

22 Cause and Unity

Unity and War

In any war, there must be a clear cause (objective) and a unified strategy in the army to accomplish it. As we saw in David's rise to the throne of Israel, it was the cause of Israel, God's house, that became the rallying point for the nation. It was this cause that unified the mighty warriors, and ultimately all of Israel, around David to establish his throne and pull the nation together.

If the cause is not clearly defined and kept in sharp focus, unity can be difficult to maintain and focus can be diverted to individual battles instead of winning the war. With such short-range strategy, an army can easily become a reactionary and defensive force reduced to putting out brush fires instead of an offensive force with a goal of total victory. By drawing out the conflict, the enemy gradually wears down the army until it loses its will to fight. [1]

The idea of gradually wearing down a superior enemy is historically attributed to the Roman General Quintus Fabius Maximus. When faced with a stronger opponent, he would avoid a direct conflict and instead attack supply lines, harass, retreat, and wait until the enemy was weakened. Late in the 19th century this strategy of gradualism was adopted to promote Marxism by a group that called themselves the Fabian Society after the Roman General. In 1905 the Intercollegiate Socialist Society was formed in New York City and they used the same principles of gradualism to introduce socialism into the educational institutions of America. As a result, Marxist philosophy has gradually crept into education and government until the principles of individual responsibility and free enterprise are often ignored, even despised, in most of our institutions of higher learning. [2]

The general statistics presented in the Introduction of this book show that the Church is undoubtedly the superior force in numbers. But how much of the Church is really the Church? It has suffered from the infiltration of counterfeit Christians and faulty belief systems until it has become a fragmented unfocused army without a unified cause. As a result we have, by default, advocated the control of civil government to those described in the previous chapter as "the Philistines" and "the House of Saul."

World War II

During the early part of World War II, even though Europe was on the verge of succumbing to Hitler and the Nazis, America remained reluctant and uncommitted to the war. But on December 7, 1941, Japan attacked Pearl Harbor and crippled the Pacific naval fleet. As painful as that event was, it gave America a badly needed cause. The next day the United States declared war and the entire nation rallied under a cause in a unified effort to defeat the enemy. Victory was the objective and it was to be defined by nothing less than the total unconditional surrender of the opposition. The sleeping giant was awakened and went to war.

Germany surrendered on May 7, 1945 and on August 14, 1945, Japan admitted defeat. On September 2, 1945, papers of Japan's surrender were signed on the deck of the USS Missouri. The objective was realized. World War II was over. The nation had rallied in a unified effort to defeat an evil threat and victory was achieved.

The Vietnam War

The war in Vietnam was another story. It was probably the most unpopular war in United States history. The war dragged on and on and casualties mounted. I remember a headline when I was in high school that said, "Twenty Year War Ahead." The war was bad enough, but antiwar protests also broke out on college campuses and the protests turned bloody. The nation had lost sight of the objective.

On January 15, 1973, President Johnson ordered a halt to operational offensives in North Vietnam. A peace agreement was signed in Paris on January 27, 1973 by representatives of North and South Vietnam. By the end of March, the American troops had departed.

Squabbles, however, continued and war broke out again between the north and the south. Soon it became apparent that South Vietnam would be overrun by Marxists of North Vietnam. On April 30, 1975, the Marine guards at the U.S. Embassy in South Vietnam, as well as the civilians and their families, were evacuated. Thousands of South Vietnamese who had been friends of the United States were abandoned and the result for them was horrific. Having no way to escape the communist forces from the north, many were killed. Others became refugees.

There are many opinions and views about the war in Vietnam. Most agree that there was no lack of ability to win the war on the part of the United States, but there was a gradual wearing down of the will to do so. Without national unity, political resolve and the will to fight evaporated. If there ever was a clear cause and objective, it was lost somewhere along the way. The United States was left with a guilty conscience, a wounded soul, and national confusion. Though the soldiers who fought in the Vietnam War were no less heroic than those in other wars, the lack of a clearly defined objective and the messy ambiguous conclusion to the war made the many battles and 55,000 casualties seem like a horrible waste. [3]

The Power of Keeping Rank

During the 70's and 80's my wife and I were part of a powerful Christian movement that was starting churches on college campuses across the United States and in several nations. Our organization was active in confronting Marxism and promoting the Christian world view to university students. One example from that experience powerfully demonstrates the importance of unity, which can also be called "keeping rank." [4]

It was 1983 and the island nation of Grenada, which had gained its independence from the United Kingdom only four years earlier, was experiencing a coup. Leftist rebels murdered Prime Minister Maurice Bishop and took control. As a result, a U.S. led coalition of troops invaded Grenada and routed the leftists. The action was condemned by the United Kingdom, Canada, and the United Nations, but opinion in the United States was yet to be shaped.

On Wednesday, October 26, Bob Weiner, the founder of our organization of campus churches, put out a call to all of us pastors asking us to make signs supporting President Reagan and his action in Grenada by staging demonstrations the next day on campus. He asked that each person make four signs and hold them like one, but if we saw others who seemed supportive, offer them a sign as well.

That night I called some of the members and we made our signs. The next day, Thursday, October 27, 1983, we were on the campus as were others across the nation. Whenever someone would walk by and give us a “thumbs up”, we would offer them a sign. It didn’t take long before we had quadrupled our numbers. Soon the local media showed up with TV cameras. The same thing happened on several campuses across the nation. As result, the New York Times and other papers picked up the story and ran articles about the broad support on American campuses for President Reagan and the action in Grenada.

The lesson is this: a few people were able to shape national opinion on the Grenada issue because there was an organized network in place with a common cause and the people in that organization were able to keep rank (act in unity).

1 Chronicles 12:33 (KJV-Emphasis added)

33 Of Zebulun, such as went forth to battle, expert in war, with all instruments of war, fifty thousand, *which could keep rank: they were not of double heart.*

Having a single heart and the ability to keep rank are critical elements in effective warfare, whether it be natural warfare or spiritual warfare. [5] We were able to shape national opinion because we were part of a unified network and we were willing to keep rank and follow the plan. This is where the principle of unity with diversity comes in. We are all individuals with our own level of independence, but if we are so independent that we won’t plug into a unified strategy and keep rank, we won’t be very effective. The best plan in the world is worthless if it is not carried out to fruition. Someone has to lead and someone has to follow. We all do both depending upon the situation. [6]

The Power of the People

A nation or a people divided will seldom if ever summon the resolve to win a war, but the power of the unified masses is formidable. That is why unity among God’s people is essential as we build the house of God and prepare the way for the Kingdom of God. When people rise up in mass, unified under a common cause, things happen. Throughout history, cultural and political change has been predicated by a core of people coming into unity. This power of the people is feared by the those in political power. [7]

The fear of the people by those in power can be seen repeatedly in scripture. Peter and John encountered a lame man and healed him on their way to the temple. It caused a great stir and the result was a large number of people who began to listen to Peter and John. The Jewish rulers, being concerned about losing their positions of power, brought Peter and John before the council and told them not to preach any more in the name of Jesus. They would have treated them more harshly but were afraid of the people.

Acts 4:21 (KJV-Emphasis added)

21 So when they had further threatened them, they let them go, finding nothing how they might punish them, *because of the people*: for all men glorified God for that which was done.

Jesus was teaching the people in the temple when the chief priests, scribes and elders came trying to find fault and a reason to arrest Him. They asked Him where he got His authority because they knew their authority was being threatened. Jesus turned the question on them and wisely used their fear of the people against them.

Luke 20:3-7 (KJV- Emphasis added)

3 And he answered and said unto them, I will also ask you one thing; and answer me:

4 The baptism of John, was it from heaven, or of men?

5 And they reasoned with themselves, saying, If we shall say, From heaven; he will say, Why then believed ye him not?

6 *But and if we say, Of men; all the people will stone us*: for they be persuaded that John was a prophet.

7 And they answered, that they could not tell whence it was.

Below are several more examples from scripture that show how power hungry politicians feared an uprising of the people and sought to suppress or kill those who would unify them.

Luke 22:2(KJV - Emphasis added)

2 And the chief priests and scribes sought how they might kill him; *for they feared the people*.

Luke 20:19 (KJV-Emphasis added)

9 And the chief priests and the scribes the same hour sought to lay hands on him; *and they feared the people*: for they perceived that he had spoken this parable against them.

Mark 11:18 (KJV-Emphasis added)

18 And the scribes and chief priests heard it, and sought how they might destroy him: *for they feared him, because all the people was astonished at his doctrine*.

Acts 5:26 (KJV-Emphasis added)

26 Then went the captain with the officers, and brought them without violence: **for they feared the people**, lest they should have been stoned.

Unity and Maturity

In Chapter 19, the Church was compared to a timepiece we can watch while we engage in three initiatives to prepare the way of the Lord. These three are:

- 1) Unity and maturity in the Church;
- 2) Holiness and purity in the Church and;
- 3) Taking the gospel of the Kingdom to the whole world (to which the greater emphasis was given).

It is difficult to give more importance to any one of the three but at this point I'd like to emphasize unity and maturity. Perhaps these three signs could be compared to the three hands on a clock called the Church. All three hands are moving and at midnight all three hands arrive at the twelve at the same time, but the second hand is the one in which movement is most easily

observed.

If one of these three signs could be compared to the second hand, it would be unity and maturity (the ability to keep rank). It is difficult to know when the job of preaching the Kingdom is finished, and measuring when the Church is sufficiently pure is equally difficult. But, like the movement of the second hand, when unity happens, it can be more easily seen and its results are obvious.

Unity is vitally important. That is why Satan works so hard at dividing us. His strategy is simple; divide and conquer. [8] Even Satan has a degree of unity in his kingdom. Jesus knew this and we need to know it too.

Matthew 12:25-26 (KJV)

25 And Jesus knew their thoughts, and said unto them, Every Kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand:

26 And if Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself; how shall then his Kingdom stand?

The unity we seek can only exist where people humble themselves and submit to godly order. Pride, self-promotion, and self-serving are completely incompatible with the Christian cause. Unity and maturity are related because immaturity is often a cause of division as pointed out by Paul when he explained to the Corinthians why they were given milk and not solid food.

1 Corinthians 3:2-3 (NKJV)

2 I fed you with milk and not with solid food; for until now you were not able to receive it, and even now you are still not able; for you are still carnal.

3 For where there are envy, strife, and divisions among you, are you not carnal and behaving like mere men? [9]

We are called to be more than mere men. It is god-like behavior to discount wrongs suffered, to cover another's fault, or to avoid divisive arguments. These are ways we walk worthy of the high calling.

Ephesians 4:1-3 (KJV)

1 I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called,

2 With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love;

3 Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. [10]

The Kingdom Cause

As important as unity is, it must form around a cause beyond itself. When unity becomes the cause, principles are often compromised to achieve unity. The result may be a unified group, but a group with no effective purpose. One of two things usually happen to such groups: 1) they simply become social clubs, or 2) with no clearly defined cause around which to rally, everyone's "pet issue" becomes their cause. This is a perfect recipe for division. As someone once said, "Two visions equals di-vision." Therefore, when unity becomes the cause, unity becomes the source of factions and disunity.

I have seen, prayer movements, pastoral organizations, and political organizations become completely ineffective when unity became the focus instead of the true cause. We cannot pursue unity for the sake of unity. Unity is a good thing, but a poor cause. The unity we seek is the result of pursuing the higher cause of God's Kingdom. [11]

A clear purpose and a cause will inspire those who are called to lead. When David saw Goliath taunting the armies of God he became indignant and said, "...who is this uncircumcised Philistine that he should defy the armies of the living God?" His brother belittled him and accused him of being prideful, but David would not be silenced. He replied, "Is there not a cause" (see 1 Samuel 17:26-29)? The result was a great victory and a re-unified and re-energized army. [12]

Somewhere along the way, the church seems to have lost the vision to win and even the ability to define what victory is. In a way, it seems that today's church is having a kind of "Vietnam War" experience. The war has gotten long and the amount of sacrifice required to win has exceeded many people's estimation. So let's be clear: The Church is in a war of preparation for the King and Kingdom of God to be established on earth. This is our cause.[13]

Paradigm Builder

We must be unified in our cause which is nothing less than to see the return of Jesus Christ and His Kingdom established to rule the earth.

Before reading this chapter, how would you describe your position regarding this concept?

1 Strongly Disagree - 2 Disagree - 3 Neutral/Unsure - 4 Agree - 5 Strongly Agree

How would you describe your position regarding this concept after reading this chapter?

1 Strongly Disagree - 2 Disagree - 3 Neutral/Unsure - 4 Agree - 5 Strongly Agree