

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

TACTICAL CHURCH

Achieving Missional Effectiveness through Biblical Application of Ancient Military Principles

A Thesis Project Submitted to
Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary
In partial fulfillment of the requirements
For the degree

DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

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Wake Forest, North Carolina

May 2014

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LIBERTY UNIVERSITY BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

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ABSTRACT

TACTICAL CHURCH: Achieving Missional Effectiveness through Biblical Application of Ancient Military Principles

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Liberty University Baptist Theological Seminary 2014

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In reviewing the current literature available on the missional church movement, there is much written from a strategic perspective; however, there are few military parallels offered regarding missional tactics. Through the process of analyzing current literature and research on the missional church movement this project will seek to offer a new application of missional church tactics.

Through the case study method this project will seek to offer a tactical translation to the local church of the methodology found in Sun Tzu's *Art of War*, by utilizing data gathered from related texts, and field experience to determine how today's American churches can become more effective; additionally, serving as a roadmap for churches transitioning to missional ministry.

Abstract Length: 111 Words

DEDICATION

The great warriors in my life who have gone before, stood beside, and undergirded me through the spiritual journey that has been this thesis project include: the Holy Spirit, my wife, Faith Bland; my parents, Jim and Claudia Bland; my ministry mentor Dr. John Brakin; and future warriors, Joshua, Whitney, and Justyn Bland.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

SBC	Southern Baptist Convention
NAMB	North American Mission Board
IMP	International Mission Board
PTSD	Post Traumatic Stress Disorder
BRC	Barna Research Group
NLT	New Living Translation
NKJV	New King James Version
NCBC	North Carolina Baptist Convention
SEBTS	Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary
LBTS	Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Some years ago the student had the heart-breaking experience of witnessing the first church that he pastored teetering on the verge of closure. The recollection of sitting in the office, surrounded by thousands of books, wondering how the church could be in this situation in spite of all the resources available was agonizing. Frustration had set in and the student began to recount the reasons and excuses for the predicament. Looking at the inherited legal problems, loans the church had made prior to the students arrival that were not being repaid, a history of questionable financial disbursements by previous pastors, and the recent hurricane that had just destroyed the new building only one week after the churches relaunch. After much thought, there was the acute realization that each one of the aforementioned circumstances, minus the hurricane, could be accounted for by circumstances and decisions that were not dealt with in any substantial way by any of the literature on the bookshelf next to the students' desk. The student had the right books and had read them, but there was still something was missing.

After years of prayer and serving other ministries the student has begun to contemplate how he could have all the books in print at ready disposal and still come up short in the area of application. One of the students' personal passions is the study of ancient military history and the cornerstone text in this study is the book, *Art of War* by Sun Tzu. Written in the mid-200s BC period, Master Tzu he recounts and summarizes the wisdom he has gleaned from observing and recording the Chinese historical period of the warring states. Sun Tzu recounts the stories and wisdom of a general named Sun Wu, whose greatest exploit was leading the Wu army against a much more powerful neighboring army. It occurred that while rereading Tzu's text, that the

principles offered for war are applicable to the transition of the modern church in the United States.

Art of War is about establishing a successful strategic framework for endeavor. While the books available on the topic of ministry were dealing with ministry tactics, without a strategy to frame and give a means for selection and application of tactics, the tactic itself would be forced to stand alone and was likely to fail. It would be akin to an established church choosing to drop its Sunday school program and install cell groups without making any other alteration to ministry, and without preparation of any kind. The student observed this occurring frequently in churches when they read Rick Warrens' *Purpose Driven Church* and adopted his tactic of cell group ministry while ignoring his overall strategy. The student has lived in a church as an associate pastor that did this and was charged by his pastor to train and launch a new cell ministry. The result was that both staff members were at other churches within a year and the church that implemented the cell ministry has not recovered. How many testimonies are there of similar mistakes being made because leaders failed to understand the difference between strategy and tactics, and then how the two work together?

This project is the outpouring of the students' personal study in the combined areas of church ministry and military history, seeking to observe the church as a spiritual battlefield and the war for souls to be, as Sun Tzu would say, "of vital importance."¹ The ultimate goal of this project is to serve as an aide to pastors and church leaders who are either in the midst of transition in their respective ministries or simply feel that their ministry has become disconnected from their community and have a desire to increase their overall effectiveness.

¹ Tzu, Sun. *The Art of War*. Translated by Robert Wilkinson. (Hertfordshire, Ware: Wordsworth Publishers, 1998) 4.

Operating under the assumption that these pastors and church leaders have similar access to materials dealing with church tactics, the focus becomes to suggest a framework for implementing tactics appropriate to each ministry to aide them in the achievement of their Great Commission goals. The researcher holds that the missional model of the church is the most Biblically sound; likewise, ministry transitions taking place will represent a shift toward missional model principles.

Art of War is a standard training manual for many of the military training institutions in the United States², top business schools³, as well as realms of relationship coaching⁴, and personal spiritual growth⁵. Such principles, which have found application in so many fields of endeavor should at least be suggested to the evangelical church in the United States. In addition, it would be of benefit to second career pastors who have been acquainted with the principles and strategic framework of *the Art of War* to have this connection point for their current ministry.

Statement of the Problem

The student's purpose for this project is to investigate is the problem of change that faces many evangelical churches in the United States today. Specifically, the transition that many ministries are attempting to make from what is often termed "traditional" ministry to a missional model. Established churches have a tendency to reject any change and choose to repeat the style of ministry upon which they were founded⁶. According to Southerland, many of the churches in

² Tzu, 1998. 18.

³ McNeilly, Mark. *Sun Tzu and the Art of Business* (New York, New York: Oxford University Press, 1996)

⁴ Cleary, Thomas, trans. *The Book of Leadership and Strategy: Lessons of the Chinese Masters* (Boston, Massachusetts: Shambhala Press, 1990) 6.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 7.

⁶ Malphurs, Aubrey. *A New Kind of Church: Understanding Models of Ministry for the 21st Century* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Books, 2004) 46f.

the aforementioned description are in decline or potentially closing their doors permanently⁷. Lifeway research is suggesting that as many as 70 percent of Southern Baptist churches are either plateaued or declining in membership each year.⁸ The net result is at best little change, and at worst a significant decrease in the overall numbers of people attending churches in a nation with an exploding population. To reach this growing population churches must seek change that is relevant and effective. According to church expert like Ed Stetzer, the model of effectiveness being advocated is referred to as missional.⁹ The student has observed many of these problems personally and has adopted the case study method to study the tactical principles suggested in this study.

Definitions of Special Terms

There are many definitions of what missional means and encompasses. For the sake of this discussion missional will be restricted to the following definition: “Missional is a model of church ministry that is focused on the accomplishment of the Great Commandment and Great Commission and focuses on the local community and expands outward.” The missional model has five key concepts including, culturally driven (*panta te ethne*), each member/regular church attender is expected to be a missionary, giving to, and living out missions are fundamental, leadership is accomplished in a team environment partnering with the congregation they serve as fellow servants, the congregation of the church prioritizes their desire to reflect the diversity of its community. Strategy serves as the overall framework for the ministry and answers the following questions: What is it God has called us to accomplish? Why are we seeking to

⁷ Southerland, Dan. *Transitioning: Leading your Church Through Change* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 2001) 14-46.

⁸ Stetzer, Ed. *Comeback Churches* (Nashville, Tennessee: Broadman & Holman, 2007) 14f.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 4.

accomplish these goals? (Should be answered by question one but as this unpacks we will look closely at the concept of motivations and individual understanding that affect tactical implementation significantly). Who will lead in the accomplishment of these goals? (Essentially we are asking for a decision maker).

There is much debate in the evangelical churches as to who is qualified to organize and implement such strategies. On occasion there is a disconnect within a given ministry between the giver of the strategy and the implementer of the strategy.¹⁰ In many congregation lead, and even in some elder lead contexts there is a group of individuals who come together and agree on a strategy (sometimes taking the form of an operations manual or constitution) and then call vocational staff for the purpose of implementation. General Sun Wu (Tzu) found himself in a similar situation with the leader of the nation of Wu.¹¹

The introduction to *Art of War* begins with this summarized incident. The lord summoned him to lead his army in a defensive war and in the initial interview asked general Wu if he was able to implement the complex strategy with his rather poorly trained army. Wu called for the lords concubines and then demonstrated in detail for them a series of military drills he wished for them to execute. Then asking them if they understood, and seeing they did not, he called them forward again and demonstrated the same drill. The concubines assured them they understood and Wu called the two most senior forward to serve as leaders. When Wu ordered the drill the concubines all laughed and could not complete the movements. Wu then took his sword and beheaded the two senior concubines who had been leading the drill and commanded those

¹⁰ Malphurs 2004, 167.

¹¹ Tzu 1998, 15.

remaining to execute the drill he had taught them. They completed each movement perfectly. Wu explained that, “War is of vital importance to the state.”¹²

To be most effective Sun Tzu advocates the creation and implementation of strategy as being joined inseparably. For this context, the position of the lord of Wu, is our Lord who has given us His commands to carry out in this life. The senior leader or leadership body is General Wu who is charged directly with the implementation of strategic principles provided by the Master, and the concubines are the subordinate leaders and congregational members in general who are charged with supporting and serving in the execution of the vision (this in no way should suggest the author believes there is a correlation between concubines and the church).

Transition refers to the culture being in a constant state of change and that for the local church to be relevant in ministry to their respective community they must change and adapt their ministry methodology. Transition does not include any compromise to the inerrancy and authority of scripture, nor does it include any compromise of orthodoxy. It is understood that many churches would disagree that their need for transition is imperative to accomplish their God-given mission.

General Tactics are the methods of implementing the overall strategy. For instance, Robert E. Lee was acting on an agreed upon strategy of taking the war to the enemy when he chose to fight at Gettysburg in July 1864.¹³ One of his tactics in accomplishing this strategy was to order a direct assault on the center of the Union line on the third day of battle.¹⁴

¹² Ibid. 7–15

¹³ Freeman, Douglas Southall. *Lee* (New York, New York: Collier Books, 1991) 319-331.

¹⁴ Alexander, Bevin. *Sun Tzu at Gettysburg* (New York, New York: W.W. Norton, 2011) 123f.

Supporting Tactics are smaller in scope than general tactics; these assign roles are detailed, and have much less room for individual expression. These should rarely include the general but rather occur at his overall direction and under the oversight of his subordinates. Using the Pickett's charge example from above, supporting tactics included: assigning James Longstreet to command the attack, assembly of cannons on the ridge for the opening cannonade, selecting the units that would participate, and indicating a series of oblique movements converging on the clump of trees in the Union center.¹⁵

Statement of Limitations

In this project the student will be utilizing historical military examples for the purpose of illustrating a tactical situation that parallels a present day church transition and not the breadth of military history. Second, while no two evangelical churches in the United States are alike, nor are there two evangelical churches that minister in the same cultural context; each one has its own specific set of issues and finds itself in a unique point along the transition and progression path. It would be a mistake to assume that any strategy or tactic could apply in its entirety to any individual ministry.

This project draws on numerous tactical military situations that affect the church and its leaders. By no means should the historical references utilized for illustrative purposes be considered as exhaustive of the event or circumstance being described. Further, the case study being undertaken is unique, as all ministries are, and should not be regarded as representative of all churches. The researcher, after having spent the last thirteen years in full-time ministry and serving through three major church transitions, to aide church leaders in recognizing the need for

¹⁵ McWhiney, Grady. *Attack and Die: Civil War Military Tactics and the Southern Heritage*. (Montgomery, Alabama: University of Alabama Press, 1882) 274–299.

transition and how to best utilize the tactics available, or to create their own tactics for the purpose of accomplishing the mission God has called them to.

The third limitation is that this is an interdisciplinary project that encompasses not only theology church functionality, military history, military strategy, and political science, and to perform an exhaustive study each issue would not be possible within the scope of this project. To do justice to this project these elements must be present but be relegated to supporting roles rather than a primary role. For instance, when dealing with the role of the leader, or general, as Sun Tzu would call him, it will be necessary to discuss issues of political science and overall leadership study, but these will be limited to the context of the local church.

The purpose of studying history, specifically military history, is to illustrate the framework as presented by Sun Tzu in *Art of War*. These illustrations will be given for the purpose of demonstrating similarity to situations in the local church and to serve as a bridge between the spiritual and secular. It is the students belief that there is an appropriateness in the comparison of the transition of the local church to a mission style of ministry and warfare as we know it both historically and in the present day. The Apostle Paul, writing to the Ephesians, reminds us that we were not against flesh and blood but rather against powers and principalities in the prince of the power of the air. In the aforementioned verse one is witnessed to biblical verification of the spiritual warfare that each Christians engages in on a constant basis. How much more acute is this warfare when we consider that it is waged against a specific leader, a specific force, and a specific realm or dominion. And as Sun Tzu would say, “war is of the most final importance to the state.”¹⁶

¹⁶ Tzu, 1998, 21.

Further, the student will focus the research on the issue of transition within the local church setting. As stated in the introduction, the researcher holds that for the local church to be effective in its ministry and calling it must become a missionary to its local culture.¹⁷

Theoretical basis for the project

The theoretical basis for this project is formed in the belief that the missional church model is the most adaptive and biblically sound model for the local church to adopt. With this belief as the foundation for the study, it is the author's assumption that as local churches strive to fulfill the Great Commission they will find themselves in the position of transitioning to a missional model. The focus of this project is then to aid the local church in this transition by suggesting a methodology of transition that is organized around Sun Tzu's *Art of War*. The conclusion was then formed, that in the establishment of a new methodology, the format of that methodology would be well supported by the framework of military tactics.

Building from a scriptural basis, and including a substantial review of the current literature related to the local church function and form, this project seeks to adapt such principles into the framework of one of the greatest military strategic texts. Within the major divisions of *Art of War* this project will synthesize church missiological principles with historical examples and warfare theory. The focus of this study is to utilize current studies on church ministry, and their related statistics, by allowing them to aide in framing the methodology being framed.

The final consideration in the theoretical basis for this study is the value of interdisciplinary combination, namely ecclesiology, missiology, military history, and even business management coming together to suggest a comprehensive single methodology relating to the missional church. With the Bible as the foundation and *Art of War* as the frame it is the

¹⁷ Wegner, Rob. *Missional Moves* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 2012) 18–27.

student's intention to draw from numerous sources in the above listed fields for the purpose of suggesting a comprehensive methodology for the transition of a local evangelical church in the United States to a missional model of ministry.

Statement of Methodology

This project is designed to adapt scriptural principles relating to ministry within a framework provided by the text, *Art of War*, for the purpose of creating a tactical roadmap for churches desiring to transition to a missional model of ministry. With the key ideas of military strategy set forward in *Art of War* serving as a the subject for the following chapters and sub points, the author will provide a biblical and historical foundation and tactical lesson that demonstrates not only the value of the concept but also its potential application for church use. These concepts will be fleshed out through case study at both the First Baptist Church of Hypoluxo in Lantana, Florida, and Southport Baptist Church in Southport North Carolina, where the student has served as Senior Pastor.

The first chapter will serve as an introduction to the overall project and suggest the rationale, as well as the limitations of for the following chapters. There may be some who question why a 2000 year old Chinese text on military strategy is being used as a framework for church transition. The opening chapter will aid the reader in understanding why this is application is both valid and valuable.

Following the opening chapter the body of the project is separated into three sections based upon the type of tactics under consideration. Each of these key points will be explored from a biblical foundation and then expanded on through use of explanation in *Art of War* and related historical case study, concluding with the application and tactics for the local church in a missional transition.

Following the three chapters that comprise the main body of the project will be the concluding chapter, appendix section including the author's vita.

Review of the Literature

*Art of War, Sun Tzu, translated by Yuan Shibing- Art of War*¹⁸, with the exception of the Holy Bible, is the foundational text for this project and serves as a framework for the discussion of missional tactics. There are a number of translations of Sun Tzu's original work available, the student selected this one because the language is most modern, and for the novice reader, it will prove the most comfortable to study. Sun Tzu's actual work is quite short, while most of the actual book is taken up by commentaries on the actual text. There are only thirteen chapters and an introduction in the actual art of war and the student has chosen this translation to use exclusively for the direct quotations found in this project. The commentary that follows is of some value, but is exclusively focused on Chinese military tradition and understanding Sun Tzu's work within his individual context.

*On War, Carl Von Clausewitz*¹⁹ - *On War* is the Western equivalent of Sun Tzu's *The Art of War* in Eastern context. The two texts are similar, however, *On War* is a compilation of eight books, each dealing with strategy. The author is using his first-hand experiences as a soldier, fighting both with and against Napoleon Bonaparte during the French Revolutionary wars. There seems to be no historical connection that would suggest Sun Tzu's thought had any influence on the writing of *On War*, but for the Westerner, reading *On War* helps to explain and expand upon the principles contained in the *Art of War*.

¹⁸ Tzu, Sun. *The Art of War*. Translated by Robert Wilkinson. (Hertfordshire, Ware: Wordsworth Publishers, 1998).

¹⁹ Clausewitz, Carl Von. *On War*. (Hertfordshire, Ware: Wordsworth Publishers, 1997).

Sun Tzu and the Art of Business, Mark McNeilly²⁰- While the book *On War* is set up in a more outline type format, McNeilly's book is detail oriented and is excellent in its explanation of each concept. It may be the most thorough application of the *Art of War* to a discipline other than direct warfare between armies that exists today. The six basic principles offered by Sun Tzu are directly applied to the business environment and offered the researcher ideas for application and possible formats for future applications of the study.

The Art of War for Managers, Gerald A. Michaelson²¹- Michaelson's works includes four primary texts that apply Sun Tzu's *Art of War* to the business world; however, the greatest overall value of *Art of War for Managers*, is the ease of accessibility with which the author makes each primary thought available to the reader. For the reader, Sun Tzu's *Art of War*, can be difficult to grasp which concepts deal with strategy and which concepts deal with tactics. Because of the excellent divisions found within Michaelson's book, any one of his texts will lead the novice reader to a better understanding of Sun Tzu's primary work.

Napoleon on the Art of War, Jay Luvaas²²- The author of this text is considered by scholars within the military historical field, as being one of the great authorities on warfare of the modern age. What the students appreciate most about Luvaas' work, and what has had the greatest impact on this project, is his wide knowledge of Sun Tzu's *Art of War*, and his combining the ancient Chinese classic on strategy with the military careers of Napoleon and

²⁰ McNeilly, Mark. *Sun Tzu and the Art of Business*. (New York, New York: Oxford University Press, 1996).

²¹ Michaelson, Gerald A. *The Art of War for Managers*. (Avon, Massachusetts: Adams Research Corp, 2001).

²² Luvaas, Jay, trans. *Napoleon on The Art of War*. (New York, New York: Touchstone Press, 1999).

Frederick the great of Prussia. The student felt it necessary to choose between the two leaders that Lewis writes about primarily, and chose the book on Napoleon because it was more accessible, as well as its overall principles. The most important section is the tie of the author makes between Napoleon's military career and General Sun Wu's concept of attacking fortified positions.

Breaking the Missional Code, Ed Stetzer²³ - While the student has read a great number of Ed Stetzer's work dealing with the missional church, in his opinion this book is his best and most important to the overall church movement. While some of the online (Christianbook.com) reviews of Stetzer and Putnam's work accuse them of being proponents of the emerging church movement; that is simply not the case if the book is read carefully and authentically. Indeed, the greatest challenge the student found in utilizing this book was being careful to separate his ideas from the students own, as they have similar thoughts on numerous issues dealing with the missional church. Especially valuable to this project was the section dealing with the correlation between the missional church movement and increasing church health that results in churches that make the transition to a mission style of ministry.

Introducing the Missional Church, Alan J. Roxburgh²⁴ - Allen Roxburgh's books have become manifestoes for the emergent church, a style of ministry that the student questions its biblical authenticity, and in specific cases, as to whether the term church should even be applied. This text in its sister mission all joining God in the neighborhood are for the most part foundational texts for the missional movement occurring in North America. The student has included this book because it is look from a tactical perspective of what missional constitutes.

²³ Stetzer, Ed. *Breaking the Missional Code*. (Nashville, Tennessee: Broadman & Holman, 2006).

²⁴ Roxburgh, Alan J. *Introducing the Missional Church*. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Books, 2009).

Comeback Churches, Ed Stetzer²⁵ - During the students' time of study at Liberty University he has had to either read or review *Comeback Churches* at least four times for various classes. Because of its constant assigning and study the student has become familiar with it, and intrigued by the concept of church revitalization. So much emphasis is spent today on church planting, and so many resources are put into the establishment of new churches, my study of this book has caused me to be intrigued by questions arising out of the possibilities of transitioning existing churches. The student has now served with four churches that have been involved in major transitions, two of which would be classified as transitions to a missional of style of ministry. While Stetzer's book is really little more than a series of case studies with general applications, he found it to be important because it is one of the few church books that spends more time addressing overall strategy, than individual church growth tactics. In addition, it expresses a great deal of diversity and recording churches that have transitioned, or turned around, within the evangelical setting in the United States.

11 Innovations in the Local Church, Elmer Towns²⁶ - The student selected Towns' book, primarily because it deals with the church from a strategic point of view. Without making judgments, Towns looks upon eleven different church innovations and styles that are occurring primarily within evangelical churches in the United States. In taking this radical step, Towns makes available to his readers the opportunity of interaction with possible strategies that may yield a more significant effect to the ministry of their given church. While this project centers on a transition to a missional church strategy, and in the text missional is referred to as community

²⁵ Stetzer, Ed. *Comeback Churches*. (Nashville, Tennessee: Broadman & Holman, 2007).

²⁶ Towns, Elmer. *11 Innovations in the Local Church: How Today's Leaders Can Learn, Discern, and Move into the Future*. (Ventura, California: Regal, 2007).

transformation, it serves as a hybrid of most of the eleven innovations included text. Transition to a missional style of ministry will look different in every individual setting. Also, it serves to remind the reader that there is room for strategic innovation than is presently available and that the opportunity for tactical application within the church is paramount.

Simple Church, Thom S. Rainer²⁷ - According to Rainer, “Do less better.” This thought, while not directly contained within the text, would perhaps be the summary of *Simple Church*. When the student first read this book a number of years ago he strongly disliked it. He disagreed with the author’s assertion that the church would be more effective in its mission by doing less ministry. Now nearly a decade later, the student sees the wisdom in value of the principles set forth in this text. Ultimately, the student included this book as most influential on this project because of its transitional nature, and its strong influence over the missional church movement in general.

Missional Moves, Rob Wegner²⁸ - It would be impossible to complete this project without this particular text. The authors serve together at a large missional church that previously had been attractional. Together, with their senior pastor, the authors lead in the transition from the attractional to the missional model of ministry. The text is the chronicle of the journey undertaken by both the staff and the congregation during this period of transition and following ministry. One of the key points that they discover and expound upon is the fact that they did not have to completely abandon the old model in order to adopt the missional model of ministry. For many churches, the greatest challenge to transition is their fear of losing their past heritage. This text makes clear that it is not necessary to abandon the old in order to adopt the new. It further

²⁷ Rainer, Thom S. *Simple Church*. (Nashville, Tennessee: Broadman & Holman, 2011).

²⁸ Wegner, Rob. *Missional Moves*. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 2012).

helps to clarify for the reader what it means to be a missional church, as well as the shift in ideology necessary to turn in inward will he focused church into a community reaching, disciple-making focused church.

The Purpose Driven Church, Rick Warren²⁹ - *Purpose driven Church* is perhaps the most recognized and best read text on church strategy in the United States. Within its pages author and Pastor Rick Warren has chronicled much of his ministry training, passions, and hard learned lessons. Warren passes these experiences along to the reader with the intense desire for the reader to learn from both his successes and his failures in ministry. He is clear that the methods that he used at Saddleback Church will not work in every context for every reader who might be considering the ideas that he puts forward.

This book has become a source of great controversy, not because of what Warren has written, but because of the laziness and shortsightedness of those who have read his words and simply try to follow his methods verbatim rather than taking his principles, as he stated his intention, and then applying the principle to the individual context. This is one of the most influential books in giving me the idea for this particular project. The thought that pastors and ministry leaders failed to listen to a fellow pastor and ministry leader as they gave instruction for a strategy of church transition, while setting forth a variety of tactics used within the authors' context, is indeed frustrating. It caused me to wonder, perhaps ministry leaders could better understand strategy and tactics if they were discussed from a well-respected secular framework, and then applied to the church. Perhaps, the only thing the *Purpose Driven Church* has missed, is the final degree of connection with church leaders who have little understanding of the church

²⁹ Warren, Rick. *The Purpose Driven Church*. (Grand Rapids , Michigan: Zondervan, 1995).

itself, and her ultimate mission. This project is an attempt to help to fill in some of the final parts of this connection.

The Thing in the Bushes, Kevin Graham Ford³⁰ - The student first became aware of *The Thing in the Bushes* when he received a copy of Bill Hyble's leadership reading list. On it he lists 10 books that he considers absolute must reads, The student promptly went out and purchased all 10 and read them. The student considers this to be the second best book on the list, but it is certainly the most applicable to this study. Kevin Ford, the author, does an excellent job of examining from a rather generic point of view, organizational structure and issues that may exist with an organization that are keeping it from reaching its full potential. Much like Sun Tzu, he records how a general will examine the leadership structure and organizational structure of the unit prior to assuming command. Ford offers advice and techniques presented from a business point of view that lead the reader to a better understanding of recognizing major falls within an organization or ministry. It is controversial and unchristian to refer to the story of Sun Wu beheading the concubines, and the student would not advocate so drastic a step; however, Sun Wu recognized and related through this incident a primary flaw in the organization he was serving. More than that, Wu takes the necessary step of eliminating the thing in the bushes thereby allowing his nation to be successful. To be successful in any transition, especially the transitions occurring in the local church, leaders must not only be able to recognize challenges but must be empowered to take action steps so that the ministry can move forward.

³⁰ Ford, Kevin Graham. *The Thing in the Bushes*. (Colorado Springs, Colorado: Pinon Press, 2001).

Building Leaders the West Point Way, Joseph P. Franklin³¹ - Retired Major-General

Joseph Franklin lists among his many accomplishments and successes in life, his obvious rank as Maj. Gen. on the United States Army, having served as commandant of the United States military Academy at West Point, as well as a distinguished business leader. The text is derived from Franklin's numerous military experiences, but focuses on the philosophy that he used in training leaders for the United States military. One of the key principles found in Sun Tzu's *Art of War* is the development and competence of leaders. Franklin's text was useful to me in this area and as a general study because he draws upon *Art of War* in the formation of the principles he used in the present day for leadership development. It is striking how many similarities there are between military command and church leadership, and this text is one the student would consider to be a bridge that helps to link the ancient and modern as well as the military with the church.

Good to Great, Jim Collins³² - *Good to Great* has long been a classic for business schools and forward thinking companies around the world. Collins begins with a study of various companies seeking to find a universal characteristic that causes some to be successful, and that when missing, causes others to fail. Over the course of this study the author comes to the conclusion that the willingness of particular companies to make hard decisions is crucial to their success. Specifically, making said decisions to eliminate business practices and programs that are seeing limited success, or that they are not able to accomplish to excellence. In an era of the church that is plagued by mediocrity, there has perhaps never been a time with the application of Collins principles to the ministry of the gospel are more needed. While he never directly quotes

³¹ Franklin, Joseph P. *Building Leaders the West Point Way: Then Principles for the Nation's Most Powerful Leadership Lab*. (Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson, 2007).

³² Collins, Jim. *Good to Great*. (New York, New York: Harper Business, 2001).

Sun Tzu or *Art of War*, Sun Tzu and Collins would be in grading agreement about the use of resources, and the importance of leadership. This book has influenced this project by providing a secular application, and therefore an example, of the application framework of the principles of *Art of War* to present organizational structure.

Lee, John Perry³³ - This text about Robert E Lee, written from a Christian perspective, and focuses on his character traits. Because of this reading I had to rethink several points of application is a sought, in this project, to bridge between military strategy and church strategy. This book brings out a similar bridge that Lee generally sought to make for himself, between being an effective military commander, and being an effective man of God. It is my contention that Robert E Lee was able to do both, he was one of the select few who was successful in this endeavor. For Lee, serving as a general in command of soldiers, reading his Bible, and seeking to apply its principles to warfare, are almost a mirror image of the local church pastor reading Sun Tzu, and seeking to apply its principles to the transitions taking place in the ministry that he serves.

Biblical Texts

John 13:13–16 states: “You call me teacher and Lord, and rightly so for that is what I am. Now that I, your Lord and teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another’s feet. I have sent you an example that you should do as I have done for you. I tell you the truth, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one sent him.”

The Bible serves as the foundation of every tactical principle examined in this project. It is the student’s belief that leadership is the foundation of the church; that is to say, that Christ, as the leader of the church, serves as its foundation. Sun Tzu establishes the final importance of

³³ Perry, John. *Lee: A Life of Virtue*. (Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson, 2007).

leadership early on in his foundational text and this passage of Scripture serves as one of the foundational biblical texts dealing with the subject of leadership. This text helps to clarify that there is a supreme leader and that the subordinate leadership, while never measuring up to the primary leader, has the responsibility to follow his example. In the story of the concubines Sun Tzu makes clear the tragic result that occurs when subordinate leaders fail to follow the example of their general. In the same way when church leaders failed to follow the example of Christ they must be prepared for a similar result.

John 15: 1-16 represents Jesus' command to bear fruit and offers the view of Himself as the Vine. For the reader, this passage is a dramatic example of the interaction between the individual Christian and the Savior, as well as the interaction between the individual church and its founder. The church must desire to bear fruit, and the best way for it to succeed in accomplishing this desire is to be part of the truth. The vine directs the actions of the church, and in the same way is responsible for the production of fruit. Since the church is then sent to reproduce it stands to reason that the church should seek to reproduce as effectively and as bountifully as possible. Not only do these verses contain the mandate for effectiveness, but they also provide a foundation for how to accomplish effective fruit bearing.

Psalm 133:1 states, "How good and pleasant it is when brothers live together in unity." Few things are more disruptive and detrimental to an organization than internal fighting. This verse in Psalms is not only that principle but also serves as a transition in the chapter dealing with information and communication. As the author's premise, as well as that of Sun Tzu that unity in the ranks of an army is necessary for victory to be achieved; and without this unity it is impossible for victory to be obtained.

I Corinthians 1:10 states, "I appeal to you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another so that there may be no divisions among the and that you may be perfectly united in mind and thought." In one of many discussions with the Pharisees, Jesus explains to them that Satan cannot cast out Satan because a house divided against itself cannot stand. This passage in the book of First Corinthians expands on that concept of the absolute, the Cecily for unity within an organization if it is to be successful in achieving its mission. Unity is essential for a military unit just as it is for local church, and since, as Sun Tzu would say, war is finally important, the author would submit that the great commission is even more important. This passage will be present not only in guiding discussions on leadership, but also in issues of moral strength and stability.

Revelation 19: 11-16 states, "I saw heaven standing open and there before me was a white horse, whose rider is called faithful and true. With justice he judges and makes war. His eyes are like blazing fire, and on his head are many crowns. He has a name written on him that no one knows but he himself. He is dressed in a robe dipped in blood, and his name is the word of God. The armies of heaven were following him, riding on white horses and dressed in fine linen, white and clean. Out of his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations. He will rule them with an iron scepter. He treads the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God Almighty. On his robe and on his thigh he has this name written: King of kings and Lord of lords." As the issues of both church ministry and historical combat are explored in this project the author could not find a better example of the two being married together in the person of the greatest general in all of past and future history; the Lord Jesus Christ. This passage in Revelation provides readers with a vivid picture of Christ not only as commander of the heavenly armies, but also of his behavior in combat. As Christians we recognize that we are at

war with Satan and the powers of darkness and look to our great commander who is the King of kings and the Lord of lords.

II Corinthians 6: 3-10 states, “We put no stumbling block in anyone’s path, so that our ministry will not be discredited. Rather, as servants of God we commend ourselves in every way: in great endurance; in troubles, hardships and distresses; in beatings, imprisonments and riots; and hard work, sleepless nights and hunger; impurity, understanding, patience and kindness; and the Holy Spirit in an sincere love; and truthful speech and in the power of God; with weapons of righteousness in the right hand and in the left; through glory and dishonor, that report and good report, genuine, yet regarded as imposters; known, yet regarded as unknown; dying, and yet we live on; beaten, and yet not killed; sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; poor, yet making many rich; having nothing, and yet possessing everything.” While dealing with issues related to the leader and leadership, this passage is valuable in the discussion of resources. The Christian warrior utilizes different weapons for his spiritual warfare than does the soldier on the temporal battlefield, if the concept remains the same; is to be vigilant prepared and trusting in the wisdom of the one whom he follows.

In Ephesians 6: 10-18 Paul relates the image of putting on the whole armor of God. The passage in Ephesians was at the top of the author’s initial study list for preparation of this project. The obvious reasons for this are that the passage deals with spiritual preparation for spiritual battle and the Christian is treated as a soldier. The apostle Paul makes a direct comparison between the art of war in the art of ministry far earlier than this project will seek to produce. There are numerous elements of the warriors preparation contained in this passage and it is the intention of this project to acquaint each of these preparations, from a spiritual standpoint, with preparations for battle from a secular perspective.

II Samuel 23:13-17 states, “During harvest time, three of the 30 chief men came down to David at the cave of Adullam, while a band of Philistines was encamped in the Valley of Rephaim. At that time David was in the stronghold and the Philistine garrison was at Bethlehem. David long for water and said, oh, that someone would get me a drink of water from the well navigated Bethlehem. So the three mighty men broke through the Philistine lines, drew water from the well navigated Bethlehem and carried it back to David. But he refused to drink it; instead, he poured it out before the Lord. Far be it from me, O Lord, to do this! He said. Is it not the blood of men who went at the risk of their lives? And David would not drink it. Such were the exploits of the three mighty men.” This passage in Second Samuel will appear several times during the course of this project. Here again is a passage of Scripture that demonstrates to the reader the biblical foundation for the project that here being undertaken. Is the author’s belief that the Bible contains a significant quantity of military references and explanations related to warfare for a purpose. Cognitive chosen to use any example to demonstrate how he works in and through the believer to accomplish his purposes. It is then more significant that God should choose to repeatedly use battle conditions to demonstrate his methods of leadership, guidance, discipleship, and mission accomplishment. David’s mighty men are one of history’s original elite military units, and the above passage records one of their first special operations missions. Since this project is dedicated to its biblical foundation it is then essential for examples such as this to be used and analyzed thoroughly.

The tactical and strategic excellence of God is demonstrated in His instructions to Joshua for the Second Battle of Ai contained in the eighth chapter of Joshua. It is Joshua chapter 8 that first suggested the substance of this project to the author. Perhaps more than any other passage recorded in Scripture, this chapter shows God as a military strategist and within the chapter’s

confines exist every principle found in Sun Tzu's warfare text. It would be possible to utilize this passage alone as the scriptural foundation for this project however, as the Bible offers many more examples it seemed prudent to utilize many more than just this one example. The strategy and tactics undertaken by the nation of Israel and Joshua during the campaign against AI is a study in morale, leadership, attacked by stratagem, the art of warfare, and has been studied by both biblical and military historians for millennia. There is strong evidence that Napoleon Bonaparte utilized the tactics of Joshua during this campaign in several of his key battles, and that it was this passage that William the Conqueror utilized at the battle of Hastings in the year 1066 to conquer the nation of England.

II Timothy 2:3–4 states, "Endure hardship with us like a good soldier of Christ Jesus. No one serving as a soldier gets involved in civilian affairs, he wants to please his commanding officer." This passage is useful in both chapters that comprise the main body of this project. Again the apostle Paul uses the state of warfare in the life of the common soldier to help the Christian disciple understand how to live for Christ. Transitions are always difficult and often become wars as the church seeks to be the best to word of the vision Christ has called her to. There are those who undertake vocational Christian ministry thinking that there will be little burden and much ease, only to find themselves mistaken. The wise general prepares his soldiers for the heat of combat so that when they find themselves under fire they will conduct themselves with the esprit de corps expected of a faithful warrior.

Isaiah 41:10 states, "Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, because I am your God; I will strengthen you, yes I will help you, yes, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand. A great number of the errors that are made by leadership find a solution within the confines of this passage. This verse will be foundational in the section dealing with avoidance of

errors in leadership, specifically in regard to the errors that come from cowardice, anger, and over serious attitude. In addition, the author intends to reference this passage in the section dealing with overall terrain. The interaction between God and those whom he appoints to leadership positions, is absolutely essential in the process of any ministry endeavor. There are few passages that so directly and personally bear out God's work in ministry in the life of the believer.

CHAPTER 2

HUMAN FACTORS

Leadership Overview

Leadership begins with God's command. John 15:1–16 NIV is essential to recognizing and reacting to God's command as seen in the following section of the passage, "...If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have obeyed my father's commands and remain in his love. I have told you this so that my joy may be and that your joy may be made complete. My command is this: love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this; that he lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends if you do it I command. I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my father I have made known to you. You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last. Then the father will give you whatever you ask in my name." Further, in regard to leadership to an organization, Maxwell states, "Everything rises and falls on leadership," however, its commonality must not serve to detract from its truth or significance.¹ Many translations of *Art of War* begin with the story of the concubines (previously described) in order to lay the foundation that Sun Tzu is advocating leadership as the primary key to victory. Sun Tzu states that the highest achievement of a general is to avoid war and that if the situation descends into armed conflict that there has been a breakdown in leadership.² Historically, this is a unique perspective when he is considered next to other masters of war and leadership such as Niccolo Machiavelli

³ Maxwell, John C. *Winning With People*. (Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson, 2004) 4.

² Tzu, *The Art of War*, 1998, 17f.

and Carl von Clausewitz who see war as a natural course of human endeavor.³ It is precisely for this reason Sun Tzu is most applicable to an ecclesiastical application since he sees leadership as the bringer⁴, or at least, the restorer of peace. In this we see God having created a perfect world where lions laid with lambs and there was peaceful communion between God and man. Sin destroys this peace as a result of mans' leadership failure to serve his Creator. Once peace has been compromised it is then modeled by God through the Person of Christ to pursue spiritual battle for the sake of restoration. His work on the cross is a prime example of this action. Peace was compromised by Lucifer and his followers in the fall and by man when sin entered the world through Adam. The direct result of Adam's fall is the shedding of innocent blood to cover man's fallenness. Therefore, as the church does her work for God she must understand that she is involved in a great war where God—centered leadership is essential for victory.⁵ The missional church must have leaders who understand the mission and have the capacity, through spiritual giftedness, to accomplish the commands of their Sovereign.⁶

Know Your Craft

Having spent the past twelve years in seminary pursuing one graduate degree after another the student took for granted that all vocational ministers pursued knowledge of the scriptures and excellence in their role with similar zeal. This illusion came crashing down in a staff meeting when discussion turned to continuing education for pastors and the newest and believed to be brightest staff member stated that any education past a Master of Arts was a waste and that the pastors of the largest and fastest growing churches predominately had stopped with

³ Clausewitz, 1997, 4f.

⁴ Tzu, 1998, 140.

⁵ Falwell, Jonathan, ed. *Innovate Church*. Nashville, Tennessee: Broadman & Holman, 2008) 202f.

⁶ Ibid. 240.

this degree. The student has been unable to substantiate this claim but the nature of this revelation and its implication was staggering to consider the possibility of future church leaders ignoring the value of training. What if the clergy leading thousands of people had ceased learning after a three semester graduate degree? How can a pastor train a leadership team if they are untrained and/or underequipped themselves? Certainly, a graduate degree is not a mark of ability or even, in some cases, knowledge; surely there are self-educated leaders that outpace the most seasoned person with a terminal degree, but to denounce training and education in a matter of eternity is unthinkable. Knowledge of craft allows the young leader who has trained for ministry to stand before a congregation with confidence refusing to allow their youth to be despised as Paul cautions Timothy. It allows them to see missional opportunities first and to look ahead to their ministry potential by opening insights that would not have been recognizable without training. This foresight enables the leader to focus a ministry with diffused resources into an effective and efficient organism for life change.⁷

Sun Tzu has sought to sharpen his personal skills and directs all leaders to do the same due to the importance of warfare to the state. He had seen the result of untrained leadership on the battlefield. It would be interesting to hear his comment on the outlook for a church where the deacon leadership is not participating in regular training. The NAMB recently concluded a study that identified 71 percent of over 500 identified barriers to missional ministry related to “head and heart” issues among leadership.⁸ In speaking with many pastors, few of them have training requirements for prospective church leaders and even fewer have a leadership education program for current leaders. McDonald’s (the restaurant) has required training both prior to, and during

⁷ Wegner, pp. 137–143.

⁸ Stetzer, E. (2006). *Breaking the Missional Code*, (Nashville, Tennessee: Broadman & Holman), 73f.

the course of employment so that every Big Mac will meet their standard. It is a wonder that so many church leaders lament the state of their church and yet ignore leadership training.

This lack of craft knowledge focuses on senior leadership and is made clear through numerous examples in the American Civil War. For example, Ulysses S. Grant viewed in history as the victorious general of the war. He is the “common” general who rises from obscurity to command of the Union Army of the Potomac, and ultimately meets Robert E. Lee at Appomattox, VA to secure the surrender of the Southern army. History is witness to the two men seated together in the McLane home to discuss surrender; Lee in his finest uniform, and Grant in the muddy coat of an army private. Their differences were not limited to appearance but are most notable in their knowledge of the soldier’s craft. Lee, the consummate student of history and former Commandant of West Point who graduated second in his class and led the overhaul of curriculum during his tenure. Lee had preserved his army and won victory after victory in the face of a superior enemy (both numerically and technologically) and now lacking the resources to continue the struggle. Grant, undistinguished in his life as a student at West Point, resigned from his career as a soldier to fail as a businessman only to reenlist and win ultimate victory simply by continuing to advance regardless of the cost in lives.

Lee’s knowledge of craft allowed him to preserve the lives of those under his leadership, while Grant’s lack of knowledge (ex. Cold Harbor) and frequent reliance upon headlong frontal assaults left him with graveyards full of men who did not survive to see the victory.⁹ For church leaders the priority must be to value life (John 10:10) and one of the best ways to care for the lives God has entrusted to them is to know their craft of ministry and continue seeking to know it better.

⁹ Axelrod, A. (2011). *Generals South, Generals North*, (Guilford, Connecticut: Lyons Press), 202.

Beware of “High-Level Dumb”

The warning against serving in the company of fools made by Jesus in Matthew chapter 7 seems to be a direct reflection of the warning by Sun Tzu regarding allowing fools into leadership positions.¹⁰ Often in ministry situations a church’s constitution will have detailed provisions for the call, duties, tenure, and even the dismissal of high-level leadership. Unfortunately, it is all too infrequent to have a list of spiritual qualifications that must be met and maintained by those assuming the leadership role. In addition, the author has yet to find a church Constitution that has as one of its requirements for leadership to be training of any kind either during the term of service or prior to assuming the leadership role. This seems contrary to the methodology seen in Scripture as it relates to how Jesus trained his disciples prior to sending them out.¹¹

One of the objections that can be offered for allowing leaders to assume roles for which they had not been prepared, is the excuse that due to the size of the ministry there were no other options to fill the stated role. The author has had this objection raised a number of times when presenting this concept to groups of pastors and the response is always the same; “better to eliminate the leadership role in question then call someone who is neither spiritually qualified nor practically prepared.” Typically, the individual in question could be prepared given their willingness to become so, and in combination with the leaders’ willingness to invest in the individual’s life. The fear can be that an individual seeking a leadership role who is unqualified may become upset at being told they are not ready for such a position and why. It is important in

¹⁰ Tzu, 1998, 26.

¹¹ Blanchard, K. *Lead Like Jesus*, (Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson, 2005) 43f.

these cases to recall how frequently the Scripture records Jesus offering to invest in individuals who exhibited that sense of entitlement, only to have the man turn away. Until pastors, elders, deacons, congregations, or whatever senior leadership is referred to in a particular church, are willing to invest in training and intentionally eliminating the plague of “high-level dumb”¹² they should not be surprised when their house falls in the storm.

Sun Tzu addresses this issue by stating, “Now, the general is the bulwark of the state: if the bulwark is complete at all points, the state will surely be strong. If the bulwark is defective, the state will certainly be weak. Now, there are three ways in which a sovereign can bring misfortune upon his army: By ordering an advance while ignorant of the fact that the Army cannot go forward, or by ordering a retreat while ignorant of the fact that the Army cannot fall back. This is described as ‘hobbling the Army. By interfering with the Army’s administration without knowledge of the internal affairs of the Army. This causes officers and soldiers to be perplexed. By interfering with direction of fighting, while ignorant of the military principle of adaptation to circumstances. This sows doubts and misgivings in the minds of his officers and soldiers. If the Army is confused and suspicious, neighboring rulers will take advantage of this and cause trouble. This is simply bringing anarchy into the Army and flinging victory away.”¹³ From a further historical perspective the result of allowing people into senior leadership that exhibit “high-level dumb” can be seen in the Union armies relationship with General Ambrose Burnside during the American Civil War. By all accounts Burnside was one of the most pleasant and least complaining commanders of the war and on two occasions turned down command of the Union Army of Virginia. Burnside explained to Abraham Lincoln that he was not qualified

¹² Michaelson G. A., 2001, 26f.

¹³ Michaelson, 2001. p. 28.

for that level of command and asked Lincoln to reconsider his position on removing General George McClellan.¹⁴ Burnside had been a graduate of West Point though his time in the Army was brief, resigning just prior to being confirmed in the rank of first Lieutenant. Then after working for McClellan as a railroad treasurer he was called upon to raise a brigade of volunteers from Rhode Island and appointed as a brigadier general over them. Burnside had been successful in leading his brigade at the first battle of Manassas and he was promoted to major general in the regular Army and commanding the IX Corp in the Army of the Potomac.¹⁵

By most accounts his service at these levels were more than adequate, though he was criticized for not being more aggressive leading his corps at the battle of Antietam. When Lincoln insisted Burnside assume command of the entire Army of the Potomac and invade Virginia he accepted, but publicly stated he was not prepared for such a command.¹⁶ The result was the Battle of Fredericksburg and one of the worst defeats by an American army in history. Burnside ordered 14 charges unexposed sloping ground seeking to dislodge the Confederates under Robert E Lee entrenched on Mayes's Heights. The resulting slaughter left his army in piles of dead and Burnside, believing there was enough light for one more try, exclaiming that he would lead the next charge personally and being restrained by his staff. After the battle, Burnside drafted an apology to Lincoln, as well as all the casualties and their families, but also asking Lincoln to let him try again further upriver.¹⁷ Such begs the question, which is the better example of high-level dumb; the general who knew he was not up to the task but tried anyway, or the President with no significant command experience prevailing on an unprepared commander to

¹⁴ Axelrod, Alan. *Generals South, Generals North*. (Guilford, Connecticut: Lyons Press, 2011) 170.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 172.

¹⁶ *Ibid.* 172f.

¹⁷ Axelrod, 2009, 174.

lead his army.¹⁸ Whatever the answer the result was a disastrous and it is the author's belief that such disasters in God's church should be avoided rather than allowed.

The church leadership must work together as a cohesive unit sharing not only a common mission, but also a common means (tactics) of accomplishing that mission (strategy). The missional church depends on the shift from single leaders to a plurality of leadership sharing the mission together.¹⁹ This type of leadership transition occurred in the Prussian armies of the late 1800s by differentiation between orders and instructions. Michaelson notes that, "*instructions* were an expression of the commander's wishes, not to be carried out unless manifestly practicable, and *orders* were to be obey instantly to the letter."²⁰ While churches of the past have relied on the orders of an autocrat, the missional church must transition to a leadership team equipped to effectively follow the instructions of the Bible.

Obey Fundamental Principles

In John 13:13–16, Jesus, the supreme commander of the local church, states, "You call me teacher and Lord, and rightly so for that is what I am. Now that I, your Lord and teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. I have sent you an example that you should do as I have done for you. I tell you the truth, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one sent him," hereby empowering his servants for leadership (as noted in the above passage). There is a unique dichotomy that exists in this passage as Jesus clarifies that being an effective leader requires the individual to first be a faithful servant. Jesus is issuing a statement on the primary trait for the Christian to exhibit if they are to be victorious as

¹⁸ Ibid, 174f.

¹⁹ Stetzer, 2010, 85.

²⁰ G. A. Michaelson, 2001, 27.

his servant. Following this passage are the five fundamental laws or principles that Sun Tzu believed were necessary for victory in war. Taken in comparison the two are much more complementary than they are divergent. The summary offered by Sun Tzu emphasizes the importance of the leader or organization being self-aware. There are few times when individuals are more self-aware than when they are placed in a position of humble servitude.²¹ Is it possible that Jesus is not only teaching his disciples a lesson in serving others for the sake of Christian testimony, but also for the purpose of teaching them to be self-aware by practicing humble servant hood?

The five principles stated by Sun Tzu have been at the core of numerous books that relate the art of warfare to other fields of endeavor including, but not limited to, business management, executive leadership, investment strategies, spiritual warfare, and even dating. Sun Tzu states them as, “Thus, there are five points in which victory may be predicted, He who knows when to fight and when not to fight will win. He who understands how to handle both superior and inferior forces will win. He whose ranks are united in purpose will win. He who is well prepared and lies in wait for an enemy who is not well prepared will win. He whose generals are able and not interfered with by the sovereign will win. It is in these five points that the way to victory is known. Therefore, I say: no the enemy and know yourself, and you can fight 100 battles with no danger of defeat. When you are ignorant of the enemy but know yourself, your chances of winning and losing are equal. If ignorant both of your enemy and of yourself, you are sure to be defeated in every battle.”²² Certainly, there could be an application made of each of these principles to the mission of the local church, as well as to churches of other styles transitioning to a missional model. The issue of timing dealt with in the first point is crucial, especially when a

²¹ Blanchard, 2005, 47f.

²² Tzu, 1998, 46f.

time of transition is occurring in the life of an organization. Most importantly, when considering this fundamental rule Sun Tzu's own reminder to his readers that the goal should be to avoid war and win without fighting. It is truly a tragedy that warfare does occur within the local church and showing God's direction on whether or not to fight is crucial.

The second direction regarding the understanding of superior and inferior forces should be taken by the church as a reminder that churches of all sizes can and should be effective in the ministry of the gospel. Whatever size an individual church happens to be the leadership should be devoted to utilizing their resources at the highest level of stewardship rather than envying the resources of other ministries.²³ Third, and of vital importance to every ministry, is the issue of unity. Unfortunately, many churches understand unity to be achieving a unanimous vote on particular issues that are unrelated to their ultimate mission as a ministry. The unity that Sun Tzu is speaking of is a unity of purpose and a general tactical philosophy shared by the leadership that creates high morale and enthusiasm among the Army.²⁴ For the missional church this equates to senior-level and supporting leadership agreeing in unity to actively pursue the great commission by means of personal engagement of the congregation as a whole.²⁵

The fourth principle sounds like something from a Boy Scout manual urging the reader to be prepared. This echoes the scriptural mandate of Second Timothy 2:15, where the Christian is commanded to, "Work hard so you can present yourself to God and receive his approval. Be a good worker, one who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly explains the word of truth."²⁶ Fifth, understanding that from a Christian context the "sovereign" represents the senior

²³ Stetzer, *Comeback Churches*, 2007, 206f.

²⁴ Tzu, 1998, 74f.

²⁵ Wegner, 2012, 49f.

²⁶ Holy Bible, NLT.

human leadership of the church, it is vital to allow equipped and called leaders to accomplish the work of the ministry God has called them to without interference or micromanaging as these practices can severely impair effectiveness.

In both church situations studied by the student he implemented a leadership training program targeted to current key leaders as well as emerging leaders. Consisting of quarterly eight hour Saturday training events lead by the pastoral staff, in each case attendance for the events grew. One particularly unique observation was that in each case participants who attended a single session but no further either left their leadership role prior to the next annual cycle or remained and became a dissenting voice opposing all church leadership decisions. Those leaders who had completed at least two of the sessions all demonstrated an increased ability to articulate the church's vision and expressed passion by increased participation and support. Training created a divide in the leadership culture that in the case of Southport, when the vision was harassed into ineffectiveness by those who chose ignorance, the trained leaders left and dramatically grew three other area churches through their ministry service. Southport, on the other hand, declined drastically, losing all of their ministry staff within a year and selling one of their buildings as a result.

Focus Energy

One of the greatest misconceptions in the local church is the concept that to fulfill the great commission they must fulfill every part of that commission.²⁷ Nehemiah 4: 14-23 deals with this issue admirably from a scriptural perspective. Could it be that the church that does not understand the value of focus is a church that has a new missions offering every month, more committee positions than people attending worship, and possesses a mission statement that

²⁷ Rainer, 2011, 57f.

nobody in the church knows and the people are terrified of changing because of the two-year long debate over adopting the last statement? If Nehemiah had functioned the way that most local church leadership teams choose to function Jerusalem would still be laying in ashes. Instead of allowing failure he strategized, organized, and adapted his tactics. What elevated Nehemiah and led him to accomplish his mission was his ability to bring people together for the purpose of focusing their energy on the mission they had been assigned.

In the book *Good to Great*, Jim Collins advocates for the concept that nobody can do everything, much less do everything well.²⁸ He suggests that organizations would be best served by limiting some of the good activities that they are undertaking and focusing their resources and energy on only a handful of things they can do to excellence. In making this determination he introduces what he refers to as the hedgehog concept, and utilizes this process to determine what an organization can do best, rather than just simply participating together.²⁹

It is not the author's intention to suggest that the only way to have an effective ministry is to feature a focused ministry, to suggest that the effectiveness of Nehemiah is attainable by the church of the present since both follow the same God. Further, it would seem wise for a church desiring to follow a missional model, which necessitates empowering people for individual and group mission engagement, to have a direction of focus for that engagement.³⁰ To lack focus in the area of missionality would be something akin to ordering soldiers into combat without providing them an objective. It stands to reason that the greater amount and quality of resources that can be assigned to a particular objective will result in a greater opportunity for success.

²⁸ Collins, J. (2001). *Good to Great*, (New York, New York: Harper Business), 2f.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 118–123.

³⁰ Rainer, 2011.

Therefore, when Sun Tzu is telling his generals to focus their energy the message the church should hear is to follow the example of Nehemiah so that the objective God has set before them may be accomplished for his glory.

Raise Up Leaders

It is an interesting point that Sun Tzu is making when he points to the similarity between a large force and only a few men by stating, “Generally, management of a large force is the same in principle as the management of a few men: it is a matter of organization. And to direct a large army to fight is the same as to direct a small one: it is a matter of command signs and signals.”³¹ In the context of the church, he would be saying that there are not many real differences between the organization of a large church and that of a small church. The leadership of either one requires that there be an existing focus that the ministry pursues, as well as a system of tactics whereby they act to accomplish their ministry focus. On many occasions those in small ministries look to those with greater resources and speculate regarding what could be accomplished if they were given the same opportunities. This manner of thinking, while common, is not in keeping with the philosophy of ministry offered in the example of Jesus. Jesus gave to each servant according to his abilities and summarily judged their level of stewardship based on how they utilized their abilities in his service.³² It is the responsibility of every leader to seek out and develop other leaders around them so that organizational effectiveness may be maintained, and ideally, increased.

³¹ G. A. Michaelson, 2001, 40.

³² Blanchard, 2005, 49f.

Unfortunately, many ministries today are led by people who are consumed with issues of fear and pride.³³ Scripture deals with this concept in I Timothy 2: 1-4 as Paul challenges Timothy to regard himself as a soldier when facing the challenges of ministry. Ken Blanchard in his book *Lead like Jesus*, refers to the situation as EGO, or edging God out, being the result of this combination of sin and pride in ministry. Often leaders have worked hard and sacrificed much in order to obtain and maintain their position. It is understandable that leaders may experience fear that someone else will replace them and they will lose the position they have sacrificed to obtain.³⁴ This loss may entail a diminishing sense of self-worth (an injury to pride), as well as a loss of financial provision that can create further hardships. The obstacle of fear and pride must be overcome by faith in God's provision and a commitment to Kingdom growth that exceeds personal security and prestige. Raising up leaders is easier to accomplish as a process of development, than it is to convince established leaders to engage in the process. The purpose of reviewing this missional factor is not to offer a step-by-step process for leadership recruitment and development, but to emphasize the necessity of incorporating leadership reproduction into the DNA of a missional ministries strategy and practice.

At both ministries pastored by the student an individual leadership mentoring program was set in place to raise up leaders on a perpetual and multiplying basis. The process began with approaching individual leaders and potential leaders (3 maximum) to make a year-long commitment to ministry mentoring with the student on a regular basis. Only once did all three complete the year, but at the completion of the action oriented, internship styled program each leader was challenged to take two others to mentor in the same way. This process was largely

³³ Ibid. 49–60.

³⁴ Blanchard, 2005, 57–60.

successful and lead to the direct mentoring of 9 reproducing leaders that have each produced at least one additional reproducing leader. Five of the nine are now in full time ministry and all are serving in significant leadership roles.

Practice Self-Care

Throughout history there are examples of great leaders who finished in failure because they had neglected to practice self-care. Lightheartedly yet with gravity one can consider: “We have met the enemy and he is us” states Pogo the cartoon possum³⁵ Whether it is Napoleon at Waterloo whose illness prevented him from recognizing battlefield developments at the speed needed to seize victory³⁶, or the deacon who is expending so much energy caring for his family and work responsibilities that he neglects the needs of individuals in his care, the effect of self-neglect is devastating. In Scripture Jesus refuses to allow the press of the crowd to keep him from pursuing his father’s business with his fullest effort. He was never afraid to step aboard a boat and sail to the other side of the lake, grabbing a nap along the way, or walking alone into the wilderness for communion with God and angelic refreshment.

Ed Stetzer in his book *Transformational Church*, notes that one of the key factors in church transformation is the need for vibrant leadership. It is not possible for leaders to be vibrant when they are exhausted, burned out, physically ill, or even mentally ill.ⁱ³⁷ The effects of post-traumatic stress disorder are becoming known to the military, but the effects of prolonged and significant event stress continue to be ignored in the private sector. Indeed, while the author was able to find numerous pastors who express ministry related trauma, he could not find a

³⁵ G. Michaelson, 2003, 50.

³⁶ Alexandar, 1993, 121f.

⁷⁹ Stetzer, Ed, *Transformational Church*. (Nashville, Tennessee: Broadman & Holman, 2010) 75f.

single psychological study relating to ministry stress and its long-term effects. It is difficult to find literature related to evangelical theology in the area of Christian work and leisure. One of the few works available, written by Leland Ryken, demonstrates that even the Puritans took time for leisure and were adamant regarding observance of the Sabbath rest. It further develops the concept that just as God created man and gave him work, God also created for him the activities of rest and leisure.

Historians have marveled that the greatest of American general, Robert E Lee, who though committed to exercising defensive battle tactics chose to commit his forces to a direct assault of the center of the union lines on the third day of the battle of Gettysburg.³⁸ Not only historians, but even his own subordinate commanders marveled at the force of his decision to proceed with the attack and James Longstreet went so far as to remind Lee that this order was contrary to his stated tactical objectives.³⁹ Perhaps much of the marble can be removed from the situation when it is noted that Lee had little or no sleep for the previous two days and had worked late into both evenings in preparing for the following days action. It has been further suggested that Lee was suffering from the possible effects of a significant physical malady suffered shortly after the battle of Chancellorsville; it has even been suggested that this may have been a series of mild strokes.⁴⁰ Historians now wonder if a healthy Lee would have made the same decisions at Gettysburg, and if his poor health resulted in the ultimate loss of the Civil War for the Confederacy. Even more tragic would be for a community to wonder what impact a church might have had if only their leadership and practiced self-care.

80 Axelrod, Alan. *Generals South, Generals North*. (Guilford, Connecticut: Lyons Press, 2011) 44.

³⁹ McWhiney, 1882, 122f.

⁴⁰ Freeman, 1991, 455f.

Be Flexible

There are few pastors and leadership teams that exhibit themselves to be more adept in the art of flexibility than Rick Warren and his team at Saddleback Church. This statement may be considered controversial, or even volatile, depending on the readers' prior interaction with Warren's ministry. Many churches in the past two decades have sought to transition from a traditional Sunday school structure to small group ministry based on the model offered at Saddleback Church. While there have been some noted successes, many attempts at transition have ended in abject failure leaving the church in a state of crisis and often looking for new leadership. The result is not indicative of a flaw in the concept of small group discipleship, nor is it an error made by Warren in describing the tactics used by his church, but the fault lies in the transitional churches decision to copy the tactics used by Saddleback rather than heed Warren's counsel and utilize the principles he presents (strategy), but adopt individual tactics for implementation.⁴¹

In *The Purpose Driven Church*, Warren offers a detailed account of the founding and early growth of Saddleback Church. He lists and explains not only the strategy of how he and his early leadership team sought to reach the "Saddleback Sam's" of their community but also the tactical means they would utilize (small groups, flexible meeting spaces, community surveys, contemporary worship, etc...) in achieving their goals.⁴² In a similar way, Jesus, as recorded in the book of Mark, indicates that there will be different results when the gospel message is shared with different people in different locations. Unfortunately, many church leaders ignore this key teaching of Christ and seek the easy road of copying what a person has done to achieve a

⁴¹ Warren, 1995, 164f.

⁴² Ibid., 170f.

modicum of success.⁴³ This kind of laziness or higher-level dumb in church leadership leads to a lack of success in spite of what may be a rather detailed copy of the original.

In the missional church, leadership must understand that the community God has assigned their ministry to reach will be different than every other community God has called others to reach.⁴⁴ Churches that desire to be effective in their evangelistic ministries must analyze those who they are seeking to reach and adopt an attitude of flexibility in their ministry structure.⁴⁵ This flexibility allows the church to experiment with various ministry tactics resulting in a culture that is not only relational, but also adaptable to the changing community demographics.

Historically, Americans have been benefited by the results of maintaining a central organizational objective while allowing a high level of flexibility in tactical application. The American Revolutionary war is an excellent example of the result when two combatants square off, one with rigidly fixed tactics and the other with a willingness to adapt to the present environment. The American Army was in every way (training, experience, equipment, naval support, etc...) inferior to the British Army yet it was the Americans who achieved ultimate victory.⁴⁶ The British refused to accept a strategy of naval blockade and chose to engage Washington and his generals utilizing European military tactics. They complained and cast aspersions on the Americans who used their long-range firearms and camouflage uniforms to snipe at the British from behind trees and rocks. Complain as they would the result was an American victory, due to their decision to maintain tactical flexibility. Washington, who rarely

⁴³ Ibid., 27.

⁴⁴ A. J. Roxburgh, 2009, 68f.

⁴⁵ T. Rainer, 1996, 137f.

⁴⁶ Alexander 2011, 224f.

won a pitched battle achieved as Sun Tzu stated above, a divine reputation for his leadership in the war. The church must understand that it too is at war. It fights against a demonic army who seeks the destruction of every man, woman, and child in the world today. As society continues to change at an ever quickening pace is vital for the church, while maintaining its theological foundation, to exercise methodological flexibility while empowering and supporting flexible leadership.

Avoid Errors

In his book, *The Art of War for Managers*, Gerald Michaelson relates a conversation between Jim McCann (then president of 1-800 flowers) and General Electric CEO Jack Welch in which McCann was asking Welch's advice on firing a senior executive. Welch responded by asking him when the last time he wished he had waited six months to fire someone. Michaelson then states, "Peers and subordinates will discover the ineffective manager long before his or her seniors do. The dysfunctional interactions resulting from the discovery will reduce this person's effectiveness-and the effectiveness of the organization."⁴⁷ Sun Tzu summarizes the issue in five mandates that describe his theory. He states, "There are five qualities that are fatal in the character of a general. First, if reckless, he can be killed. Second, if cowardly, captured. Third, if quick-tempered, he can be provoked to rage and make a fool of himself. Fourth, if he has too delicate a sense of honor, he can be easily insulted. Finally, if he is of a compassionate nature, you can harass him. Now these five traits of character are serious faults in a general and in military operations are calamitous. The ruin of the Army and the death of the general are inevitable results of the shortcomings. They must be deeply pondered."⁴⁸

⁴⁷ G. A. Michaelson, 2001, 78.

⁴⁸ Tzu 1998, 38.

For the church this story should serve as a reminder that leaders are stewards of God's resources. I Corinthians 6:3-10 is an excellent example of scripture dealing with this very issue. As such it is incumbent upon them to not only be good stewards through their individual service, but as leaders to ensure effectiveness in the ministry they are called to serve.

It is impossible to be a good steward of a ministry and allow people in unrepentant open sin to continue to serve in church leadership. In Paul's second letter to the church at Corinth he is addressing his practice of ministry stewardship and making it clear that he has made a high priority of being a good steward and not a stumbling block. It is not sufficient for senior leaders in Christ's church to do their job well; they must be engaged in ensuring that those whom they have been given charge over are practicing stewardship principles and not becoming stumbling blocks. Furthermore, each church as a whole must ensure that their organizational structure is conducive to biblical church discipline that can be accomplished with swiftness and compassion to minimize harm to both the offending party and the church as a whole.

Recklessness

Reckless behavior should neither be accepted nor tolerated in any organization, especially the local church. By reckless the author understands this to be the trait of acting in a careless manner that exhibits a lack of prior consideration for the outcome. Reckless leaders are too great an expense for any ministry to risk. It is not uncommon that leaders with this failing have had prior successes in their ministry and exhibit a high level of confidence that these successes can be repeated. Therefore, it is wise to question the potential leader as to their practices of preparation for the execution of their ministry, as well as what factors were considered prior to moving forward with other ministry endeavors. A reckless leader will demonstrate a lack of

understanding for process and potential consequences as well as an ignorance of human factors and feelings.⁴⁹

From a military perspective recklessness is a terrifying characteristic. One of the most reckless commanders in American history is George Armstrong Custer.⁵⁰ During the American Civil War Custer built a reputation for both daring and recklessness as a commander of the Calvary in the Union Army. So much so that by the close of the war Custer had become the youngest major general in the history of the American army and had several notable victories including success against the Confederacy's great Cavalier JEB Stuart.⁵¹ However, more famous than Custer's success through headlong charges during the Civil War was his final defeat by the Sioux and Cheyenne warriors on the Little Big Horn River.⁵²

Custer's refusal to follow orders and coordinate his Calvary with the two infantry forces on his flanks, as well as his arrogant refusal to include Gatling guns in his column served as the beginning of his final failure. It was, though, his decision to ignore his Indian Scouts warnings, divide his forces into three columns, and then charge headlong into the middle of a massive Indian encampment that led to the massacre of his entire column and his own death.⁵³ While he had a string of successes prior to that day in 1876, they were all wiped aside by the final exposure of his recklessness. It must not be taken for granted that success in one mission will result in success in every ministry endeavor. One of the most dangerous and foolish decisions a

⁴⁹ S. W. Michaelson 2001, 81f.

⁵⁰ Smith, Gene. *Mounted Warriors: From Alexander the Great and Cromwell to Stuart, Sheridan and Custer*, (Hobokan, New Jersey: John Wiley and Sons, 2009), 211f.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 157.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 212.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 212f.

church can make is to call staff based on the information contained on their resume; remember the 7th Calvary was glad to have Custer in command based on his resume.

Cowardice

The trait of cowardice carries with it perhaps the most unpalatable connotation of this group of flaws as it would seem to affect the perception of the individual. There is no single area of endeavor where cowardice would be seen as acceptable or even allowable in the smallest way yet it is running rampant in the church. Scripture states that, “for him that knows to do right and doesn’t do it, to him it is sin.”⁵⁴ And further, Nehemiah 6: 11-13 states, “Later I went to visit Shemiah son of Delaiah and grandson of Mehetabel, who was confined to his home. He said, “Let us meet together inside the temple of God and bolt the doors shut. Your enemies are coming to kill you tonight. But I replied, “Should someone in my position run from danger? Should someone in my position enter the Temple to save his life? No, I won’t do it!” I realized that God had not spoken to him, but that she had uttered this prophecy against me because Tobiah and Sanbalat at hired him. They were hoping to intimidate me and make me send. Then they would be able to accuse and discredit me.”⁵⁵ When a pastor chooses not to preach the entirety of the Bible for fear of the congregation, or a particular groups’ reaction, this can be cowardice. When a body of deacons is confronted with an individual causing dissention in the church and do not act to correct the errant individual because they are afraid of the repercussions, this is cowardice. And when a church will not examine their ministry in the clear light of Scripture and make necessary modifications to be in line with Gods’ direction, this is cowardice.

⁵⁴ Holy Bible NIV.

⁵⁵ Holy Bible, NLT.

Cowardice is killing the American church and the result is seen in the sociological shift away from a Christian society. Nehemiah is a study in courage. He is a great example of the concept that taking risks at Gods' direction is the safest decision a leader can make.⁵⁶ When the pastor preaches the Word, when the deacons make godly decisions, and when a church practices self-correction, God honors their courage. When we examine the passage above it becomes clear that Nehemiah was a man whose commitment to the cause of God was greater than his commitment to his own life.⁵⁷ One of the greatest needs in the missional church is for its leaders to refuse to give into the sin of cowardice.

Easily Angered

“The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy. He will not always chide: neither will he keep his anger forever,” states Psalm 103:8–9⁵⁸ It should be enough for the Christian to read this passage in the book of Psalms and, because of a burning desire to follow the example of God, to refuse to be angered; yet often this type of self-control must develop over time. There are few indeed who have not had experience with people who are angered easily. Whether it is the motorist driving aggressively and gesturing furiously, or it is the church member in a meeting making personal accusations and pointing fingers, the constant reminders of anger are ever present. To be clear, anger itself is not a sin, but the admonition of this section is to follow God's example stated above in the Psalms.

In any organization when a leader gains the reputation of being angered easily, the result will often follow that few will want to share something with them that could lead to an outburst.

⁵⁶ Page, Frank. *The Nehemiah Factor*. (Birmingham, Alabama: New Hope Press 2011) 165f.

⁵⁷ Ibid, 167.

⁵⁸ Holy Bible, NIV.

This result may be that vital information will not be shared with the leader causing a breakdown in the organization.⁵⁹ In a missional setting, that requires an outward focus on reaching the community, the result of having a leader who is easily angered may develop at a major community outreach where key leaders are unable to attend and no one wants to share this information with the outreach director. Given sufficient time replacements could be found, or the event modified to accommodate be available staff, but when this information is not shared the ability to adapt is greatly diminished and even a highly capable leader can find their event handicapped or worse. Sun Tzu addresses the issue by stating, “Now the art of employing troops is that when the enemy occupies high ground, do not confront him uphill, and when his back is resting on hills, do not make a frontal attack. When he pretends to flee, do not pursue. Do not attack soldiers whose temper is keen. Do not swallow a bait offered by the enemy. Do not thwart an enemy who is returning homewards. When you surround an army, leave an outlet free. Do not press a desperate army too hard. Such is the method of using troops.”⁶⁰

Overly Serious

What a tragedy that many Christians allow the sentence of death from which Christ has freed them to continue to constitute a driving force in the manner in which they choose to live. It would be unconscionable for a slave to be freed and then to continue to live the unchanged life of slavery. Yet, many Christians have not understood that the sentence of death, recounted by Paul in II Corinthians, is most important because it provides contrast to the joy that should result from it being cancelled. In the view of Sun Tzu this issue extends beyond a sort of melancholy demeanor, though that is included, to include a heightened sense of ego, can be embarrassed

⁵⁹ Page, 2011. 78.

⁶⁰ G. A. Michaelson, 2001, 68f.

easily even to narcissistic tendencies.⁶¹ There are numerous examples of those who become so self-focused that they are overly serious in both military and church life.

James Longstreet, while one of the confederacies most able and experienced commanders earned the moniker, “Gloomy Pete,” by his constantly depressed behavior and inflated ego.⁶² These traits kept him as a significant subordinate and rarely given the opportunity for independent command. More to the fault, when he is ordered, by Lee, to return with his corps to participate in the Chancellorsville campaign, he moved uncharacteristically slowly (according to select historians); thus the result of a perceived slight by Lee during the aftermath of Second Manassas.⁶³ His heel dragging left Lee outnumbered, and though the result was one of the greatest victories of Lee’s career, having Longstreet present could have led to the entire destruction of the Union Army of the Potomac and an end to the war.⁶⁴ The missional leader must not allow himself to become self-focused which leads to pettiness and destruction, but must focus on his calling and mission to achieve the dynamic level of leadership needed in the growing church.⁶⁵

Overly Compassionate

The passage in Proverbs chapter one verses twenty-four through thirty-one, like so many in the Old Testament, presents the wrath of God directed toward a wicked and rebellious people. Literally hundreds of passages could be selected to demonstrate the compassionate nature of God and the leadership admonition here is not a direction to avoid compassion. Rather, the direction

⁶¹ G. A. Michaelson, 2001, 78.

⁶² Axelrod 2011, 103f.

⁶³ Alexander, Bevin. *How Great Generals Win*. (New York: W.W. Norton and Company) 141f.

⁶⁴ Freeman, 1991, 406f.

⁶⁵ Stetzer, 2010, 86f.

is a warning against becoming overtaken with compassion. The church leader who refuses to address sin in the church because of their concern for the individual, or groups, feelings not only harms the church, but also enters into personal sin as a result.⁶⁶ Good intentions are not an excuse for a refusal to follow scriptural direction. The key above is that God did call and was refused, he did stretch out his hand only to be refused; his compassion is clearly demonstrated but it is compassion in moderation not to a fault.

Sun Tzu would lower the bar of compassion to reflect the attitude that compassion is only acceptable when it enhances the leaders' authority and does not harm the state. From Sun Tzu's perspective the goal should be to avoid fighting whenever possible and therefore compassion is acceptable if it helps to accomplish this goal.⁶⁷ The Christian must go beyond this secular limitation and find their line in the sand of appropriate compassion defined in the scriptures and not subject to organizational necessity. During the middle 1600s in America, the early Pilgrim settlers were faced with the challenge of how much compassion to exercise with the surrounding Indian tribes. Unfortunately, they bowed to the leadership of Myles Standish and err by exercising too little compassion out of political necessity. These compromises lead a group ostensibly dedicated to founding a Christian community having a very negative missional result among the people of their community.⁶⁸ The missional leader must exercise Scripture balance in all areas, even in the realm of compassion.

The student observed this error continually in the church leaderships handling of controversy. Almost without exception leadership (primarily deacon) teams were halted in making progress in ministry by the desire to not create waves of dissent. Southport's deacons

⁶⁶ Blanchard, 2005, 19f.

⁶⁷ G. Michaelson, 2003, p.185.

⁶⁸ Philbrooke, 2009, 296f.

were criminal examples of allowing a single opposing voice to stop the process of church discipline, already enacted, toward several individuals openly sowing discord in the body. The claim of compassion lead to a year of delays and the ultimate collapse of three years of ministry growth and the sale of one of their buildings to extend the churches survival. Compassion must not be allowed at the expense of scripturally mandated action is the students hard learned lesson from this observation.

CHAPTER 3

WAGING WAR

The question must arise in the mind of the reader regarding the feasibility of combining the teaching of the Bible with a secular warfare doctrine like *The Art of War*. Sun Tzu is known to history as a mercenary warlord who is ruthless in the cut of Niccolo Machiavelli and Napoleon Bonaparte; would his writings be in consistent with biblical church leadership? The two are able to be combined because the Bible works. Further, the Bible frequently describes battles as a medium of change; some include Christ as the leader of the armies and the key change agent. Consider the following passage in Revelation 19:11-16, ““I saw heaven standing open and there before me was a white horse, whose rider is called faithful and true. With justice he judges and makes war. His eyes are like blazing fire, and on his head are many crowns. He has a name written on him that no one knows but he himself. He is dressed in a robe dipped in blood, and his name is the word of God. The armies of heaven were following him, riding on white horses and dressed in fine linen, white and clean. Out of his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations. He will rule them with an iron scepter. He treads the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God Almighty. On his robe and on his thigh he has this name written: King of kings and Lord of lords.”¹

Sun Tzu, and many others have found kernels of truth and applied them to their situation with the result being a measure of success. They have not written truth; rather, they have stumbled, through education, experience, and sometimes luck upon elements of truth. The Bible is truth and represents the direct revelation of God to His creation. Sun Tzu can be compared to the scientist seeking to understand the laws of the universe, only for him it is seeking to

¹ Holy Bible, NIV

understand the laws of human leadership and objective achievement. He states on the issue of waging war, “A speedy victory is the main object in war. If this is long in coming, weapons are blunted and morale depressed. If troops are attacking cities, their strength will be exhausted. When the Army engages in protracted campaigns, the resources of the state will fall short. When your weapons are dulled and ardor dampened, your strength exhausted and treasure spent, the chieftains of the neighboring states will take advantage of your crisis to act. In that case, no man, however wise, will be able to avert the disastrous consequences that ensue. Thus, while we have heard of stupid haste in war, we have not yet seeing a clever operation that was prolonged. For there has never been a protracted war which benefited a country. Therefore, those unable to understand the evils inherent in employing troops are equally unable to understand the advent pages ways of doing so.”²

In this section, dealing with the waging of war it must be understood that the issue of the morality of war is not under scrutiny. Rather, understanding that there is a spiritual war taking place which involves every Christian, the goal is to examine tactical options that may be applied to aid the missional church in its objective of reaching their community with the Gospel. For Sun Tzu the greatest victory is to win without fighting. The reading above from Revelation makes clear that God has a different plan and that he will lead his armies to victory. Prior then, to Christ’s final victory, the church must understand that they are engaged in spiritual warfare with Satan and his followers; and in so understanding, must prepare to fight well for the cause of Christ!

Make Time Your Ally

It is of great interest to note that even the creator and sustainer of the universe chooses to act according to the principle of timing. His action, described in Galatians 4: 4-5, is for mankind

² Tzu, 1998, p. 23.

the most significant action in all of history. The actions that surround the provision of redemption for fallen man constitute a turning point in the timeline of history and the greatest spiritual victory to date are recorded to be subject to the coming of the correct time. Time is a key factor in God's strategy and for this reason alone should be of the highest importance to church leaders fighting on the front lines every day. Entire books could be written on the importance of timing from both a spiritual and a secular perspective. From a business standpoint timing can represent bringing a product to the marketplace before competitive, staffing effectively for growth, or even knowing when his time to sell and get out of a particular market. From a business perspective, Gerald Michaelson proposed seven key issues regarding the importance of making time your ally. First, as a rule, earlier is best. Time saved his time gained. Second, the later you start, the more you require. Third, the more urgent the need for a decision, the longer it takes. Fourth, rapid decision-making produces rapid execution. Fifth, rapid action is simultaneous action. Sixth, delayed decisions inevitably lose their positive quality. Finally, all the positive consequences of speed accrue to the early offensive.³

In the missional church many of these same principles apply. The nature of a missional church suggests that the ministry in question perceives itself as a missionary to its surrounding community and the world in general.⁴ Missions is something of a race. Understanding that every person who dies without Christ is lost forever, results in an overwhelming sense of urgency among every Christian and a desire to penetrate the unsaved world with the gospel as quickly and effectively as possible. For this reason the missional church values rapid decision-making and subsequent action over the plodding nature of many more traditional church organizations. Napoleon said," the loss of time is of reparable in war. Operations only fail through delays.

³ G. A. Michaelson, 2001, 14f.

⁴ Stetzer, 2010, 1f.

Space we can recover, lost time never.”⁵ Because it takes time to understand the needs and most effective access points in the church’s community planning and allocation of resources are subject to timing. To move too soon would result in waste, and to move too sluggishly can result in lost opportunities and a breakdown in tactics. God’s timing is always perfect and when He directs the church to move it must be faithful to move instantly.⁶

The effective missional church must see itself as a spiritual response unit—prepared, provisioned, and awaiting the word of their commander to attack. From a military perspective fighter pilots spend a tremendous amount of time training to perfect the timing of their maneuvers. The tactic of “getting inside” of the enemy means to execute tactical maneuvers more swiftly than the enemy in order to defeat them.⁷ In spiritual warfare it must be remembered that the enemy, while powerful, is a limited created being. As missional leaders piloting ministries, a key goal should be to get inside the enemy’s mindset, “observation-orientation-decision-action cycle.” The concept of being that, “by the time your opponent observes what you are doing, orient’s his thinking to it, decides what to do and acts, his response will be too late.”⁸ Sun Tzu states this about timing, “When the strike of the hawk breaks the body of its prey, it is because of timing. The timing is similar to the release of the trigger.”⁹ Few churches move at radio speed, swift enough to make time their ally, but the wise minister will sacrifice comfort level in their organization structure for the sake of victory with eternal consequence.

⁵ Alexander, 2011, 45.

⁶ Wegner, 2012, 78f.

⁷ G. Michaelson, 2003, 169.

⁸ Ibid., 170.

⁹ G. Michaelson, 2003, p. 169.

Everyone Must Profit

Missional ministry is about people, intentionally reaching out to people with the Gospel. In an ideal situation those who are doing the reaching find their reward from honoring the command of Christ and refuse to exercise jealousy of those who are receiving ministry or those who may receive recognition for their ministry. Many excellent outreach ministries end in disaster for the sponsoring church because of position jockeying among leadership and workers alike.¹⁰ The apostles encounter this situation in the distribution of food described in Acts chapter 6. Rather than rejoice that some were being taken care of and focusing on the good that was happening there was a comparison concerning who was receiving more food? The energy of the missional leaders was being turned from their ministry of teaching to a ministry of bean counting and the unity of the church was subsequently threatened. To combat this danger they returned responsibility for the job of distribution to those who were tasked with the ministry. When everyone was involved, not only in the solution, but the ministry as a whole, then everyone was content with the result. Sun Tzu would have applauded this decision by the apostles.

The effective leader must understand that victory in battle is of little value if the organization is not strengthened.¹¹ Many churches are responding to the phenomenon of spiritual victories that through personal selfishness result in organizational reversals by producing their own pre and post event promotional material. Conducting baptismal services at a local river or beach can be problematic because there may be some groups within the church will be unable to attend and subsequently complain that they are being excluded from the ministry. Wise churches have met these concerns by producing video of the baptismal event and showing the video

¹⁰ Rainer 2011, 135-149.

¹¹ G. A. Michaelson, 2001, 17.

during one of their regularly scheduled worship services. This tactic is also utilized during community outreach events that serve to demonstrate to the church congregation, which may not have attended but financially supported the event, that their participation was both actual and valuable.

Often when church members complain about poor communication in their church they are referring to the feeling of being left out of significant ministry events. Sun Tzu would respond by taking necessary steps, like video productions and personalized thank you notes, to create a feeling of inclusion and importance. He would also, in the author's opinion, encourage denominational and associational ministry organizations that depend on funding and volunteers from their churches to maintain a visible relationship that is fraught with significant acts of gratitude. One of the greatest enemies of the missional church is the issue of personal preferences choking the life out of ministry objectives.¹²

Many missional churches are led by pastors and leadership teams that have a significant sense of mission and desire to see those objectives accomplished.¹³ The pitfall so often then becomes that while they are moving forward to achieve those objectives the congregation may pose the question: "How will achieving this objective benefit me in my situation?" The result of this can be the irony of victorious battles that produce defeat in war. A historical example of this is found in the manner in which the British government chose to deal with the American colonies after 1775.

The King and Parliament were in agreement that war would be preferable with the colonies to offering concessions. In hindsight this seems to be foolish, especially since Britain

¹² Stetzer, Ed, *Breaking the Missional Code*. (Nashville, Tennessee: Broadman & Holman, 2006) 50f.

¹³ Stetzer, 2010, 53f.

changed this stance in dealing with Canada, Australia, and New Zealand in following years. The difference in the American colonies was that a significant amount of the land was owned by wealthy British aristocrats who would suffer financially from alterations in British fiscal policy toward America.¹⁴ To enforce their policy the crown sent aristocratic officers, whose means of advancement came through victory in pitched battles, with armies trained in open field European linear tactics to a heavily forested rural terrain. These generals won an almost unbroken string of victories whenever they could bring an American Army to battle, but ultimately lost the war.¹⁵

Had the British government adopted measures which would have rewarded both aristocratic land owners, and if war had still resulted, the result would likely have been a continued union between England and America.¹⁶ Sun Tzu offers the following applicative summary, “Hence, a wise general is sure of getting provisions from the enemy countries. One zhong of grains obtained from the local area is equal to 20 zhongs shift from the home country; one dan of fodder in the Concord area is equal to 20 dan from the domestic store. Now in order to kill the enemy, our men must be roused to anger; to gain the enemy’s property, our men must be rewarded with war trophies. Accordingly, in chariot battle, when more than 10 chariots have been captured, those who took the enemy chariot first should be rewarded. Then, the enemy’s flags and banners should be replaced with ours; the captured chariots mixed with ours and mounted by our men. The prisoners of war should be kindly treated and. This is called becoming stronger in the course of defeating the enemy.”¹⁷

¹⁴ Alexander, 2011, 40f.

¹⁵ Ibid, 224f.

¹⁶ Alexander, 2011, 40.

¹⁷ G. A. Michaelson, 2001, 16f.

Marshall Adequate Resources

Damon Runyon stated, “The battle may not go to the strong, or the race to the swift, but that’s the way to bet.”¹⁸ it seems to be a common occurrence in every endeavor, that those who are either treading water, or even failing, are swift to make statements that begin with the phrase, “if only I had more....” During his ministry, Jerry Falwell would talk about making a leap of faith, but would be sure to remind his audience to be positive of having enough faith to walk on the other side of the leap.¹⁹ The church is in a situation that is unique from many other areas of endeavor, in that she has the ability to marshal unlimited resources. Unfortunately, it seems that many leadership teams fail to examine a proper understanding and application of this vital fact. Many churches will never make the transition to a missional style of ministry because when they count the resource cost (financial, emotional, political, energy, etc.) they become overwhelmed by the price required. The potential short-term loss of human and financial resources may exceed the churches desire to reach their community. The church must consider the actions of, and power displayed by Jesus in Matthew 15:32-38 as he provides for every persons need and has significant leftovers.

It is understood that it takes more time to develop contributors who are new converts to Christianity than it does to proselytize current believers.²⁰ Questions then arise as to the ability of the church’s budget to absorb the potential loss of current members and their giving while developing new converts to move the church forward. In this question, lies the core of marshaling resources for the transition. In fact, 21 percent of the churches studied in Ed Stetzer’s

¹⁸ Ibid., 13f.

¹⁹ Falwell, 2008, 2f.

²⁰ Stetzer, 2006, 200.

Comeback Churches listed a lack of financial resources as the reason they did not transition.²¹

Examining the Scripture above causes the reader to note that Jesus draws the disciples' attention to the lack of resources they possessed to meet the present need; to feed the masses gathered to hear Jesus' teaching.

The parallel to a church that does not fund outreach because they are struggling to pay their fixed expenses. Jesus then calls the disciples to present their resources and He increases them to exceed what is necessary to meet the needs of the people. Sun Tzu would perhaps point out that Jesus marshaled the resources before he directed the disciples to proceed with feeding the people. In this way the issues of faith and practical ministry are seen to be homogeneous. The church lacking the resources, following this example, would then prayerfully offer all resources to the Lord for His mission and then utilize all that He gives for the purpose of accomplishing His mission. The transition to a missional ministry must begin with committing all (funds, traditions, buildings, staffing, worship style, etc.).²² The excuse that it is easier to accomplish missional ministry in a larger ministry has been proved false, what is necessary is the willingness to commit.²³ Every ministry has the resources to be successful but not every ministry will commit all of their resources to make success a reality.

Know Your Opposition

In all of history there is no more direct example of a great leader utilizing his knowledge of his adversary to gain a victory over him than Jesus in Matthew 4:1-11. Not only, does Jesus reveal his infinite knowledge of his opponent but also a study in the use of tactics based upon

²¹ Stetzer, 2007, 206.

²² Stetzer, 2007, 67.

²³ Ibid., 173.

that knowledge. In addition, it is important to note that the tactics applied by Satan in this encounter are themselves impressive. While his knowledge of Jesus is extensive, it is limited; and yet he waits until Jesus is in a weakened position, is alone, and could be considered vulnerable. Satan then makes three attacks that have proved effective in the past; thus, challenging Jesus to act for himself instead of for the Father. Sun Tzu would approve of the timing of the attack and the method demonstrating the suggestion of a cosmic universality regarding the nature of strategic principles. He states this as, “Know the enemy and know yourself and you will never be defeated.”²⁴ It is human nature to ask for help when challenged and yet to do so would have resulted in a failure for Jesus. Instead of yielding to these well-devised tactics Jesus responds by returning to his original mission of honoring the will of his Father. He is given every opportunity to deviate for his objective to respond to Satan’s flank assaults, but Jesus refuses to yield, and ultimately wins a telling victory.

There are numerous means that Satan now employs to seek to distract and discourage the church in its purpose of accomplishing the Great Commission. Transitions in the church involve change for the people who comprise the church.²⁵ Change is challenging. It is true that change can be dangerous; to the point that if the leader is unwilling to shoulder significant risk to their position, reputation, and even health, then transition should not be undertaken until the mission gains in importance.²⁶ In order to minimize liabilities, the leader must seek to know all they can about those in their ministry, as well as the subject of ministry transition.²⁷ A church congregation should never be regarded as the enemy, quite the contrary, yet it must be

²⁴ Tzu, 1998, 28.

²⁵ Southerland, Dan. *Transitioning* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 2001) 111.

²⁶ *Ibid*, 105f.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 111–119.

understood that the enemy will oppose any change that leads to greater effectiveness, and he may use people and circumstances both outside and within the church. Risk is a necessity of leadership and ministry.²⁸ With risk comes an opportunity for faith, and with faith comes the opportunity for great victory.

Consider Admiral Chester Nimitz, in 1943, utilizing his intelligence department providing him with secret Japanese information as a result of their code breaking efforts. As the Americans waited the next attack Nimitz learned that the enemy target was having trouble with their water purification system (a false message he had planted to test if the code had indeed been cracked). This superior information regarding the enemy's intention allowed him, with limited resources, to set a trap with the aircraft carriers Yorktown, Hornet, and Enterprise at the island of Midway. The ensuing battle was an overwhelming victory and ended the offensive threat of the Japanese navy in World War II.²⁹ Nimitz gathered a superior knowledge of his enemy, understood what resources he could utilize, and then chose a location that allowed the probability of success. Many in ministry attend a conference with a mega church pastor and upon their return set themselves to copying their tactics, only to be discouraged. Sun Tzu expresses the need to know your enemy, or know the risks, first, and then plan the battle to favor the resources available.

Seize the Initiative

This statement from Art of War is sometimes condensed into the axiom, "Be there first with the most."³⁰ The concept of seizing the initiative is built upon the foundation of martialing

²⁸ Ibid., 139f.

²⁹ Hart, 1970, 348–352.

³⁰ Ibid, 48f.

resources and having a superior knowledge of the enemy. These factors combine to allow the leader to enter the engagement on their own terms and with sufficient force to not only gain victory, but to pursue victory once gained. One of the great tragedies of American history was the failure of Union General Gordon Meade to practice this principle at the battle of Gettysburg. Having been promoted to command the Army of the Potomac only days before the battle, Meade was unfamiliar with the dispositions of his troops, supplies, and even overall strength. When he arrived on the battlefield it was late in the evening and the entire first day of battle had occurred, the battle lines had been established, and spies attempting to ascertain their enemy's strength. Meade's opening statement to his commanders was to ask if they were on good ground.³¹

The result was that he engaged in the race to occupy Little Round top on day two and was victorious, largely due to field commanders like John Reynolds buying time to occupy superior ground leading to ultimate victory. Had Meade possessed knowledge he would have been able to utilize his superior numbers to cut off Lee's retreat into Virginia (as Lincoln was demanding) and end the war in 1863. He was there first with the most and won but could not capitalize on the victory because he never possessed the initiative.³² Additionally, had they followed the following axiom of Sun Tzu the outcome may have been further altered: "Generally, he who occupies the field of battle first and awaits his enemy is at ease; he who arrives later and joins battle in haste is weary. And, therefore, one skilled in war brings the enemy to the field of battle and is not brought there by him. One able to make the enemy, of his own accord does so by offering him some advantage, and one able to stop him from coming does so by inflicting damage on him.

³¹ Alexander, 2011, 115–120.

³² Alexander, 2011, 119.

Therefore, on the day the decision is made to launch war, you should close the passes, destroy the official tallies, and stop the passage of all emissaries. Examine the plan closely in the Temple Council and make final arrangements. If the enemy leaves a door open, you must rush in. Sees the place the enemy values without making an appointment for battle with him. Be flexible and decide your line of action according to the situation on the enemy side. At first, then, exhibit the coyness of a maiden until the enemy gives you an opening; afterwards be swift as a running hair, and it will be too late for the enemy to oppose you.”³³

What if Jesus had seen the disciples straining at the oars in the storm, but could not go out to them until he had put the issue before a series of committees and a final vote as whether or not walking on the water at that time was the best course? Many churches fail in their mission because they are so encumbered by self-imposed bureaucracy that they are unable to act when called upon to do so.³⁴ The move to a missional mindset necessitates the empowering of the people of the church for the work of ministry.³⁵ If the people have no ability to make ministry decisions then there is no empowerment. A ministry team that is assigned a task, but has no authority to accomplish the task, then it serves no purpose. Sun Tzu emphasizes training leaders and then empowering them to make decisions. The student recalls a mission team sent from his church to build a kitchen and dining facility for a church plant near La Antigua, Guatemala. The church provided funds for the project, but a stove was not included in the funding. The team on site chose to use additional unauthorized funds to finish the project, which lead to several church members becoming extremely upset. This situation lead to a restructuring of church’s financial

³³ G. A. Michaelson, 2001, 48.

³⁴ Wegner, 2012, 215f.

³⁵ Ibid., 207–212.

policies for mission teams to allow for discretionary funds to be readily available for “ministry initiative projects.”

In order to be missional, every church member must see themselves as a missionary both at home and abroad. That is to say, everyone must be committed to accomplishing the mission God has assigned them collectively. Missional is about surrendering control of the church and allowing God to move in the lives of His people. Sun Tzu would applaud the mission team that chose to break the rules to accomplish the mission and decry the church that placed constraints that hampered initiative. Jesus saw an opportunity to teach His disciples on that stormy evening; therefore, he walked on the water to them. This act of bold initiative would only have been effective when the disciples were in the storm. Further, it inspired an act of initiative by Simon Peter when he walked on the water to Jesus. On the battlefield leaders must have great awareness of the situation in order to seize opportunities of initiative.³⁶ In the church, leaders have no less mandate to seek victory in the battle to make disciples of all people groups and must add to great awareness a great willingness and ability to seize the initiative when God presents the opportunity.

Attack by Stratagem

Essentially, to attack by stratagem means to attack the strategy of the enemy is more important than to engage in battle with them. It is possible to win a war and never engage in a single battle. The Cold War between the United States and the USSR is a debatable example of when two nations fought a war to resolution without actual battles. Their opposition was a series of diplomatic posturing, technological competition, and third party conflict; yet it remained clear that there was a war being fought. It is even being argued by top military strategists that this

³⁶ Alexander, Bevin. *How Wars are Won*. (New York, New York: Three Rivers Press, 2002) 33–39.

“cold” format of strategy and tactical warfare will be the primary means of future conflict.³⁷ This type of conflict begins with a highly detailed yet flexible plan in writing. Being in writing is key for reference and revision, as well as overall clarity yet so important that business strategist Gerald Michaelson states, “If your plan is not in writing then you do not have a plan.”³⁸ Sun Tzu outlines an example of the principle in the following statement, “Generally, in war the best thing of all is to take the enemy’s state whole and intact; to ruin it is inferior to this. To capture the enemy’s entire Army is better than to destroy it; to take intact a battalion, a company or a five-man squad is better than to destroy them. Hence, to win the 100 victories in 100 battles is not the acme of skill.

To subdue the enemy without fighting is the supreme excellence. Thus, the best policy in war is to attack the enemy’s strategy. The second best way is to disrupt his alliances through diplomatic means. The next best method is to attack his Army in the field. The worst policy is to attack walled cities. Attacking cities is the last resort when there is no alternative. It takes at least three months to make mantlets and shielded vehicles ready and prepared necessary arms and equipment’s. It takes at least another three months to pile up earthen mounds against the walls. The general unable to control his impatience will order his troops to swarm up the wall like ants with the result of that one third of them are slain, while the cities remain untaken. Such is the calamity of attacking walled cities. Therefore, subdue the enemy’s army without fighting. They capture the enemy’s cities without assaulting them and overthrow his state without protracted operations. Their aim must be to take all under heaven intact through strategic superiority. Thus,

³⁷ Alexander, 2002, 8.

³⁸ G. A. Michaelson, 2001, 5.

their chips are not worn out and the rich right of will be complete. This is the art of attacking by stratagem. “³⁹

While Gideon’s plan, recorded in Judges 7:16–24, is not in writing per say, God makes his will and directions known to his general. Initially, there is little left for Gideon to plan. God has chosen the men he wants to be engaged, the equipment that each man will carry, the location and timing for the attack, and even his direct involvement in the success of the strategy. All that is left for Gideon to do is to shout the battle cry and engage the enemy. However, when the Midianites finished fighting with each other and begin to flee, Gideon then demonstrates his leadership quality by acting to follow up on the victory. It should be noted that during God’s involvement, the Israelites do not need to engage in battle, but when Gideon begins to act on his own initiative by calling for reinforcements and pursuing the enemy, more traditional combat ensues. Sun Tzu, when his principles are applied to this battle, would applaud God’s part of the plan as being the highest example of an attack by stratagem. While in review of Gideon’s role, no doubt his battlefield success would be noted and encouraged, he still resorted to destroying the enemy through traditional means of battle.

For the church making a transition, as well as the ministry engaged in pursuing their ministerial objectives, it must be noted that a great deal of the opposition faced will come directly or indirectly from people. If the church engages in battle against the people who are acting in opposition then it will fail in its mission to reach them, as well as inflicting significant collateral damage to her testimony. Church leaders must read Gideon’s battle with the Midianites and realize the importance of acting according to God strategy and allowing him to act in

³⁹ G. A. Michaelson, 2001, 22.

situations so that open battle may be avoided.⁴⁰ There are occasions when war is necessary in both a military and a spiritual sense,⁴¹ but for Christians it must be of high priority to practice attacking the enemy's strategy and tactics rather than those people Satan is using to oppose God's work.

Strength against Weaknesses

If Sun Tzu had been a Christian he would perhaps have added, "When you have Christ, speak His name," looking to the same result achieved in the garden when an entire armed troop fell to the ground before the Lord in John 18:3–7⁴². There are few historical examples of an army, when outnumbered, overcomes its opponent.⁴³ These examples, battles like Cannae, Alesia, Agincourt, Chancellorsville, and Rorke's Drift will become the context of legends because they are so rare. Far more common in every arena of life is victory going to the strongest, largest, and best prepared. In examining the concept of strength and weakness, it is important to understand the difference between strategy and tactics. Strategy is a mental exercise that focuses on the laying of plans, as well as the critical examination of the enemies' plans and resources. On the other hand, tactics are the physical application of those strategic plans that have been developed.⁴⁴ Sun Tzu states, "Consequently, the art of using troops is this: When 10 to the enemy's one, surround him. When five times his strength, attack him. If double his strength, engage him. If equally matched, be capable of dividing him. If less in number, be capable of

⁴⁰ Cole, 2002, 54f.

⁴¹ Ibid., 53–57.

⁴² Holy Bible, NLT.

⁴³ O'Brien, Cormac. *Outnumbered: Incredible Stories of History's Most Surprising Battlefield Upsets*. (Beverly, Massachusetts: Quayside Publishing, 2010) 6.

⁴⁴ G. A. Michaelson, 2001, 47.

defending yourself. And if in all respects unfavorable, be capable of alluding him. Thus a small enemy that acts inflexibly will become captives of a large enemy.”⁴⁵

For the missional church, the strategy is missional (with some individual adaptation) and is fixed just as the Great Commission is fixed. The variations should come from a tactical perspective where the missional leader examines their ministry resources and objectives and then adjusts tactically to achieve those objectives. In this adjustment the key, from Sun Tzu’s perspective is to find areas that will gain the most success with the least cost and begin there.⁴⁶ If the church needs a location for a food pantry and the options are between the library and a storage closet it is easier to install a shed and clean out the closet than to upset the library folks. Perhaps the closet is used more than the library (and in many churches likely is); this point is irrelevant. Sun Tzu would call this a walled city and point out that it is better to win without fighting, which in this scenario, is possible; even if the end result is not perfect. If the library is the only option and the need is immediate then resources must be martialled in order to make this switch with as little challenge as possible, in other words, pray!⁴⁷

The final warning to the reader of *The Art of War* in this chapter comes in the last line of the quotation above. The warning is that a lack of flexibility, especially in a smaller ministry often leads to disaster. It has been pointed out that size has little bearing on a ministry’s ability to transition to a missional model, but the other side of that coin is that while a large church can maintain the status quo, perhaps a small church refusing to adapt will soon perish. Any church that fails to reach new people is destined to die as soon as those remaining can no longer pay the

⁴⁵ G. A. Michaelson, 2001, 24.

⁴⁶ McNeilly, 1996, 87f.

⁴⁷ Southerland, 2001, 139.

bills. It could be argued that the church dies long before that when it ceases to accomplish Great Commission ministry. Ministries that desire longevity must be flexible and utilize the power that is inherent in the name of Jesus.⁴⁸

⁴⁸ Stetzer, 2010, 52–59.

CHAPTER 4

RESOURCE FACTORS

Change requires a cost. Scripture indicates that it is the better part of wisdom to examine the resources one has available prior to moving forward, and Sun Tzu echoes this council as well as offering five factors that he sees as constant in the fighting of war in the following statement: “War is a matter of vital importance to the state; a matter of life and death, the road either to survival or to ruin. Hence, it is imperative that it be thoroughly studied. Therefore, to make assessment of the outcome of a war, one must compare the various conditions of the antagonistic sides in terms of the five constant factors: Moral influence, Weather, Terrain, Commander, Doctrine. These five constant factors should be familiar to every general. He who masters them wins; he who does not is defeated.”¹ The ‘war’ in this context refers to the challenges that go with the undertaking of transitioning an existing ministry to a missional model. The cost requirements for this transition will vary according to the factors of each situation, including support and general ministry acumen of leadership, condition of physical resources, finances, attitude of people toward change, level of ministry establishment, pastoral confidence² and remembering that the most vital resource is spiritual direction and protection of the Holy Spirit which cannot be quantified. In this chapter the framework for resource analysis and application is provided by the outline from Art of War, but should be understood to be adapted to factors related to the local church.

¹ G. A. Michaelson, 2001, 8.

² Southerland, 2001, 144f.

Elmer Towns often states to his classes, “Methods are many, principles are few; methods must change, principles never do.”³ In this statement he is outlining the difference between transitioning as a church from traditional to missional, rather than from traditional to emerging. Towns advocates for innovation in methodology that allows the church to achieve the highest level of effectiveness in its local context, while maintaining theological orthodoxy in a postmodern culture.⁴ One of the great challenges in resource assessment for change is the variable of people’s reaction to change. There is a tendency in the church to combine methodology and theology into a single concept and ignore the differences between convictions and preferences.⁵ Furthermore, many researchers hold that the church has been long overdue for a strategic overhaul and a tactical update. The missional return to the focus of the early church is an inspiration, yet without biblical understanding even missional intent can be perverted; it can become a church emerging from the sacred and developing a theology based on science, sociology, and liberal (i.e., unbiblical theology).⁶ The following chapter will examine the human resource issue in particular and utilize the parallel between battlefield tactics and pew tactics that lead to victory.

Weather

The ability to develop and implement strategy on the battlefield is due to the ability of leadership to research, analyze, and apply the results to the conditions of the army and ground. According to Sun Tzu, these factors are the conditions of weather and are essential to the ability of an army to be victorious. It is knowing the difference between attack and defense, and when

³ Towns, Elmer. *11 Innovations in the Local Church.* (Ventura, California: Regal, 2007) 15.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 14f.

⁵ Conder, 2006, 31–36.

⁶ Buchanan, 2012, 31–34.

to utilize each tactic to achieve the overall strategic goal. The western equivalent of *Art of War* is a text by Carl von Clausewitz entitled *On War*. Clausewitz states, “every attack must lead to defense; what is to be the result of that defense depends on circumstances: these circumstances.”⁷

By recognizing these circumstances and acting correctly it becomes possible to seize the initiative and shape the enemy’s strategy.⁸ Why are some churches so effective in reaching their community and others ineffective? Perhaps, it would seem logical that the ministry with the greater experience would be the more effective; unfortunately, many with experience rely on the experience of the past rather than recognizing the changing tactics necessary for future success.⁹ It seems to require a crisis for many in organizations to acknowledge the need for a change rather than the ideal, which is to choose to evaluate ministry with regard to objective effectiveness.¹⁰ In this section a number of, what Sun Tzu would consider, “weather” issues will be discussed in relation to their role in the transition of an existing church to a missional strategy.

Be Sensitive to Momentum

The story of Pentecost from Acts chapter two is an example of ministerial momentum. Acts 2:5–12 state, “At that time there were devout Jews from every nation living in Jerusalem. When they heard the loud noise, everyone came running, and they were bewildered to hear their own languages being spoken by the believers. They were completely amazed, “How can this be?” they exclaimed. “These people are all from Galilee, and yet we hear them speaking in our own native languages!... And we all hear these people speaking in our own languages about the

⁷ Clausewitz, Carl Von. *On War*. (Hertfordshire, Ware: Wordsworth Publishers) 322.

⁸ Michaelson, Steven W. *Sun Tzu for Execution* (Avon, Massachusetts: Adams Media, 2001) 36.

⁹ Malphurs, 2004, 146f.

¹⁰ Kotter 1994, 36.

wonderful things God has done!” They stood there amazed and perplexed. “What can this mean?” they asked each other.”¹¹ God could have chosen from any means within His nature to establish His church, but He chose to utilize timing and momentum at their highest level. Waiting until Jerusalem is filled with Jews from many different nations and languages, He then empowers the believer’s to speak each of their native tongues and launches them in a surprise Gospel assault on the community. The surprise among the crowd places them automatically in a receptive state for an explanation, which Peter will step forward and supply to them. The crowd is not of one mind over the situation and some believe that the Galileans are drunk, but they are in the minority and a tremendous move of the Holy Spirit begins. God used the momentum of a day to establish His church, which continues to grow to the present day. The result, found in verse 41 is that some 3,000 people were baptized and added to the church that day. Is momentum important to ministry transition and growth? Clearly, God believed it to be or He would not have used it.

Perhaps, in all of history there has been no general more sensitive to, or dependent on the principle of momentum than Napoleon Bonaparte. His battle strategy was to place a superior force on an enemy’s weaker flank while engaging the main enemy body in a “holding” fight. The flanking force would then attack, achieve a breakthrough, thereby gaining momentum and then to exploit it.¹² Where many generals desired to simply achieve a victory, Napoleon introduced to the world the idea of battles of annihilation; where victory was not sufficient, but the enemy force must be destroyed. Napoleon refused to stop when the enemy retreated, and where other generals would end a battle to rest their army, Napoleon understood that the greatest good for his

¹¹ Holy Bible, NLT.

¹² Alexander, 1993, 121–123.

men was the removal of the danger posed by the enemy. His life was always on the table if it meant victory.¹³

Napoleon stated, “Always remember three things: unity of forces, positive action, and firm resolution to perish (if need be) with glory. These are grand principles of the military art that always gave me good fortune in all my operations. Death is nothing; to live defeated and without glory is to die every day.”¹⁴ Sun Tzu adds to this, “When torrential water tosses boulders, it is because of its momentum; when the strike of a hawk breaks the body of its prey, it is because of timing. Thus, in battle, a good commander creates a posture releasing an irresistible and overwhelming momentum, and his attack is precisely timed in a quick tempo. The energy is similar to a fully drawn crossbow; the timing, the release of the trigger. Amid turmoil and tumult of battle, there may be seeming disorder and yet no real disorder in one’s own troops. In the midst of confusion and chaos, your troops appear to be milling about in circles, yet it is proof against defeat. Apparent disorder is born of order; apparent cowardice, of courage apparent weakness, of strength. Order or disorder depends on organization and direction; Kurds or cowardice on postures; strength or weakness on dispositions.”¹⁵

The church needs leaders who are willing to follow one victory with another. Satan is adept with bringing forward distractions. Adding to this the idea that many people are complacent and there exists the potential for a culture that will never complete a transformation even if they are able to gather the momentum required to begin a change.¹⁶ Missional ministry is goal oriented and involves the concept for fighting a spiritual war of annihilation. Jerry Falwell

¹³ Alexander, 2011, 45f.

¹⁴ Luvaas, Jay, trans. *Napoleon on The Art of War*. (New York, New York: Touchstone Press, 199), 18.

¹⁵ G. A. Michaelson, 2001, 44.

¹⁶ Kotter, 1994, 37–40.

coined the phrase: “Saturation Evangelism; meaning: the goal is to reach every person, at every available time, with every available means.”¹⁷ This is a statement of momentum and annihilation, and leads to one of the most spiritually influential ministries in history.¹⁸ The results of Pentecost do not have to be a onetime event, people are still people and God is still God, ready with a strategy for missionally engaging every person in the world with the Gospel.

Plan Surprises

Even though Jesus had said to His followers that He would rise from the dead on the third day following His death, He knew they would still be surprised to see Him; and they were.¹⁹ Because Jesus is God and is omniscient it follows that He chose to have His resurrection be a surprise, a surprise that He had planned for a specific purpose. Jesus chose to utilize planned surprises to accomplish His mission, and following His example, the planned surprise becomes a key tactic in the arsenal of the missional church. God’s church must become a place where it is predictable to expect the unpredictable to occur.

When the church comes together for worship, expecting the Holy Spirit to move in the lives of His people, then it should be natural for church leaders to plan and prepare for each gathering to include a Holy surprise.²⁰ It is not for the leadership team to define what the surprise may be, simply to expect the Holy Spirit to move and be prepared to respond to His leading in the ministry. When the church creates a ministry schedule so ridged that every facet of the church’s life becomes predictable, Satan has an easy task to know how and when to attack it. Sun Tzu’s counsel above involves the church seizing the initiative and being prepared to take advantage of opportunities created by God. Ministry in a missional church then becomes less

¹⁸ Falwell, 2008, 2.

²⁰ Buchanan, 2012, 155.

dependent on the church bulletin and more dependent on the leading of God. This concept can be seen as forming and reforming. The missional church is reforming, that is reclaiming and refocusing on biblical truth, while forming new tactical methods to remain responsive and relevant to the culture that she is intentionally engaging.²¹

The military tactic of the planned surprise is an old one with numerous examples of its use to varying degrees of effectiveness. In American history one of the most effective examples of the planned surprise occurred at the Second Battle of Manassas. Abraham Lincoln had ordered George McClellan to move his army so as to join with John Pope's forces massing near Manassas, Virginia. The result of this joining would be an overwhelming force, which Pope was to then use to overwhelm Lee's Confederates and capture their capital of Richmond. Lee knew he must act before the Union forces could join and sent one of his army corps under James Longstreet to engage Popes forces.²² In the initial phases of the battle Pope's superior numbers granted him success and the battle seemed a sure victory until a second corps under Stonewall Jackson crashed into Pope's rear leading to a route of the Union forces and an end to the danger of the two armies producing any significant gain.²³

The surprise came from Lee's violation of the primary philosophy being taught at West Point (of which Lee had been both graduate and commandant), which was to never divide forces in the face of the enemy.²⁴ Lee allowed the "weather" of the situation to determine the opportunity and had the wisdom to leave enough flexibility that he could utilize surprise to his

²¹ Rouse, Rick. *A Field Guide for the Missional Congregation.* (Minneapolis, Minnesota: Augsburg Fortress, 2004) 72.

²² Axelrod, 2011, 109.

²³ Anders, 1968, 214–217.

²⁴ Axelrod, 2011, 189f.

advantage. The significance of this decision cannot be overstated. Following the battle the British (whom the Confederates were seeking an alliance) Foreign Secretary wrote to the Prime Minister, “ I agree with you that the time has come for offering mediation to the United States Government, with a view to recognition of the independence of the Confederates. I agree further that, in case of failure, we ought ourselves to recognize the Southern States as an independent State.”²⁵ One surprise nearly changed world history. Imagine what the effect of the surprise the Holy Spirit has prepared for the church if only it would act on the opportunity.

Win with Internal Communication

Internal communications has become a far more complex and multifaceted issue due to the exponential advances in communications achieved since the time of Sun Tzu, yet the fundamental issues remain constant and are the subject of this section. Often, in the authors experience, when an individual is complaining about poor internal communication in a ministry they are expressing frustration that they were not aware of a change or activity. Many choose to abstain from change because it removes constancy from an organization, which through endless repetition of programming, leads to perceived excellence in communication. In this way a ministry that sends out a weekly newsletter can maintain internal communication, so long as nothing occurs to upset the normal calendar. Sun Tzu foresaw this possibility when he mentions changing battlefield conditions such as darkness that will obscure the normal banners and flags of day fighting. He stated, “The ‘Book of Army Management’ says: “as the voice cannot be heard in battle, gongs and drums are used. As troops cannot see each other clearly in battle, flags and banners are used.” Hence, in night fighting, usually use drums and gongs; in day fighting, banners and flags. Now, these instruments are used to unify the action of the troops. When the

²⁵ Kaltman, Al. *The Genius of Robert E. Lee*. (Parasmus, New Jersey: Prentice Hall Press, 2000) 235.

troops can be thus united the brave cannot advance alone, nor can the cowardly retreat. This is the art of directing large masses of troops.”²⁶

The missional church fights on a modern battlefield that includes change as constant as the changes to the society it is seeking to engage. To respond to this reality the effective leader must take a page from the secular business world and utilize the foreknowledge (also a subject of Sun Tzu) to project the communication needs of the ministry based on the secular organizations in their community.²⁷ Many church leaders become comfortable with study and utilize books to aide them in their development as leaders. In the area of internal communications, by the time the book would be published it has become out of date, requiring ministry leaders to utilize other methods of training to develop excellence in this area. Key to becoming missional is the intentional engagement of the church’s community and the community has become technologically adept at varying levels. Social media, email, website, internet advertising, blogging, tweeting, web blasts, and YouTube have now joined the flyer on the church door and newsletter in the mailbox as vital means of communication. In a church society where people miss the pulpit announcements for every March Madness, Super Bowl, or just because, missional internal communications have entered a new dimension.²⁸ For many churches, the issues are more daunting than they are equipped to deal with, and the result is a refusal to change, not out of a rejection of need, but rather resulting from a belief that they are not able (fear).²⁹

In 1575, Japan’s army of Daimyo Takeda Katsuyori, seeking to expand his power base, led his well-trained and experienced samurai army to besiege the forces of Oda Nobunaga and

²⁶ G. A. Michaelson, 2001, 66.

²⁷ McNeilly, 1996, 40f.

²⁸ A. J. Roxburgh, *Missional: Joining God in the Neighborhood*, 2011, 14f.

²⁹ Malphurs, 2004, 167-171.

Tokugawa Ieyasu in Nagashino Castle. Takeda had a well-earned reputation for military dominance, but had little experience with a new technology utilized by Tokugawa: a primitive matchlock musket called a arquebus. They fired much more slowly and with poorer accuracy than the bow but a arquebusier could be trained in a few months where it took years to develop archers. Takeda ordered his men to charge Tokugawa who had arrayed his army behind massed arquebusiers shielded by a wall of spears lodged in the creek bed in front of them. The result was a short, complete defeat for Takeda and a rise to dominance for Tokugawa.³⁰ The failure to adopt new technology defeated an army of superior overall quality. The ministry that fails to educate itself in the use of technology will fail to engage its community effectively, making internal communications vital for churches seeking to transition to a missional model.

Fortunately, there is an abundance of help available from denominational assets, church consultants, and most importantly, the people in the community a missional church will reach.³¹

Obey Movement Rules

Sun Tzu indicates what he considers the four key movement rules: (1) occupy strong natural positions; (2) stay on high ground; (3) evaluate every situation realistically; (4) implement discipline. Paul would phrase this as encouraging the church to know its community, respond to its changes, and be sure to reflect the community at every possible opportunity. The essential mandate is that different circumstances require different responses. There are many unique factors in this conversation, yet several are pertinent. In 1999, George Barna researched the reason people attended their particular church and an interesting factor came to light. While those who had spent a significant portion of their lives in church listed theology as the primary

³⁰ Devries, *Battles that Changed Warfare*, 2008, 98–103.

³¹ Malphurs, 2004, 168–171.

factor (58 percent), those who were surveyed as previously unchurched answered that the pastor was the primary factor for their choice (90 percent).³² For many unchurched people their connection is relational and it is the leadership that set the relational tone for the church in many cases. Also, it should be noted that many churches that effectively reach unchurched people are focused and have a relationally intentional leadership culture.³³

For an organization to be in motion successfully, it must have direction and that direction comes from a trained and equipped leadership team. Business analyst Steven Michaelson states of leaders, “Leaders accept risk. They work to understand the risks they are taking, to manage those risks, and to reduce them.”³⁴ For leaders in the missional church, it is necessary to be relational in their ministry leadership and to utilize these relationships to aid them in accomplishing the ministries mission. Working with people is risky and it is for this reason that Sun Tzu includes his analysis of the varieties of ground so as to provide a framework for risk assessment and response. Peter Scazzero has written and lectured on the subject of spiritual health and earnestly states, “As go the church leaders so goes the church.”³⁵ Scazzero has developed a series of concentric circles that deal with a church becoming healthy emotionally and at the center is the church leadership. To reduce the risk posed by relational ministry it is essential to begin, as leaders, with the decision to minister in a state of balance and spiritual self-care. This decision cannot help but have a ripple effect that helps the entire ministry to minister in a healthy method and manner.³⁶ Healthy people transmit fewer diseases than those who are ill.

⁴² T. Rainer, *Surprising Insights from the Unchurched and Proven Ways to Reach Them*, 2004, 73f.

³³ Rusaw, 2004, 19–21.

³⁴ S. W. Michaelson 2001, 73.

³⁵ Scazzero, 2010, 37.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 34f.

Battlefield Behavior

Because spiritual warfare is a reality, it is vital for the leader to do all that is possible to ensure that the army is fighting on the best possible ground to achieve victory. The Boy Scouts motto: “Be Prepared,” business strategists repeat the mantra that great research always precedes great strategy,³⁷ and Rick Warren has introduced the church to “Saddleback Sam.”³⁸ Sun Tzu advocates in the strongest terms the leader taking pains in knowing the nuances of the battlefield; yet the church has the greatest advantage because she has the ability to know the One who, according to the Scriptures has all knowledge of every battlefield and the outcome prior to creation of the world. Sun Tzu tells his readers to, “know the enemy and know yourself and in a thousand battles you will not be defeated.”³⁹ For the missional leader, and all Christians, the mandate is to know God and follow him and you will never be defeated.

The ability to assemble, analyze, and assimilate quality research into the battle ground is essential for a leader to be successful; for the ministry leader this must involve a knowledge first of God (theology), and then of his community demographics, history, and issues; of the people who comprise his existing ministry, their motivations, dreams, spiritual state, and giftedness; and finally, of the physical resources currently available (buildings, finances, loans, etc.) with a realistic view to the immediate future. Napoleon Bonaparte points out yet another key for the leader to not only be aware of, but to act on, which is the reality that when engaged in ministry the church is essentially in a state of war. “Wartime is not the same as peacetime. In war every delay is fatal. Manifestly you need order, but this order must be of a different kind than in times

³⁷ G. A. Michaelson, 2003, 89f.

³⁸ Warren, 1995, 36f.

³⁹ Tzu, 1998, 7.

of peace. During peace, war consists in furnishing nothing except through the required red tape; in time of war it consists in granting as much as possible without any formality except for the returns that help keep things accurate,” states Napoleon.⁴⁰

Many churches fail to achieve the measure of effectiveness of which they are capable because they have become a peacetime organization rather than a wartime organism. This is a result of churches understanding the relational value of ministry as congregational leadership as opposed to pastoral or elder leadership. Clearly, it is more likely that a small group of well-trained leaders, called by God as elders can gain understanding of the battleground more effectively than could an entire army. If Napoleon waited for every soldier, or at least a two-thirds majority, to understand the issues of strategy and campaign tactics, and then agree to them he would never have fought and nothing would be accomplished. Yet this is the primary means of function for many evangelical churches and then they lament their lack of effectiveness. “Leading from the middle,” is the concept that leaders make decisions after they make relationships.⁴¹ The congregation at large should not vote on tactics; they should vote on strategy and then empower their leaders’ direction.

Understanding that the congregational leadership model is not only ineffective, as many churches utilize it and has a lack of biblical support is essential to becoming a missional ministry. Effective missional ministries not only reflect vibrant empowered leadership,⁴² but also focus on the “sentness” of the people rather than the sending of a pastoral figure or team.⁴³ This is not a devaluing of the pastoral or elder role, rather a return to the concept that spiritual

⁴⁰ Luvaas, 1999, 9.

⁴¹ Falwell, 2008, 21–27.

⁴² Stetzer, *Transformational Church*, 2010, 71f.

⁴³ A. J. Roxburgh, *Missional: Joining God in the Neighborhood*, 2011, 121–127.

eldership focuses on equipping, undergirding, and facilitating ministry (tactics). This is a significant departure from the concept that the church's primary ministry occurs on the platform during service times.

In 2005 Lifeway Research conducted a study with 300 NAMB church strategy analysts to find common factors of church ineffectiveness; the result, 71 percent of the 500 issues listed dealt with "head and heart issues" involving leadership.⁴⁴ Leadership must be active and equipped to both recognize and adapt tactics to the state of ministry ground in which they are serving; however, they must be allowed to lead the church in the adaptation or their value is nullified. For the missional leader the "red tape" of ministry will result in frustration and worse.⁴⁵ The missional leader is objective oriented and like the commander on the battlefield looks at the field before him, sees the harvest ready to be got in, and will not be satisfied until an army of workers is in the field working with maximum effectiveness. Furthermore, the missional leader understands he is most accountable for the effectiveness of the ministry he leads and hates being hamstrung by unnecessary red tape for which he will have to give account. Good leaders will not long stay in a ministry where they cannot see an opportunity for victory, and will not be allowed to stay in churches with leaders who also see the battleground and choose to live as spiritual cowards; living with an inward focus and hypocritically claiming to have a part in the Kingdom of God.

Make Victory the Only Option

Actual cases of victory or death are rare in the annals of history. Often these situations involve mistakes in strategy or tactics that result in desperate fights of rapid development (e.g., Custer at Little Bighorn, Fetterman's Massacre, Islandawanda, etc.), rather than the decision to

⁴⁴ Stetzer, *Breaking the Missional Code*, 2006, 73.

⁴⁵ Page, 2008, 201–204.

hold a position in a chosen victory or death situation. One of the few circumstances that reflect the tactical situation described by Sun Tzu above occurred on January 22–23, 1879 at a remote supply station in what is now South Africa. The British army had been tasked with subduing the Zulus under their King Cetshwayo who decided to attack the main British encampment near Isandlwana. Nearly all of the 1700 British soldiers and native levies were massacred in the attack and illustrated a case of circumstances creating a life or death struggle in which the result for the defending force was death. Several miles away at Rorke's Drift, a supply station for the main force a British detachment was charged with building a bridge, was ordered to "hold their ground" in the face of between four and five thousand Zulu warriors now armed with the weapons of the Isandlwana casualties. Lieutenants Chard and Bromhead had just over 100 effective soldiers under their command to defend the outpost. They decided to obey orders (though many other outposts did not) and defended the small outpost until the Zulus retreated the following day leaving nearly 1000 casualties behind. Eleven Victoria Crosses (Britain's highest military honor) were awarded to the defenders (more than at any other engagement).⁴⁶ The defenders could have retreated when they first learned of their situation, but chose to obey orders and receiving casualties amounting to nearly one third of the command.

Many individuals think of the church as a safe place and ministry as a journey of continual joy and contemplation. Those who are under that impression are either part of a spiritually based social club and have no concept of real ministry or have never been involved in ministry. Missional ministry involves fallen sinful people on all levels and is under satanic assault. The author will discuss this issue in detail in the concluding chapter, but suffice to posit that those who have served in church ministry have experienced the sting of spiritual battle. Faith

⁴⁶ O'Brien, 2010, 220–228.

is built in such battles. Few have endured such attack in recent American church life as Jerry Falwell. When asked about how he was able to enduring faith, Falwell responded, “I don’t have great faith in God; I have faith in a great God.”⁴⁷ When God places His servants in a victory of death type situation it is for His purpose. First, the servant must be willing to obey the order to hold when it is given, second, the servant must understand that this order may result in their death or the fall of those they love, and finally, that either way God’s will is sovereign.

Plan Coordinated Efforts

It would be a great challenge to find, in all of military history, a plan of battle that involves greater coordination’s of an army than the plan, given by God to Joshua, implemented during the Jericho campaign. Just as the Shuai Ran snake discussed by Sun Tzu having the ability to respond to any attack from another quarter, the people of Israel were acting in coordination in their manner of marching and in their manner of attack. Though the credit for the plan of attack must go to God, the credit for the implementation must be shared by both Joshua and his army. It is a miracle that the Israelite army, a militia force, could act with such discipline and cohesion in the face of the enemy.⁴⁸ Yet, it is their strict adherence to coordinated effort that allows God’s plan to be effective and the result to be achieved.

One of the greatest historical battlefield innovators was Frederick the Great of Prussia. The army he inherited from his father had excellent training in the military tactics of his era; relying on linear formations that placed artillery ahead of lines of infantry interspersed with cavalry. Fredericks’ first battle resulted in near annihilation for his army because the Austrian hussars were able to attack with such speed that the coordination between the three elements of

⁴⁷ Falwell, 2008, 262.

⁴⁸ Herzog, 1997, 48f.

his army broke down and their mutual support disintegrated almost as quickly as his cavalry left the field.⁴⁹ From this setback Frederick chose to release the battle strategy used by European armies, with few exceptions, for the past 100 or more years and, from scratch, generate a new strategy that placed cavalry on the wings as an extraordinary force and rely on his massed infantry lines to advance without firing and create breakthroughs. This formation led to a terrible cost in the lives of his infantry until he developed the concept of the oblique infantry formation. This innovation allowed his infantry to give mutual support to one another as well as minimize their exposure to enemy cannon and musket fire.⁵⁰

To search for books on will yield hundreds of texts on the missional church movement and the importance of churches reaching their immediate communities with the Gospel. Missional is about empowering people to act as missionaries for the purpose of kingdom growth, and for many existing ministries this requires collapsing the current culture of their present ministry.⁵¹ Often the greatest challenge may seem to be not in people understanding the biblical mandate or the need to transition, but rather, the willingness to change in order to become missional. Coordination is essential to a church becoming missional. If only the leadership are missional in their strategy and tactics the church will fail to transition since being missional requires the people to be on mission, not just the leadership.

Frederick the Great wrote a manual he called his “Instructions” that was only given to his top generals and a select few promising subordinates and even they had to swear they would never take it into the field and would make arrangements, in the event of their death, to have it

⁴⁹ Weigley, 1991, 167–172.

⁵⁰ Luvaas, Frederick the Great on The Art of War, 1999, 211–214.

⁵¹ Rouse, 2004, 20–28.

returned in a sealed packet.⁵² These instructions explained in detail what the army was to do in every perceived circumstance so that total strategic and tactical coordination could be achieved at all times. It was effective, even when a copy fell into enemy hands, they failed to be able to use Frederick's plans against him. The lesson must be that strategy is important, but it will fail or succeed based on those who are engaged in the battle. Frederick won, not because he had a great strategy of coordination, he won because his army was coordinated. Missional churches must be comprised of missional people who have chosen to surrender their lives to the mission God has called them to. Without coordination strategy alone will fail.

Press the Attack

Joshua must number among the greatest military leaders' in all of history, as well as having the distinction of being a man who enjoyed tremendous blessing from and intimacy with the Lord. It is almost marvelous to read of his abject failure to deal effectively with the Gibeonites, recorded in the above scriptural passage, and allow them to become allies in the land. Sun Tzu would chide Joshua as it was his responsibility to "keep good management" over the situation; instead, the Gibeonites are the ones who execute Sun Tzu's principle of pressing the attack effectively. Was Joshua tired? Overconfident? Regardless of the reason God had commanded him to press the attack and destroy all of the inhabitants of Canaan thereby preparing the region for His people to settle. When Joshua follows this direction, both before and after his encounter with the Gibeonites, he is successful in his mission.⁵³ Tragically, it is his failure to execute the principle of pressing the attack that resulted in much of the historical and present unrest in the region.

⁵² Luvaas, 1999, 6–11.

⁵³ Herzog, 1997. 52f.

Business analyst Gerald Michaelson sees the decision of an organization to press home their attack to be a key to ongoing success. He states, “The pressure necessary for success is applied by good people working within good systems that empower them to use their skills.”⁵⁴ Southwest Airlines is used as an example of a business that, through continuing to pressure their competition has made themselves a tremendous marketplace success.⁵⁵ For them to continue to move forward after their initial success resulted from a reliance on a sequential business plan that looked far forward. Michaelson indicates three types of implementation plan including: cumulative, sequential, and simultaneous.⁵⁶ Each has proven successful in their various implementations but the overall essential concept is that regardless of which plan is chosen; it is necessary to have a plan to press the attack and then implement it tactically to achieve continuing success.

The missional leader must possess a commitment to the Master and the mission so great that they are unwilling to stop until victory is achieved.⁵⁷ Thomas “Stonewall” Jackson stood next to a Hunter McGuire while the Union army was deploying for the first attack at Fredericksburg and McGuire asked, “What shall we do, General, with such vast numbers against us?” To which Jackson replied, “Kill them, Kill them all sir! Kill every man!”⁵⁸ The missional leader must not only possess the calling to engage in ministry and the willingness to study and serve; but true effectiveness comes with the fortitude to see the overwhelming nature of that call and respond, “Win them, Win them all! Disciple every one!” The church in America desperately

⁵⁴ G. A. Michaelson, 2001, 114.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 113.

⁵⁶ Michaelson, 2003, 144f.

⁵⁷ Page, 2008, 176f.

⁵⁸ Connelly, 2002, 50.

needs a generation of leaders who will press the attack until every man woman and child on their mission field has heard the Gospel.

Moral Influence

No soldier in history has made a more significant use of the concept of moral influence to achieve victory than Constantine at Milivan Bridge. It was here that the beleaguered Roman general made the decision to inspire his largely Christian army by gathering them together and expressing to them the vision he had of a cross and the message that by it he would conquer. He then ordered a cross to be constructed and his army was indeed victorious following it into battle. For the missional church, and every Christian for that matter, the clearest principle of Sun Tzu's is the principle of moral influence. This is due to the fact that the church fights on a spiritual battleground and the issue of moral ascendancy is vital to the success of the church in its mission.

One of the greatest concerns related to churches making the transition to a missional ministry strategy is that harm will come to their theology and compromise will ensue.⁵⁹ In addition, there is the possibility that moral lapse has already gripped the ministry and there is a fear among the leadership and congregation that making a transition will expose flaws in the organization.⁶⁰ The willingness of ministry leadership to proclaim and adhere to the infallible, inerrant Word of God is the only opportunity a ministry has to achieve moral ascendancy and to retain this advantage. The enemy has gone to great lengths to erode the integrity of ministry leaders for good reason. Benjamin Netanyahu, former Prime Minister of Israel, summarized the issue relating to leadership stating, "Moral clarity is simply being clear about what is right and

⁵⁹ Malphurs, 2004, 46–49.

⁶⁰ Ford, 2001, 11f.

wrong.”⁶¹ If a ministry and its leaders are not clear about moral right and wrong, and the only place this can be found is in Scripture, then there is no possibility of achieving moral influence in a significant manner because it will be neither found nor recognizable if tripped over.⁶²

Throughout history military leaders have perpetrated horrible atrocities in the name of religion and moral right (Richard the Lionheart at Acre as example), causing the world to question anytime this issue is raised. Perhaps what so many leaders recognized that this is such a powerful strategy that even when used wrongly the result can yield victory. In addition, there are numerous examples of enemies seeking to knock their competition off the moral mountain by attacking their integrity, this tactic is attempted frequently in the book of Nehemiah as his enemies attack his integrity to the king.⁶³ Nehemiah is victorious, but that is not historically always the case. After the surrender at Appomattox Courthouse Robert E. Lee wrote, “We failed, but in the good providence of God, apparent failure often proves a blessing.”⁶⁴ The most wonderful result of making moral influence a part of missional strategy is not only that it motivates people to do the work of ministry, but also in the event of failure the ability to look for future blessing is retained.

Disposition of Military Strength

Two books on church transition appeared several years past in relatively close proximity to one another; *Simple Church* by Thom Rainer and *Transformational Church* by Ed Stetzer. Both have impacted the evangelical church culture, yet both have much more to offer to the church leader who determines the difference between the two. Simple Church deals with

⁶¹ Michaelson, 2003, 56.

⁶² Falwell, 2008, 192.

⁶³ Page, 2008, 132f.

⁶⁴ Kaltman, 2000, 317.

strategy, transitioning ministry to do less more effectively (much like *Good to Great* by Jim Collins has accomplished in a business sense).⁶⁵ *Transformational Church* is a manual of tactics, which accounts for why the “Transformational Loop” can be entered at any point and all of the growth indicators in transformational churches are so similar.⁶⁶ The problem with many existing churches is illustrated by their interaction with these texts and others like them; they fail to understand whether the book is dealing with strategy or tactics.

To correctly dispose of ministry strength, namely resources, the ministry leader must understand not only what strategy is, but what their strategy is and then hold to it. The transition to a missional model for most churches represents a shift in strategy, while the means by which they choose to accomplish their mission comprise their tactics. Reading a manual on tactics and adopting it as a strategy is far too limiting in scope and the results can be a disaster. God has given the believer, and His church, weapons for warfare, but if they go unused or misused then the believer and church are vulnerable and likely to fail. It is the child on the bicycle who wears their helmet but fails to buckle their chinstrap. Similarly, it is the leadership team that reads about small groups and adopts this tactic as an overall strategy. Both are apt to suffer severe head injuries. Sun Tzu’s principles dealing with high-level dumb delve into the results of this mistaken use of resources.

At the battle of Cambrai during World War I British forces used a combination of massed tanks and infantry together for the first time in history to achieve a significant breakthrough with minimal casualties. Unfortunately, the gains were so unprecedented that the British command had no idea how to follow up their success and even doubted that they would

⁶⁵ T. S. Rainer, 2011, 171f.

⁶⁶ Stetzer, 2010, 32f.

be able to do so.⁶⁷ The result being that the German army regrouped and recaptured virtually all of the ground lost during the following two days. More tragic was that the ultimate outcome of continued stalemate lead to this tactic not only never again being duplicated during the war, but the adoption of the doctrine that rapid tank movement for deep incursions behind enemy lines was not feasible.⁶⁸ The great English historian, Captain Basil Liddell Hart, writing on the subject between world wars disagreed vehemently and went so far as to outline a strategy using tanks to conquer France. The British government rejected his arguments, but a German general named Rommel found his work genius and utilized the principles during his campaigns in France and again in Africa during the Second World War.⁶⁹ Ministry leaders must recognize the difference between strategy and tactics, as well as possess the acumen to apply both in their individual ministry setting.

Remove Vulnerability

The opening chapter of Thom Rainer's book *Simple Church* challenges the reader, assumed to be connected with church life in some capacity, with the question as to why so many types of endeavor understand that working unencumbered is more effective than the alternative and yet the church refuses to adapt in the same manner.⁷⁰ Many traditional ministries continue to spend a great deal of their resources on attempting to relive the past rather than to reach people in the present much less the future. Churches seem to refuse to accept opportunities to grow or adapt and remain mired in the repetitions of the past.⁷¹ Sun Tzu would look at the state of these

⁶⁷ Devries, *Battles that Changed Warfare*, 2008, 178–181.

⁶⁸ Alexandar, 1993, 210f.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 211.

⁷⁰ T. S. Rainer, 2011, 7–10.

⁷¹ Malphurs, 2004, 35–39.

churches decry their leadership for not recognizing the difference between the time to defend and the time to attack; in ministry terms, when to build, hire additional staff, launch a new ministry, and when to simplify and economize.

In the past, programs have been a tactic used to drive church growth, but now times have changed and the continued use of this practice has led to the subversion of the local church by choosing to allow programs to become an idol.⁷² To become a missional church, among other things, churches must stop focusing internally through program driven ministry and begin focusing outwardly on neighborhood engagement.⁷³ That is not to say all programs are antiquated, it is the focus that they can produce that is inherently deadly to the local church. How is the difference identified? Simply, any program that cannot be ended is an idol and must be ended. The ‘simple’ idea is much less about what the church has done in the past and is focused on finding a few areas of ministry that can be done to excellence in the future.⁷⁴ From the decision of which strategy to adopt the transiting church then “simplifies” by freeing itself of every ministry excluding those couple that now comprise the church strategy.

The next step in transition is to answer the question, “How do we best accomplish these ministries?” The answer to this question establishes the ministries tactics that can then be communicated thoroughly and acted upon. Sun Tzu would make much of the concept of removing encumbrances, or vulnerabilities prior to implementing any tactical action because to advance in an encumbered state would harm the effectiveness of the army. More importantly, God challenges the believer to remove vulnerability for the sake of achieving victory. The

⁷² Wegner 2012, 121f.

⁷³ A. J. Roxburgh, *Missional: Joining God in the Neighborhood*, 2011, 169.

⁷⁴ T. S. Rainer, 2006, 4f.

effective missional church is a ministry with little encumbrance or vulnerability. Recognition is important; orthodox theology must never be altered for the sake of change. In order to increase the speed of his troops movement to the Little Bighorn George Custer left behind two Gatling guns (i.e., primitive machine guns).⁷⁵ This decision to leave behind the wrong items was fatal, just as altering from the Scripture is fatal to the church. Methodologies should be left behind, just as Sony has left the Walkman and Video Cassettes;⁷⁶ the church must determine to leave behind antiquated methodologies to prevent their becoming idols and to make room for new tactical opportunities.

Attain Relative and Strategic Superiority

The concluding verses of Daniel chapter 5 are another excellent covalence of the spiritual principle intersecting with the strategies and tactics of the temporal battlefield. The fall of Babylon is one of the greatest military successes in all history and though the biblical reader is benefitted by the lesson of the “handwriting on the wall” and God’s authority over all kings and kingdoms, the fact is that as the hand is writing on the wall, the Persian army has infiltrated the city and begun this final phase of conquest. The historian Herodotus records that after Cyrus had defeated the primary Babylonian army and captured their king several months prior, he then had his army dig a channel several miles upriver from Babylon. Cyrus stationed his army near the river gate of the city and ordered them to enter, as soon as the river level lowered enough to become passable, he then opened the channel and directed the Euphrates river temporarily in a

⁷⁵ G. Smith, 2009, 229f.

⁷⁶ G. Michaelson, 2003, 44f.

new direction allow his men to enter. Given the massive size of the city it was several hours before his troops reached the palace and thereby concluding his conquest of the city.⁷⁷

Cyrus and Sun Tzu had the same understanding of the cost to attack a walled city and therefor he seized an opportunity to negate the advantage of the colossal walls and defenses of the city and gained a strategic advantage over his enemy. One could critique Cyrus by pointing out that the river gate was the obvious weak point of the city and that waiting for dry season may have produced the same opportunity. The Babylonians recognized this weakness and planned accordingly owing to the fact that the city had stood to this point. The difference comes in the superiority of the commander (Cyrus) who was able to maintain the secret of the channel as well as have his forces concentrated so that when Belshazzar decided to call his leaders to a feast and weaken his command structure they were prepared to strike instantly.

These strategic opportunities are available for every ministry. The challenge is not in having an opportunity to minister, it is having the strategic freedom and tactical ability to seize the opportunities as God presents them.⁷⁸ This is one of the most important reasons churches should choose to make the transition to a missional model, to enable them to seize upon the opportunities for ministry before the enemy. When the church will not engage in volunteering in the local public schools history has shown that the enemy is only too glad to fill textbook committees and school boards. When the local church will not take a stand on moral issues facing their community such as abortion, family values, and religious liberty, the enemy has offered their leadership in these areas.⁷⁹ The church must engage its community for the purpose

⁷⁷ Walvoord, 1971, 129–131.

⁷⁸ Rusaw, 2004, 119f.

⁷⁹ Falwell, 2008, 227–236.

of influencing the culture with the Gospel and this will lead to uncomfortable ministry; yet effective ministry will usually be uncomfortable.⁸⁰

Develop, Gather, and Invest in Intelligence

It is the contention of the author that the wise leader never ceases to seek wisdom and knowledge. Education is not about the achievement of a station in life, or the accolades of colleagues, but rather serves to equip and sharpen the leader to provide ever more effective service to Christ and his ministry. In addition, it is not enough for the leader to expect to become an expert in all areas and to have mastery of all information. Gerald Michaelson suggests that there are three essential people in the life of every effective leader that are necessary in the process of intelligence gathering and utilization: a guru, a coach, and a sponsor.⁸¹ In other words, someone of whom one can ask for counsel, one to provide encouragement and tactical guidance, and one to stand next to moving forward. Sun Tzu states, “Generally, when an army of 100,000 is raised and dispatched on a distant war, the expenses borne by the people together with the disbursements made by the treasury will amount to 1000 pieces of gold per day. There will be a continuous commotion both at home and abroad; people will be involved with convoys and exhausted from performing transportation services, and 700,000 households will be unable to continue their farm work. Hostile armies confront each other for years in order to struggle for victory in a decisive battle; yet if one who begrudge is the expenditure of 100 pieces of gold in honors and emoluments remains ignorant of his enemy’s situation, he is completely devoid of

⁸⁰ Towns, 2007, 238–243.

⁸¹ G. A. Michaelson, 2003, 82.

humanity. Such a man is no leader of troops; no capable assistant to his sovereign; no master of victory.”⁸²

Many churches find themselves dying and not understanding why a once thriving ministry is now in danger of closing. Certainly, there are reasons for this as numerous as there are struggling churches, but a question worth asking must relate to the information being received by the ministry and their ability to understand and take action on that information. An effective and equipped leadership team may not be sufficient to answer these questions. Especially, on issues dealing with church traditions the church members and leaders may be too close to the situation to deal with the information needed and outside evaluation becomes essential.⁸³ Solomon had the opportunity to ask for anything and he chose wisdom. Because he chose well God granted him a great deal else. Perhaps the focus of prayer for the church should relate less to budgets and buildings and focus more on seeking God’s wisdom for how to best accomplish the mission He has called the church to accomplish.

Focus Leadership Credit

Perhaps no force has been as extraordinary as the Mighty Men that stood with David. There is a great lesson to be gleaned from the three men who stood with David when the rest of the army fled; the lesson that great warriors respond to great leaders and this interaction leads to great victories. No great leader can achieve extraordinary results without extraordinary people around them. Jerry Falwell had Elmer Towns, Pierre Guillerman, B.R. Lakin; Napoleon had Sault, and Murat; Lee had Jackson, Stuart, and A.P Hill. It is not sufficient for a leader to attempt to carry a ministry on his shoulders; he must understand that God has created ministry to be a

⁸² G. A. Michaelson, 2001, 26.

⁸³ Malphurs, 2004, 62–65.

team undertaking and great leaders surround themselves with great leaders.⁸⁴ Furthermore, assembling leadership credit will allow the leader to accomplish more because they will not battle alone. David with three other men vanquished an entire army of Philistines; this success was certainly helped by Eleazar who fought until his hand was locked to his sword. John Maxwell makes the point in a number of his leadership books that the ability of the key leader will attract leaders that are slightly below their own.⁸⁵ Applying this concept to David as a military leader, it follows that his ability as a warrior must have been extreme to have attracted the Mighty Men to his banner.

Little is said in the Bible of David training for battle yet given his exploits, the battle described above among them, it can be inferred that he spent significant effort transforming from shepherd to premier warrior. A transformation such as this; such a tremendous display of heart and effort, would no doubt have resulted in a significant boost in morale and challenge to his leaders and army alike.⁸⁶ When asked regarding their leadership style, a missional leader should always respond that they lead from the front. This means doing the tasks that are hard and humbling so that the integrity of the leader will be clear to all.⁸⁷

A tour of the Gettysburg battlefield can be an inspiration with one stop on the route being especially powerful. Near the end of the route there is a small cluster of trees on the left side of the road with a large memorial beneath them. Yet few tourists even stop at the sculpture but continue approximately fifty yards ahead to a point where three cannon flank a square of white ropes that is often surrounded by photographers, reenactors, tourists, and people of all ages and

⁸⁴ Putman, 2008, 85–94.

⁸⁵ Maxwell, 2004, 47f.

⁸⁶ Putman, 2008, 95–101.

⁸⁷ Scazzero, 2010, 211.

backgrounds standing silent, many weeping. It was here that General Louis Armistead fell mortally wounded on the third day of battle having lead his men closest to victory of any that day. During the action known as Pickett's Charge, nearly 15,000 Confederate soldiers made a combined assault on that small clump of trees and were repulsed taking nearly 6,000 casualties.

Armistead's brigade was supporting fellow Virginians under generals Jim Kemper and Richard Garnett during the charge. Seeing their brigades decimated by Winfield Scott Hancock's Union division under the trees Armistead's brigade faltered.⁸⁸ Then stabbing his sword through his had Armistead rallied his men, crossed the wall and nearly won the battle when he was killed during the Union counterattack.⁸⁹ Armistead was not the most famous general yet his courage, self-sacrifice, and willingness to give all for his objective inspire thousands of visitors every day. Louis Armistead had the leadership credit accumulated to cause his brigade to follow him to destruction when many other units retreated before crossing even half of the battlefield during the charge. His decision to focus leadership credit brought his nation closer to victory than at any other point in the war. Ministry leaders must choose to live and serve in such a way as to inspire leadership credit among the people they are on mission with so than when the situation becomes desperate and the Lord directs action, they can pursue victory together.⁹⁰

Prepare for Breakthroughs (Follow-Up Victories)

How could Peter and the other disciples fail to understand that the promise Jesus is making to them above is a promise of victory that goes before the Gospel. When a promise of victory is held the leadership team must plan for breakthroughs in the enemy's line; victory

⁸⁸ Tucker, 2004, 362–363.

⁸⁹ Ibid., 364.

⁹⁰ Putman, 2008, 222–224.

should never be a surprise, it should be expected and a plan to follow up ready to be executed. For Peter this lesson is not coming, immediately; however, at Pentecost he is prepared to step forward and follow up the breakthrough provided by the move of the Holy Spirit. The ability to experience a breakthrough on the battlefield is not unusual; it can be caused by the enemy doing something foolish; similar to Sickles moving his Union corps forward at Gettysburg on day two blocking his artillery support and leaving a gap in the Union lines.⁹¹ When Satan allows a hole in his battle plan or implements flawed tactics, the church must be prepared to respond before he can fill the gap. These omissions are rare dependent on the ability of the opponent and in Satan the church faces an adversary surpassed in ability only by her Advocate. Much more frequent are breakthroughs that come as a result to tactical actions from a strategically missional force that is actively engaging its enemy.

Historically, Napoleon Bonaparte was one of the most skilled generals in producing and exploiting a breakthrough. He became so reliant on the ability of his army to achieve a breach in the enemy line, or to turn its flank that he altered his battle tactics to exploit these successes. Many armies of his time would fight in linear formations of infantry to maximize their firepower in either attack or defense; this served to minimize casualties to cannon fire as a shot would only affect the men in the few rows that it impacted. Napoleon arranged his infantry into deep columns of sometimes 20 or more rows so that while casualties to cannon fire were extreme once the column had reached the enemy line they would be unable to prevent a breakthrough.⁹² In addition, he made a tactical habit of massing his artillery on a single point on the battlefield, then ordering a cavalry charge to force the infantry into square defensive formations, then withdrew

⁹¹ Tucker, 2004, 236–247.

⁹² Alexandar, 1993, 116–118.

his cavalry nearby and destroying the squares with his guns. The cavalry would then charge again to hold the breakthrough open until the infantry columns could charge through. His final and perhaps greatest innovation was the attack from the rear.⁹³ He would fix the enemy army on a point of his choosing and then send a large force to attack the enemy's flank or rear creating panic and allowing him to destroy the enemy army.⁹⁴ It could be argued that what made Napoleon master of Europe was his ability to exploit breakthroughs and follow up his victories.

The logic of his tactics is clear on the battlefield and yet seems to be lost on the spiritual battlefield. What is the use of praying for victory when one is unprepared to act when the Holy Spirit grants the request? One of the fastest ways to create a spiritual breakthrough in the church is to be intentional in the act of creating community with the surrounding community.⁹⁵ This breakthrough is seized advantageously by practicing hospitality in the church.⁹⁶ The one-two punch is this: engage the community by engaging people individually (coach a youth sports team, volunteer at school, minister at the hospital or nursing home, etc.) and then build on those relationships to connect them to the church who will treat them as valued guest rather than as numbers or resources. This process was utilized by the early missional church to affect the Roman world and has proven effective in America.⁹⁷

⁹³ Alexander, Bevin. *How Wars are Won*. (New York, New York: Three Rivers Press, 2002) 266f.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 83f.

⁹⁵ Stetzer, 2009, 149–152.

⁹⁶ Roxburgh, Alan J. *Introducing the Missional Church*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2009) 188f.

⁹⁷ Towns, 2007, 138.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

Project Summary

I remember walking across the stage in the Vines Center at Liberty University with a piece of paper in my left hand and my right hand still throbbing from the firm grip of Jerry Falwell, and approaching Paul Fink who grabbed me by the arm and whispered in my ear, “now go preach the Word.” I had considered beginning work on a Master’s degree that fall, but God had another plan; and that led me and my new life to northern Michigan, where I would serve as a youth pastor in my first church. While I loved youth ministry the call from my wife’s former church in South Florida seemed like a welcome change from the “cold” climate in which we were serving.

Sitting next to my wife, Faith, after having just preached my first sermon in view of a call to what remained of Calvary Baptist Church, West Palm Beach, Florida our hearts leapt when we found out that we had received a unanimous call to my first senior pastorate. Calvary had once boasted extensive facilities and a weekly attendance of well over 900, but was now a beleaguered congregation meeting in the gymnasium on the campus of their Christian school and struggling to maintain 50 in weekly attendance. At the close of that first Sunday service I attended my first business meeting to discuss the schools relationship with the church. The result of the meeting was that at 23 years of age I saw my first church split without having spoken more than a few words. For the next two years my wife and I fought to settle the loan’s owed to the church by the school from which we had separated. To avoid an audit by the Internal Revenue Service, which had been intentionally designed to close the church so that delinquent loans would not have to be repaid, and attempt to grow a ministry when every Sunday we would arrive for worship and have

to remove 80–90 garbage bags piled in front of our entrance doors, periodic tampering with our sound system, locks changed on doors without notice, and other occurrences.

It was in these circumstances that I met members of the Florida Baptist Convention at the Jacksonville Pastors Conference. With the help of the convention we were able to relaunch Calvary in a new, miraculously provided and equipped facility. Though, when the leadership of the Christian school used their cars to block the exits when we attempted to move our church equipment to the new facility and called the police to have me arrested, the future seemed in doubt. John Brackin and I now laugh about my calling him from the gymnasium storeroom and asking if the Association had funds available to pay for my bail. Funds however, were not required, as the police looked at my paperwork and directed the school leadership to complete the loading and to help us in any way that I required.

With tremendous help from our state convention and local Association Calvary was relaunched as a Southern Baptist church plant with 77 excited adults in attendance. One week later my wife and I, and two deacons stood in the middle of our brand-new sanctuary with standing water up to our ankles and blue sky above due to a hurricane removing the roof. That next Sunday we met without power as all 17 of us walked past the 24 hour of eviction notice that would precede the demolishing of the strip mall we had rented. God was good, and I received a call from the pastor of Haverhill Baptist Church offering us facilities at a minimal charge to allow us to continue as a ministry. With help from our association we not only moved to this new facility, but settled the defaulted loans and other issues with the church's former Christian school. It was a dark day when I received a call from the pastor at Haverhill informing me that my remaining deacons had expressed to him their intent to personally gain control of the church's settlement funds. His words to these men resulted in their calling me to inform me that

God had directed them to resign from the church leaving me with only three members who were not part of my family. Sitting in John Brackin's office, I asked him if I would ever serve in ministry again and his response was that we should pray about it. He further advised me that if God would continue to use me in ministry that I should actively pursue higher education for that purpose. It was under these circumstances that I began my journey back to Liberty to begin work on a Doctor of Ministry degree and ultimately this project.

This project is born in the mind and the heart of a pastor seeking to make an impact for Christ through the local church in America and wondering how long it is possible to survive as a pastor in these prevailing conditions. I have been told that these early circumstances, and those more recent that will be discussed later, are unique to my ministry and should not be viewed as common. While I hope that this is accurate, the longer I serve in ministry, and minister to and with other pastors, I find that the specific circumstances may be unique but the hardness and scars that come with service to Christ in his church are universal. It has brought to me an ever greater realization of the wisdom used by Paul in speaking to Timothy about the church and ministry in relation to serving as a soldier on the battlefield in a great war. From the secular I read Sun Tzu and others who seemed to be offering insights that paralleled with scripture. Sun Tzu stated, "The skillful warriors in ancient times first made themselves invincible and then awaited the enemy's moment of vulnerability. Invincibility depends on one's self, but the enemies' vulnerability on himself. It follows that those skilled in war can make themselves invincible but cannot cause an enemy to be certainly vulnerable. Therefore, it can be said that, one may know how to achieve victory, but cannot necessarily do so. Invincibility lies in the defense; the possibility of victory in the attack. Defend yourself when the enemy's strength is abundant, and attack the enemy when it is inadequate. Those who are skilled in defense hide

themselves as under the most secret recesses of earth. Those skilled in attack flash forth as from above the topmost heights of heaven. Thus, they are capable both of protecting themselves and of gaining a complete victory.”⁹⁸ This project seeks to minister to my fellow church and ministry leaders by expanding on this metaphor and offering an insight into ministry preparation and application from the perspective of engaging in spiritual warfare.

There are numerous tools that could have provided the framework for this study but having read the works of Gerald A. Michaelson, Bevin Alexander, Mark McNeilly, and Rupert Smith, each utilizing *Art of War* by Sun Tzu to provide a framework for business strategy, as well as military strategy I began to see numerous similarities in the principles of the life and teachings of Jesus. In addition, having spoken with pastors and other church leaders who possess a military background and are familiar with Sun Tzu on a professional level but are now seeking a tool to clarify ministry tactics and strategy the same way Sun Tzu does for military issues, I perceived a need for a tool of this sort. During those early days of my ministry I read many books on the church that all seemed to have the answer but none seemed to fully agree on what the answer was. The question came to me, “what if they are all correct and the issue is not whether their methods are effective but rather, where, and in what cultural settings will each method be most effective?” I searched in vain for a text that dealt directly with how to make tactical applications in various conditions. Being successful in many areas but with the notable exception of the church I believe that there is a need for literary analysis within a proven framework for success in conflict. I chose to relate these tactical applications to the strategic framework of the missional church because I believe the missional model is a biblical, as well as effective model to reach our diverse American culture with the Gospel.

Project Impact for Kingdom Growth

Without the prospect of adding to the growth and advancement of God's kingdom the countless hours over the past three years of my life in producing this project can only be seen as waste. My heartbeat in the production of this project was to provide a plan of action for those serving, or desiring to serve in a missional style of ministry, a set of parameters that would serve as an aide as they prayerfully implement their great commission strategy. When I began to outline and discuss this project, my rationale was focused on an offensive of style of ministry.

After 13 years of full-time pastoral ministry I became frustrated by so many established churches that seem to have little concept of what it means to be effective in ministry. For so many churches that I have encountered, it seems to be normal to be satisfied with giving a few thousand dollars annually to overseas missionaries and having several types of underfunded programs that they consider to be outreach. Through his writings and various speaking engagements which I have attended, Ed Stetzer has emphasized the ability of the local church to be effective. Clearly, in examining the bibliography for this project, his works have influenced the content and conclusions. The overall theme that seems to have developed over the past 10 years of his writing, in my opinion, center on studying various facets of ministries that are being effective in achieving their ministry goals.

I came to the realization that the studies and statistics that would justify adopting missional ministry were already being undertaken by Stetzer and his team. He has accomplished the work of justifying both the approach and the absolute necessity of tailoring ministerial tactics to the immediate culture of a particular ministry. The goal of this project is to impact kingdom growth by offering a framework for the application of new ministry methods for the local church. Often in reading books dealing with church ministry I have found that the subject matter is

remarkably similar. As I have had the opportunity to teach concepts relating to community engagement and growth strategies for the local church to pastors and ministry leaders with little or no formal ministry training, it has concerned me that if they struggle to understand some of the books available in this genera then they would struggle to understand the majority and perhaps become frustrated and curtail their personal development.

With the popular advent of online theological education, quality leadership education for those in ministry has become readily available. My concern is that much of the material available for this training is written with career ministers and those with significant church experience in mind. Little exists to help those retiring from military service and entering the ministry to bridge between both callings and enable them to minister utilizing their career experience. Further, many of the books available dealing with church ministry today are written from the perspective of telling the reader what to do in order to accomplish their ministry goals rather than how to create an effective strategy with tactical, or methodological implementation. I believe that one of the most important contributions that can be made for Kingdom growth is to help church leaders understand how to recognize and make the most of ministry opportunities presented by the Holy Spirit. It is important to provide means for ministry leaders to be able to assess their own individual ministry situation and effectively respond to their situation.

As a young pastor, this would have proved an invaluable resource for me since no books were available in Christian circles that explained how to recover a million dollar loan from another entity that refused to pay but was able to do so, or what to do when a hurricane destroys all of your church facilities. These situations thankfully are too rare to merit their own book, but a lesson on how to accurately assess crisis situations dealing with church ministry, or a roadmap for developing a strategic ministry plan, would have been extremely valuable. Thankfully, in the

absence of this education, God chose to protect and preserve not only my family and I, but the ministry's that he called me to lead; though I no doubt required a great deal of his undivided attention.

Personal Project Impact

This project has not only had a great impact on me personally; it represents a record of how God has worked and moved in my life as a pastor over the past three years and more. Further, it is with the same passage of scripture that my greatest ministry encouragement has come, "Fear thou not, for I am with thee, be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen thee, yea, I will help thee, yea, I will uphold thee with my righteous right hand," states Isaiah 41:10⁹⁹ When I began this project I was serving as a senior pastor of a small inner-city church in South Florida. With the help of the Florida Baptist convention and the Palm Lakes Baptist Association I had made the decision to close our church plant. We asked Brackin to return all of the assistance checks to the convention and help us to use the remaining church assets for Kingdom growth.

During this time, one of the associational churches that had been damaged in the hurricane was facing closure and was unable to pay the pastor; God used the situation to provide a new place of ministry for me and my family. It was at the First Baptist Church of Hypoluxo that I first engaged in a missional ministry strategy to engage the cultural diversity of our community. It was during this time that I began my studies at Liberty and read for the first time *Art of War*. Listening to Elmer Towns lecture about the innovations in the life of the church during his ministry service, and his obvious passion to seek out continuing innovative methods for greater Kingdom impact inspired me to take every one of his classes possible. Since I had

⁹⁹ Holy Bible, KJV.

such a goal in ministry it seemed only logical that my Doctor of Ministry project relate to subjects that would help me to accomplish the goals God has set before me, as well as serve to help my colleagues in their pursuits.

Beginning the reading preparation was great fun as it allowed me to research into topics that I love and would have read recreationally if not for academic purposes. At Hypoluxo they were a number of issues to contend with, the greatest of these was inheriting approximately 30 elderly white people who lived in a community that was only three percent Anglo and its makeup who were not eager to see their church reflect their community. Known for a high rate of violent crime, significant gang activity, and 90 percent of the community residents living at or below poverty, the San Castle Community had only one church and we took it as our mission to share the gospel with every person of every nationality in our 1200 home community.

Three years later, two new missions had been planted with a third in the preparation phase, a drastic reduction in overall crime, and a worship attendance of approximately 350 the mission had been accomplished. It was at this time that I began outlining and writing for this project as my coursework concluded. I was convinced that aggressively following biblical principles related to the organization and function of the local church, operating within the framework of *Art of War*, would result in a similar outcome wherever applied. Certainly, there had been a great cost in dealing with existing leadership who had no desire to engage the community, and entrenched poorly equipped staff that loud for the church of the past; but being interviewed as a transformational church and being recognized by the Florida Baptist Convention for having the seventh highest baptism rate in the state eased much of the pain and sold me on the idea that initiative results in victory.

Having begun the writing of this project with the concept of initiative resulting in victory, I moved my family to Southport North Carolina and accepted the call to pastor a church with a 140 year history of destroying pastors who they limited to an average tenure of 19 months during that time. Ministry after all, in my mind, required a posture of initiative and activity and what better place to apply these lessons than a small town where the impressive buildings and empty pews of Southport Baptist Church awaited. By the end of my third year as their pastor we had seen average worship attendance increase from less than a hundred to more than 400 annually adding nearly 100 members annually and seeing every historical attendance figure shattered. We became the largest Baptist church in our County and had great expectations of reaching Brunswick County in the same way we had reached San Castle previously.

There were numerous factors however, that I had not anticipated, and the moment that the initiative was lost the beginning of a dramatic downward spiral began. I saw one dissenting Deacon overcome the will of the other 15 because the majority feared the personal consequences of their ministry decisions. I found that the offer of power and position was sufficient to turn some of the leaders on whom I most depended into “Judas Iscariot.” In short, this project had to, in large part, be deleted and rewritten to reflect not only the consequences of a transition that failed, but also lessons involving the cost of defeat.

This project has for me, become a narrative of the lessons that I have learned at great cost throughout my professional research and ministry service to Christ in his church. Now at the conclusion, I find myself living on a seminary campus studying, determined to grow my skills, develop new abilities, and recover from the great cost to my family and myself, while looking forward to the next place of service. For me this study comes down to the realization that whatever the cost, yet I will serve him.

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