

The Inscrutable Question: Momentum Testing: Disaster Testing: Personal, 1 Pet 1:7-8; & National: Aaron Wolf's "Little Pink Churches for You & Me"

4. Disaster Testing:

Whereas People, Thought, and System testings are personal and often subtle, this is not the case with disaster testing. This category is very obvious and presents itself in two ways: (1) personal disaster and (2) national disaster.

Personal disaster includes illness, disease, injury, or congenital handicap. There is the trauma of the loss of a loved one, employment, reputation, or finances. Sometimes the loss of provisions is involved, manifest by hunger, thirst, or exposure.

Whatever the event, it is usually viewed at least initially as a tragedy. But there really are no tragedies except in Greek plays. It is interesting to note the definition of the word "tragedy" from an English dictionary:

Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary, s.v. "tragedy":

1 a: a medieval narrative poem or tale typically describing the downfall of a great man **b:** a serious drama typically describing a conflict between the protagonist and a superior force (as destiny) and having a sorrowful or disastrous conclusion that excites pity or terror **c:** the literary genre of tragic dramas **2 a:** a disastrous event.

These definitions more aptly describe the circumstances of the believer who is under intensive divine discipline. However, momentum testing is designed to give the adult believer more motivation to apply doctrine under pressure and to accelerate his advance toward spiritual maturity. Disaster testing thus becomes a critical point in this advance in which the believer can be tempted to bolt the system or, preferably, use the doctrine he has to manage the disaster, endure its trials, and emerge with an enhanced frame of reference regarding the power of doctrine.

Peter speaks of this area of disaster testing in:

1 Peter 1:7 - These [**testings**] have come so that your **faith** [**the application of biblical principles & problem-solving devices to circumstances**]—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire [**even gold which endures the fires of purification will be destroyed on the last day**]—may be proved genuine [**faith in the perception of doctrine is proved genuine, i.e., it is verified as what you really think, when utilized under disaster testing**] and may **result** in praise, glory, and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed [**the rapture of the Church and the events that follow before the evaluation throne of Christ**].

v. 8 - Although you have never seen Him [**Jesus Christ**], you continue to love Him [**reciprocal love culminating in occupation with Christ**], and even though you do not see Him now [**He is seated in heaven at the right hand of the throne of God**], yet you continue believing [**the operation of an ongoing absolute confidence in the testimony of the Word of God about Him**] and you rejoice to the maximum with inexpressible and glorious joy [**problem-solving device #9: sharing the happiness of God**], having been clothed with glory [**Nike Award #5: the uniform of glory**].

Peter describes tranquility of soul that is the result of a confident faith in doctrine under pressure. Faith is something that cannot be proved. It is a noun that denotes confidence in its object without dependence on empiricism or rationalism to prove its validity, its virtue, or its veracity. These attributes are considered immutable components of God's character and therefore the testimony of His Word is proof enough to warrant an unmeasured faith in its claims. Faith in God's word is more powerful than any other force in the universe. Therefore, the greater the problem the more powerful the faith.

The second category of disaster testing is historical disaster with which we are all now very familiar. It involves the bad decisions of others in which we as believers are involved by association. The current Islamic War is waged by those who hate us because of their perceived understanding that we are a Christian nation. We aren't but they think we are. Further, this hatred is exacerbated by our support of the nation Israel which is the target of their most virulent hatred.

Because the Protestant pastors in this country have failed miserably in the presentation of biblical truths for over a century, the people have either never gained the thought or if having acquired it in one generation it has been lost in the next.

Wolf, Aaron D. "Little Pink Churches for You and Me." *Chronicles*, May 2002, 17-19:

American churches have lost their nerve at a time when people seem to be flocking to them *en masse*, looking for solace, meaning, and leadership in the face of impending crisis. What do they find? More often than not, they will be subjected to a glut of feel-good praise choruses, guitars and drums, and pithy sermons on anything but the appointed text for the day—not to mention such Christian symbols as "God Bless America" and prayers that amount to: "Lord, keep us steadfast while the U.S. military bombs Afghanistan back into the stone age." What they will not find (in most cases) is the hope of the Gospel offered through Word and Sacrament. Nor, by and large, will they learn about the *significance* of Christ's Incarnation (a point of particular importance in the face of Islam), Christ's Cross (which brings up the nasty subject of what put Him there), His Resurrection (the basis of all Christian hope), or His Ascension (which points to His present reign and His future return as Judge of the quick and the dead).

Why not? After all, these are not complex points of esoteric dogma: They make up what C.S. Lewis calls 'mere Christianity'—that which is common to all Christian denominations. There is, to be sure, a core of truth that we can call "mere Christianity." However, as the Oxford don points out, there is no such thing as a "mere Christian." Human beings are complex creations of God, made up of one or several ethnic backgrounds, racial traits, regional and local identities.

Furthermore, there is no such thing as a "mere Christian church," devoid of a history of theological conflict over fine points of doctrine and existing apart from a real community of people who share familial and ethnic ties and tradition. "Mere Christianity" exists in the foggy realm of ideas; real people must encounter mere Christianity in real churches that preserve real, historic traditions. Attempts to create mere Christian churches—such as the many evangelical or "nondenominational" sects—eventually default into one of the convoluted traditions that are mostly Anabaptist or Pentecostal. Bereft of any coherent heritage, these groups experience high turnover and quickly degenerate into dog-and-pony shows.

These nondenominational, big pink churches now surround our American cities, slapped up overnight next to the Wal-Marts and mini- and maxi-malls. But just as quickly, our traditional churches within our crumbling cities are being spray-painted and converted into little pink churches for you and me.



Experts offer any number of explanations as to why American churches have lost their nerve, all of which contain a nugget of truth. But at the root of all these tendencies is a common factor: American churches are beginning to look much the same, the result of a simultaneous and collective loss of identity.

Lutherans, Catholics, Presbyterians, Episcopalians—clergy and laity—have capitulated to the great homogenizing force that is America. Every aspect of their lives they have let erode into the American sea. Once this erosion occurs, “mere Christianity”—that deposit of faith that is guarded at the core—is free to float away, as well.

With the loss of identity comes a loss of nerve, precisely because nerve is a function of identity. Bold defiance of an enemy can only come from someone who clearly understands who his enemy is. In order to know who your enemy is, you must know yourself. That means discovering and engaging your own tradition, which is precisely the opposite of the impulse of every major Christian denomination in America.

There will be no passion for the truth—no nerve—in the hearts of Christians in American churches, unless Lutherans, Catholics, Presbyterians, Baptists, etc., rediscover their own identities. Until that happens, joint campaigns of resistance against common enemies such as militant Islam will also lack nerve, and probably will not even be mounted.

We cannot simply write or speak about the loss of nerve and thereby transform the homogeneous “American church” back into something that has depth and guts. Reinvigorating the nerve of American churches by rediscovering identity requires real work, in the home and in the parish, before it can affect a denomination. It requires fathers to catechize their children, parishioners to resist whenever they see the inevitable announcement in the bulletin that the church is planning to add a little pink rock ‘n’ roll worship service, and pastors to express outrage whenever their superiors sign off on ecumenist documents.

The “soul drain” has now become so pronounced that the nation is under disaster testing and is failing that test.

Only the few who are positive hold the key to survival. Only those who are in the Pivot have the power to hold the line until those who are in pursuit of truth can join them. Only a change of mind by the reprobates of this land or their systematic elimination from history by means of historical disaster can alter the spiritual consciousness of our population so that doctrinal concepts again achieve a position of priority and prominence among the people.

It is not patriotism that enables a nation to survive national disaster, it is the invisible impact of divine truth in the souls of a few sophisticated believers that enables Jesus Christ to lower the wall of fire that protects our land from predators, be they terrorists, invading armies, or domestic rabble.