



Storming Fortresses

For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh,
but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses.

2 CORINTHIANS 10:4

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INSIDE:

Such a movement will break down all strongholds and vain thinking that men use to deny King Jesus so that we might eventually see the day when the whole earth acknowledges Jesus Christ as Savior *and*

Why the Movement Fails

By

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A recent article by former Chalcedon staff member Andrew Sandlin entitled, *Why the Movement Stops*, (www.razor-mouth.com) is an interesting explanation of his desire to create a Christian culture and why he felt an organisation such as Chalcedon was not the right vehicle for him. This essay is a continuation of Andrew's thoughts, offering positive reasons why a movement need not stop but can in fact grow.

The first question that needs to be asked is what are the hallmarks of a movement, and Andrew provides a useful list. A

movement, he says, has "vision, camaraderie, enterprise, creativity, a plethora of publications, publicity, tight ideological thinking, public denunciations and recriminations, purges, family feuds, midnight firings, conspiracy theories, turf wars, and backroom cut-throat deals." On a more positive note, he adds that the CRM stressed "the total authority of the Bible in all of life, the Christianization of culture, and an optimistic outlook."

Now in this definition, we could recognise other movements, for example Protestantism. Protestant-

ism could be defined similarly as a movement, containing feuds, purges, family feuds, etc. We need only read a history of the sixteenth century to discover that the negative, as well as the positive, aspects of a movement were evident.

All this, however, does not tell us why a movement should stop. It only gives us the signs of a movement. But these signs are more than signs of a movement. Families in business exhibit the same marks of a movement: midnight firings, backroom cut-throat deals, family feuds, and so the list goes on. In other

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words, this list does not identify a movement. This is more like a list of practices endemic of all organisations, civil, religious, corporate, public and private, for-profit and not-for-profit entities. Most important, the list omits a very important mark of a movement: membership fees.

We could take one example and apply the description. Protestantism, it seems, is in trouble. Even its defenders are unable to agree on Protestantism's agenda and its doctrine. With thousands of Protestant denominations in existence, each one implicitly or explicitly claims it has the true and correct biblical teaching.

Amongst Protestants, many parish groups have sprung up each purporting to defend various aspects of Protestant theology or some particular denomination or denominational variant. This provides a smorgasbord of beliefs for the individual to choose from. And choose the individual does, based on his own

reading of Scripture or his own understanding of how a church should be.

If the definition above by Andrew Sandlin of a movement is the definition of a *dying* movement, then Protestantism should have ended decades ago. But the movement persists. All the marks of a movement quoted above apply to Protestantism, and in some cases with a vengeance.¹

Because movements possess these attributes does not in any way indicate that they are in decline. These attributes are not the hallmarks of decline: If anything, they are the hallmarks of a growing and energetic movement. Nothing exhibits discontent as well as a highly strung new business, with an owner whose entrepreneurial flare is almost uncontrollable. He will not be content with the fact that his vision has not been implemented in the past three months, even though it might be an impossible task. He is enlightened with his view of how things must be and nothing will stand in his way to see things get done — his way and in his time. And in order to achieve this, purges, denunciations, feuds, midnight, midday, midafternoon, midmorning — anytime — firings, will, and do, occur.

What, then, are the marks of a *declining* movement? There will be a number of indicators. A smaller number of followers, declining revenues, a lack of ability to spread the message of the movement (i.e. in business language, little or no marketing and sales), all contribute to the death of an organisation. We might say, at the human level, a lack of sound management will stop an organisation more than anything else.

The hallmarks of decline are the opposite of the marks of growth of a movement. Movements do not grow or decline because they have family feuds, purges or turf wars. They grow when sound management is in place, and God blesses those sound management practices so that the movement succeeds. Sometimes, God blesses a movement in spite of its management practices, but this is not the norm.

The marks of a movement listed above may contribute, in some instances to unhappiness in followers, and may ultimately lead to dissatisfaction within members who come out second-best in these feuds and denunciations. They almost certainly lead to denunciations by former movement members who lose out in the turf battles. And these denunciations of the old movement often occur when the former member starts his own movement and wants to tell everyone that his is the true movement, without all the baggage of the old movement.

Protestantism is alive but not-so-well on plant earth, even if some denominations within Protestantism are in decline. While there is certainly a hesitation among many about attending a particular denominational building on Sunday, there are many who say they are Christian even if they possess no formal membership.

An active recruitment campaign, then, is more important to the life of a movement than almost anything else. Not only the number of members is important, but the amount of capital it can raise from its supporters to give it life now and in the future. These aspects, if anything, tell of the future of an organisation and unfortunately, many neglect the dictum of

¹ With one possible exception: "tight ideological thinking". This is not a hallmark of much of contemporary Protestantism.

management expert Peter Drucker, “profit is the future costs of staying in business.” Many religious organisations, and many businesses find the idea of making a profit an anathema. Some bible scholars deplore the idea that even an ordinary business should have profits as their goal. But it is almost certain, that without profits as a goal, the business, movement, organisation — call it what you will — will flounder.

Andrew’s list of the marks of an organisation are useful. If we are to grow the organisation, we need to build on our strengths and get rid of our weaknesses. If we have propensity to waste time on feuds and denunciations, these do not spell the end of the movement, but they may certainly hinder its growth.

The CRM, therefore, just like Protestantism, is far from ending. It has too many supporters, even if they don’t use the same brand name. The CRM fragmented over twenty years ago. New organisations have sprung up based on the biblical principles of CRM, while not always taking the brand name with them. Thus we’ve had CRM in various forms all vying for public attention and the public’s funds to keep them going.

Today, the CRM is healthier than it has ever been. Some of the older organisations have come and gone. (Who remembers the *Christian Reconstruction* newsletter out of Ashland, OH, in the early 1980s?) Still others have sprung up in their place,

such as the Center for Cultural Leadership, or the new publication *Business Reform*, in which I have an involvement. In the latter case, the magazine has reached a subscription base of 200,000 in just two years since inception. This is hardly indicative of the death of a movement. If anything, it indicates that CRM is alive and well on planet earth.

There are, no doubt, some who would hope for the death of the older organisations that have been influential in the CRM movement. This is hardly a Christian perspective on our neighbor and his life, since we should all hope and pray for the success of our Christian neighbours — not an easy task when we have disagreements with them at some point. But this is the challenge that is before us, to pray and work with those with whom we might disagree.

This is a bigger challenge to many Protestants than it might seem, since the Protestant principle of everyone declaring for himself what the Bible does or does not teach makes it difficult for people to reach an agreement that allows for a working relationship. Someone will always feel that to work with others who don’t hold to the Bible as they see it is a compromise of the faith.

The church, for over a thousand years, was a movement that attracted people to the extent that Christendom, with all its faults, carried the day. We need such a movement again, raised by God, blessed by the

Holy Spirit, recognising Jesus as King over all the earth — a movement that will again lead the battle against false gods and idols that men raise in their efforts to be their own god (Gen. 3:5). Such a movement will break down all strongholds and vain thinking that men use to deny King Jesus so that we might eventually see the day when the whole earth acknowledges Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord.

We may need many organisations, joined by a unified vision of the movement, to help this movement succeed. In which case, the longevity of numerous organisations is what will help carry the day. Let’s work to that end.

The inability of those organisations representing the movement to work together, to develop a combined agenda of what the movement is about is the Achilles’ heel of not just the movement but the organisations themselves. This is why Protestantism and Catholicism combined have failed to hold the culture against the onslaught of humanism. And neither Protestantism, Catholicism, nor the myriad of church and para-church organizations flying the Christian flag have been able to turn the tide. And none, it seems, is about to change its ways to solve the problem.

This is why, in the end, the movement fails.

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