

FIRST AND CENTER

Pastor's Blog

October 12, 2017

*“Let the dead bury the dead; as for you,
go and work with God to recreate the world.”*

~ Luke 9:60 (paraphrase)



Hence, my conflict about celebrating “Founders Day.”

Wearing my academic hat, I am a historian of worship, and by nature, I simply love to study history. I also firmly believe in the maxim that those who do not learn history are doomed to repeat it. We are rather living that these days. So, it's not that I think history is silly or useless.

On the other hand, churches are often prone to letting their histories become idols. They engage in what we often call “selective historicity.” They forget the bad stuff that happened and remember only the high points, some of which may never have happened quite in the way they are remembered! Sometimes they spend more money and time preserving the past than living into the present, let alone the future. I know of a church (not one I have ever served as pastor) which has plenty of volunteers to give tours of the crypt in their basement, where great people of the past are buried, but has no volunteers at all working in the soup kitchen in their parish house basement. Ouch.

It's all about balance and truth. Learning from the past in order to avoid the mistakes of the past. Being empowered by the stories of faithful, courageous, loving ancestors, while at the same time looking around us at the realities of this day, which are very different than those lived by any of our ancestors in the Ancient Burying Ground. And, preparing for a future by teaching our children what kind of world God longs to see us inhabit.

100 years hence, if our children's children celebrate Founders' Day, what will they remember about us?

~ Rev. Shelly Stackhouse,
Pastor