

A Parallel

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The sound is a harsh, sharp, irritating, loud, staccato buzz, repeated three times. To those of us in Strategic Air Command, it was a reminder of the unpleasant reality of the real reason why we were here. It was an unwelcome intrusion in our daily lives.

Just off the end of the runway, was a pad large enough to hold four KC-135 tankers with its own special taxiway leading to the end of the runway. On that pad, an utter, but strangely organized pandemonium broke loose with Crew Chiefs and Flight Crew members running to their particular planes, removing covers and beginning startup procedures. Perhaps today is not merely a drill, but a horrifying reality has occurred and time is of the essence. Meanwhile, the Control Tower and the Aircraft Readiness Center have cleared the runway of all normal flight operations so that nothing impedes the launching of the Alert aircraft. In short, everything is now focused on the fact that the Cold War may now no longer be something to be pushed out of mind and temporarily forgotten.

During the years of 1948 through 1991, most of the Western world, but particularly America experienced a war that, after the early years, became something to be forgotten, or ignored. In the 1950's and early 60's, it was not uncommon for attack response drills to be carried out in schools and government offices around the country. However, as time wore on, the response to a very real threat began to drop off. As the expected attack never came, people became far less concerned with the fact that The Soviet Union had several thousand warheads and bombs designated for targets in the United States. In fact, by 1985 the perception of actual threat in

American society had diminished to the point of being the concern of only few "warmongers" and virulent anti-communists. The vast majority of America was too absorbed in being entertained and making money for retirement, or the next vacation. By 1991, when Communism supposedly collapsed in on itself, American society was poised for the decade of self-absorption in which "If it feels good, do it." was the motto.

However, over the years of the Cold War what was not well understood by the society at large, was that the enemy was not the USSR per se, rather, the enemy was the philosophy and socio/political system of Communism (or Marxism, whichever you prefer). Indeed, the aggression of missiles and bombs was only the outward manifestation of a deeper, and more serious war that was occurring on many levels and fronts. Most of which were either unseen, or undetected except by a few perceptive individuals. When those individuals sought to raise the alarm, they were derided as virtual lunatics and paranoids.

What was not, and still is not well understood about this war, is that those who are the aggressors hold a completely different mindset about war and how war is to be fought. To them, the war is not confined to the battlefield where the bullets and bombs are expended. No – to them the war encompasses every aspect of life. This war is to be fought in the hospitals, schools, libraries, factories, social gatherings, churches, etc. etc. and consists primarily of the conversion of persons from one way of thinking to another. Every turning of thought, every person convinced to change their way of thinking, even on the smallest of issues, was and is considered a victory. To achieve this victory, every means of communication is used by the adversary, whether it is the supposed "documentary," a Hollywood movie, a song (it doesn't matter what particular genre – the Communists have their agents in every aspect of the music industry), the various books (even religious books), or the political and social issues arena, they left no area untouched in their drive to

alter the thinking of American society. Thus, bit by bit, person by person, the Communists seek to change the thinking of a significant minority, up to the majority of persons to their way of thinking. When this is achieved, then they will have accomplished a victory without ever firing a shot.

Failing that, they have a backup plan – tear down the existing society if it will not accept the tenets of Marxism. This is done by actively working to increase disorder and immorality in the society so that it collapses in on itself. Thus, the society is set up for them to propose their “solution” to the problem of the chaos that they helped create. Fascinating isn't it, that when the end justifies the means, anything can be done – so long as the goal is accomplished.

There is a parallel here – between the war the Marxists launched against America, and American society's long term response to it, and the church the Lord Jesus Christ brought into existence on this earth, particularly in the late 20th Century. You see, we all “know” that spiritual war exists and that there is a spiritual war that is occurring, but we, like the American society that we come out of, don't like to be particularly troubled with the details of it, or involvement in it (as if we could really avoid it). And, like American society, we frequently wish it would just “go away” so we could continue on with our lives.

However, like the Communists (whose father is the Devil), Satan has other plans for the Lord's church. And, like the Communists, the Devil uses every bit of deceit and trickery he can find to get his message across, and influence the Lord's people to do things contrary to what the Lord would have them to do. But, unlike the Marxists, Satan is far more successful. How do we know? History records it, specifically Bible history.

If we go back and read about the various churches spoken of in the New Testament (which weren't supposed to fail) we can ask

ourselves a very simple question: Where are those churches today? In fact, where were those churches in 250 AD? Since the last book of the New Testament was written in 90 AD, it is reasonable to ask if the churches described in the New Testament survived as proper churches for the next 160 years.

Moreover, we ought to ask ourselves a very similar question: Will we survive as a proper church? Now I know that some raise the question: Doesn't the Lord tell us that the "gates of Hell will not prevail against it" meaning that the church cannot be defeated?

The answer is both a "yes" and a "no" to the question. If we consider the church as a kind, or a species (if you will), then it is very true that Satan will not destroy the Lord's church. Additionally, if we consider the implications of the entire statement, we find that gates are a defensive measure used by cities against attackers. Thus, as long as a particular church is on the offensive, and guided by the Holy Ghost in that offensive, then that church will stand. There is no possibility of that church being defeated. However, we find recorded throughout the last 19 centuries, voluminous evidence of churches that decided not to follow the leadership of the Lord and adhere to His commandments. In short, they also became like American society in the late 20th century – unwilling to commit themselves to the reality of the war that is on-going.

Therefore, what guarantees do we have as a proper New Testament church that we will survive in both doctrine and practice? Do we also understand that it is not enough to have a good doctrine but we must also give that doctrine feet and legs. The doctrine must be put into practice. This is one of the very valuable lessons taught in the military – readiness doesn't mean much if you cannot respond quickly in the event of an actual attack. This is the exact reason for the no-notice Alert drills that SAC loved so much. Why? Because it proved that what we stated daily was actually true. As

fundamental, independent, Baptists can we actually prove that what our doctrine states is really true by our actions? Or, are they just so many words on paper, nice to look at, but not to be actually practiced?

When we talk of spiritual war, do we really understand that there is a real war occurring? Or, is this something that happens somewhere else? Do we understand that the focus of the war is the Lord's people and their ability to carry an effective Gospel testimony? Do we also understand that the Devil is a liar and the father of lies, and thus has no problem setting about to deceive us and distract us from the task the Lord has given us? Do we also understand that nothing is off-limits as far as what the Devil will use against us?

And finally, is it clear to us that everyone – lost or saved, is involved on one side of this war or the other? And that those on the other side desperately need deliverance from the destruction of sin and iniquity and the bonds of the Devil? Moreover, just like the war that Communism continues to prosecute against the United States, this war will not end until one side is completely defeated.

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