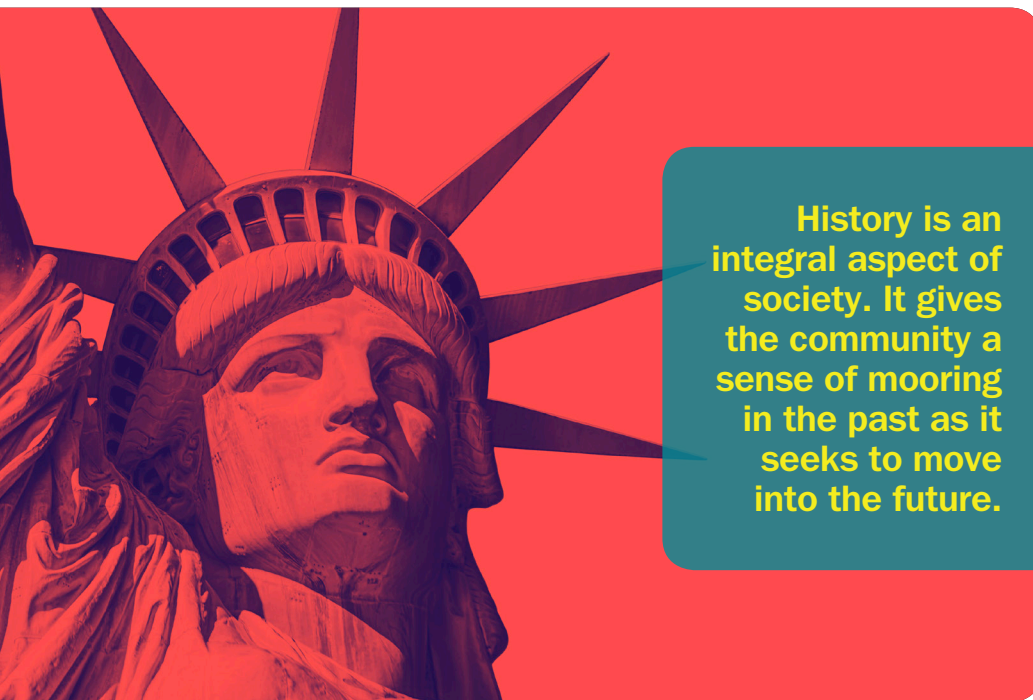
StewardCAST

A monthly e-newsletter of LCMS Stewardship Ministry

lcms.org/stewardship



Stewardship of History



History is an integral aspect of society. It gives the community a sense of mooring in the past as it seeks to move into the future.

The images are striking; images of protests that have led to the toppling of historical statues. Statues of Confederate officers, Christopher Columbus, St. Louis, and even President Lincoln have been singled out for protest, defacing and destruction. The rationale behind these efforts is not the point of this article. There may well be well-reasoned arguments for the removal of some of the images in question. But what is at the heart of this piece is what those images represent: history.

A call to repentance

History is an integral aspect of society. It gives the community a sense of mooring in the past as it seeks to move into the future. History really has two essential functions: It serves as a call to repentance and a call for rejoicing. Far too often, the assumption exists that historical monuments are designed only to celebrate the accomplishments of the founders and fabled ones in our nation. There is a great deal of celebration in monuments

like Mt. Rushmore, the Jefferson National Expansion Memorial (The Gateway Arch) and the Statue of Liberty. These images celebrate the ideals and people who have made the United States what it is today. These memorials are intended to celebrate what the nation has been and what it is today.

But there are other historical monuments that point the nation to repentance. Travel to the western region of the United States includes places like Little Big Horn which reminds the nation of the lamentable way our nation has dealt with Native Americans over the years. Pearl Harbor and the 9/11 Memorials remind us of very dark times in our history. Even monuments like the Lincoln Memorial carry in them a need for repentance. They remind us that we needed a war and declaration to set men, women and children of African descent free from the despicable treatment of slavery. This is not to be celebrated. It is a reminder of sinful man's inhumanity to man. This needs to be remembered and repented of.

When history is forgotten or eliminated, it leaves a society with no moorings. As has been noted so many times, when a world refuses to teach and learn the lessons of history, they are doomed to repeat their failures. When history is forgotten it opens up the possibility that not only will the evils of the past be repeated, but that the reprise will likely be even more evil and destructive than before.

StewardCAST is published monthly by:
LCMS Stewardship Ministry
1333 S. Kirkwood Road
St. Louis, MO 63122
888-THE LCMS (843-5267)
infocenter@lcms.org
lcms.org/stewardship

StewardCAST may be reprinted with acknowledgment given to The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.

STAFF

- Rev. Heath Curtis
*Coordinator (contracted),
LCMS Stewardship Ministry*
- Rev. Dr. Nathan Meador
*Assistant Coordinator (contracted),
LCMS Stewardship Ministry, and
Pastor, St. John Lutheran Church,
Plymouth, Wis.*
- Robbie Clasen
*Administrative Assistant,
LCMS Stewardship Ministry*

CONTRIBUTOR

- Lisa Moeller
Designer

How to Subscribe

To subscribe to *StewardCAST*, register online at lcms.org/enews. Select *StewardCAST* from among the “Stewardship and Giving” newsletters.

Support LCMS Global Mission Fund

Your gift to the Global Mission Fund impacts people around the world and in our own backyard through acts of Christian compassion, wherever the need is greatest at the time the gift is made. Gifts are used exclusively to support Synod’s *Witness, Mercy, Life Together* work at home and abroad.

GIVE NOW

© 2020 LCMS

Stewardship lessons from the past

Teaching faithful stewardship is something that requires a grasp of history. Stewardship taught faithfully, like history, is an occasion for repentance and rejoicing. A reflection on the Scriptures and upon the lives of the individual steward reveals the stark reality of the need for repentance. The heart of the steward loves to create idols. In fact, “the human heart is an idol factory” (John Calvin) that would put even the most efficient modern manufacturing plants to shame. The human heart, tainted by sin, seeks to elevate the good things of creation entrusted to the steward to the place of gods. This started in the Garden of Eden and continues to this day. Talents, possessions, desires and so many other trusts from God which are intended to be employed for God’s glory and the benefit of the neighbor are so often deified. This history, including our most recent history, is a call for repentance.

This is seen clearly in the history of the troubled stewardship of Israel. God’s good gifts and ever-flowing mercy were met by idolatry of the highest level. Israel’s stewardship history is a monument to the need for our own continual repentance. There were long stretches of faithful stewardship in Israel. But, in its history like our own, when it fell, it fell hard.

God’s mercy, the same forever

The same is true of stewards of the Gospel of Jesus Christ today. While the church has received the trust of the Gospel revealed in Word and Sacrament, how often in her history has that trust been abused. Individually and corporately as a congregation, the trust of creation has been claimed as a possession. It has been elevated above God. Periods of judgment and exile are just as merited in the modern

history of stewardship of God’s many and varied gifts as they were in ancient Israel. To fail to remember this history that leads to repentance makes learning faithful stewardship impossible.

History also leads the steward to rejoice. Israel, as unfaithful as they were, was never abandoned by the Lord. Even in captivity and exile, history records a faithful Lord who would never leave nor forsake His people. Read the Psalms. The Hallelujahs ring out throughout history. The Lord’s mercy poured out generation after generation was the genesis of this praise. The Lord continued to entrust Israel with good things. This says so much more about the Lord than it does about Israel!

The same is true for the steward of this age. The Lord’s mercy is still abundant toward those who continue to fail in their stewardship of the Gospel. Each week the Lord bestows more and more of this mercy on unworthy, repentant stewards. This too says much more about the Lord than it says about today’s stewards. The history of God’s rich, undeserved, unmerited grace and mercy leads God’s stewards to rejoice.

Not knowing this history of stewardship makes leading faithful stewards impossible. Ignorance of the history of individual and congregational stewardship failures leaves current and future stewardship without any mooring. But when knowledge of stewardship history leads to repentance, amazing things happen. It opens the door to rejoicing. This rejoicing feeds the momentum of new and faithful stewards in the generations to come. This allows the Gospel of the Kingdom of God to spread and grow!

Without history both society and stewardship are lost. With history taught and rehearsed, repentance and rejoicing leads to even greater faithfulness. Learn the history of stewardship. It opens the door to an even greater future!



**Without history
both society and
stewardship are lost.**