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Stupendous Change Leadership Series: Depth of character

A Positive Mental Attitude, PMA or some similar term is generally used to describe an attribute of people who are able to adapt to extremely trying times. The major outward appearance of these folks is that they are not overcome by fear of the situation, whether you call it stupendous change, disaster, catastrophe, pandemic or another name. This outward appearance is just a symptom however, of a more powerful inner condition called depth of character.

John Wayne made a movie called "True Grit" in which he starred as the man who had it. Pretty much in everyone of his movies he was that true grit man, the take charge leader who achieved the impossible, just because he could, and the situation demanded such a person. Enter "The Duke" to the rescue. The reason John was able to pull off those roles with such

success, is that he really wasn't acting, he was just playing a character of the real John Wayne.

So you are not John Wayne. You are a unique personality created in God's image. Are you really comfortable as that person, or are you the person you are truly afraid of who you could become? The opposite of faith is not unbelief, even though every preacher may tell you so. The opposite of faith is fear. You become a faithful person by overcoming your fears.

Simple as it sounds the application is much more difficult, or is it? Faith is gained by living through something by/or in which you can't control the outcome. The more of those events you are involved in, the more willing you should be to try other things. Chances are almost 100 percent the results will never turn out the way you envisioned in any faithful adventure, but



that does not mean you did and do not grow as a person during the experience and beyond. On the backside of all adventures is the reward of increasing the depth and complexity of your created character.

Faith however is not presumption. Presumption is foolishness, because it doesn't factor into account the true reality of the situation. So the question becomes how do you know which is faith and which is presumption, and how or why does this relate to this whole thing about disasters, catastrophes and stupendous change?

Worldviews have recently become a new buzz word. I suppose in the old days it was called religion, but since religion now has such negative meanings, we invent a new religious word so that we will not offend the religion of no religion. Be that as it may, worldviews are basically divided into two genre or paradigms. One paradigm is a long past, limited unknown future. The other is a short past, eternal future. Both paradigms are mutually exclusive, therefore both can not be true. If one is right, the other is not correct, it is in error of the truth of reality, it is simply wrong. Whichever paradigm you hold, the other worldview is sin in the broadest sense.

The Jewish Christian Bible claims to be the only Holy Book of the short past, eternal future paradigm. Furthermore, it states that it is the only valid specific revelation in the universe, applicable to all humanity. Notice I did not say, on my authority the Bible claims to be the Holy Book. I said the Bible claims to be the Holy Book. Hence, if it's claims are true you must deal with those precepts once you know the book exists and makes these exclusive claims. The Bible claims to be the Word of God. Accept it as such or reject this premise and live with the consequences. My beliefs may or may not influence you, but you alone are accountable to God.

Modern Christianity, especially American Evangelicalism, teaches that you can believe just about anything you want, live morally, and if sometime in your past you asked Jesus into your heart, when you die you will go to heaven. Furthermore, American Evangelicalism teaches

not to worry about the future, because before things get really bad, The Rapture will take out the believers in Jesus and judge all the bad dudes.

How much of this is true depends, not on what you believe is true, or what you have been told is true, it depends upon what God says is true in His book. That specific revelation is common to all of this paradigm's believers and centers on the propitiatory sacrifice on the cross for the sins of all mankind by Jesus the Messiah, and His bodily resurrection from the dead for our justification. All other stuff or fluff is insignificant compared to that truth because it alone is the gateway, bridge, or whatever concept you want to use, into the eternal future.

The long past paradigm holds that you do not need a God or a specific revelation such as the Bible to understand the natural world and reality. It slowly just happened uniformly over billions and millions of years without any divine guidance at all. It sort of just evolved naturally by random occurrences, contrary to known laws of thermodynamics, just random leaps of incredible complexity. The real world looks old, not because it was created by an eternal being, but because it is really old. It takes an eternal past to create the world and all in it. What will happen in the future is up to us, because we, modern man, are the zenith of that evolutionary pathway.

Enter some beyond belief event, either of natural occurrence, or man caused. How do you deal with it within each of the worldview paradigms?

In the evolutionary structure, by definition these happenings are catastrophes and disasters, because catastrophes and disasters, are an inconsistency within the uniformitarian evolutionary paradigm. How can the undefined happen except by some lack of knowledge on our part? If events do happen in that horrific context, what can we do to fix the problem, or at least predict when and where they will occur in the future.

But how can such an evolutionary worldview develop a depth of character, because the very nature of change outside of this uniform model can not be defined, because uniformity through random small changes are the paradigm's only absolutes?

The eternal future worldview, requires a revelation beyond what appears natural. That does not mean that men are not going to be held accountable for that specific revelation, it means that God knows the level of that accountability each human being received, created in God's image, and will fairly judge them as eternal personalities consistent with the specific revelation disclosed in the Bible. The point is the Biblical concept, to those who have been given much, much will be required. This is true both within and without the constructs which Christianity generally calls saving faith.

That means there is no such thing as a true excuse to not deal with the reality of the Bible revelation to the maximum extent it has been revealed to you. Furthermore, those within the church structure, who preach a different gospel message, will be also judged for their error of not faithfully preaching the Good News made available to them. That is the gospel of eternal life through Jesus Christ, not temporal materialistic prosperity.

In the more common grace natural situation, Christians are the only people who have the true specific revelation of an eternal depth of character. Furthermore, if you don't accept it and live it out by faith, when times get difficult, just like everyone without that specific revelation, you will be afraid. If God holds the future, why are you afraid of stupendous change? You call it a catastrophe not because it is, but you are not willing to rest in the truth of God's word.

Watching a program Monday night on the planning steps for a influenza pandemic, one of the speakers made the distinction between acute and chronic disasters. In that context a minor earthquake or a storm was an acute happening, a pandemic was a chronic change. In the case of the pandemic this event may resort in radical changes in the way we live and view life for up to six months. But after 6 months, what of the old will remain? I would in this regard, specifically in the gulf coast region around New Orleans, state hurricane Katrina was a chronic stupendous change event. Another example of chronic stupendous change could be a nuclear terrorist attack.

In the context of last week's article, for three days to a week you can handle an acute event. If it is a chronic event, you will have to change your lifestyle and truly begin to understand the concept of sacrifice. To be successful in that lifestyle change, you must do and grow through the depth of your character. That growth is controlled most significantly by your application of your chosen worldview paradigm. That includes the two mentioned earlier, but also all the other attributes that define your worldview as uniquely your own.

In the context of what we have been saying, any type of stupendous change, at least in what we would call a disaster, catastrophe context is a disruption of personal and community command and control. In that regard it has been framed in a military type situation. As much as we may want to think good thoughts, stupendous change command and control is not based upon emotions. It is not based upon democratic voting for the proper course of action. It is based upon true analytical assessment of the situation, and making a decision to reestablish normal command and control as rapidly as possible.

A significant problem with the Katrina event in Louisiana and New Orleans that didn't happen in Mississippi was the fact, the real fact, that the governor of Louisiana was a woman politician and the mayor was a black politician. Neither person had the training or the mindset to handle the reality of Katrina at that time, and from recent news reports, normal command and control has still not been reestablished in New Orleans.

But should the citizens of the Big Easy have ever looked to the politicians, or the police, or the Federal Government to fix New Orleans better than Old Orleans? What responsibility do the citizens hold? This last week three thousand residents finally held a march in the city, stating the failures of the post Katrina past were not acceptable, and they were going to take back their city, without the help of the failed and failing infrastructure. The jury is still out on whether this will succeed, but the future of the city in the historic sense is definitely at stake.

Seattle, as the most potential disaster city in the world, is a leader in planning for unpleasant events. But will planning solve the problem in anything but a relatively minor acute stupendous change event, without telling and really training people for the

inevitability that a chronic event may or may not happen in their lifetime?

Somebody within the greater Puget Sound emergency preparedness structure knows what damage a Seattle fault earthquake of a certain magnitude will cause. After the shaking, if you leave your job in downtown and ride the bus home from work as usual, this is consistent with an acute event. If all the bridges over the ship canal and the floating bridges to Bellevue and points east are destroyed, and you have to walk and/or swim home over a period of days or weeks, this is the result from an earthquake of chronic magnitude.

When you get home you realize that you no longer have a home as you have known it. The wife and the kids are not there and neither are any of the neighbors you had at least casual conversations over the years. Discouraged you make your way to the local fire station, where you call your out of the area contact. Then you find that your family is fine and staying with friends again out of the immediate area. They had been worried sick because you had not checked in. Refreshed you begin to make plans to rebuild your life, probably someplace new. It will take years, if not decades until things in the old suburb are back to normal.

With a chronic event, plans made for an acute event are virtually worthless unless it happens while you and your family are at home. Even then your plans will be drastically inadequate. However, the one resource that will help you, and can be developed within the family and the community structures is that of depth of character. That also means not only can that save your life, it also means you will be the leading cool head in a world of fear and despondency.

Leadership, whether you like it or not, will be thrust upon those who have the deepest depth of character. Stupendous change, disasters, and catastrophes require assets beyond normal depth of character. You begin by taking the reality that bad things can happen to good people, to heart. From there you realize as a good person you need to make preparedness plans not only for yourself and your family, but also friends, neighbors and the broader community. You need to get with the program by starting to plan a program. The reality of reality is that there is no easy road in stupendous change, just a narrow difficult path.