

IS THERE REALLY A TROJAN HORSE OR A FIFTH COLUMN?

Dear Pastors

Pastor Chuck has spoken clearly, repeatedly and emphatically about the issues of which my Email Articles are concerned. There would not be a need to write these *Stay the Course* articles if there were not some outside Calvary Chapel (i.e., the Trojan Horse folks) and inside Calvary Chapel (i.e., the Fifth Column folks) calling and working for a change in direction and doctrine for the Calvary Chapel movement. For example, outside Calvary Chapel there is a blog (frequented by some Calvary Chapel pastors) dedicated to bringing about the kinds of changes that the anti-Chuck lead blogger on that blog says Calvary Chapel must undergo to satisfy him. While he considers himself a Calvinist, his understanding of Calvinism seems to be in transition. Regardless he sees me as a *blue meanie* for my intransigence and misguided/hard-hearted ways because I am trying to keep Calvinists from becoming Calvary Chapel pastors and Calvary Chapel pastors from becoming Calvinists. For example, several years back, this anti-Chuck blogger said (on his anti-Chuck blog):

Today is the first day of the annual Calvary Chapel Senior Pastors Conference (2010)...My focus this year will be on praying for *our friends* [two CC pastors, one of which is a CCA board/council member]...as they will be bringing the messages today and tomorrow. I do think that this is a critical juncture in the history of Calvary Chapel and I do believe that God may choose to speak prophetically to the men gathered ...and if he does it may be through those we call friends...

On this same blog, one of the CC pastors this blogger calls a friend said:

George Bryson speaks for no one but himself. He is not a leader within the Calvary Chapel movement. He does not pastor a Calvary Chapel... Those who are suggesting that [a prominent CC pastor, who is also a CCA board/council member] is behind Bryson's stuff are ignorant. George's views are decidedly not [the CCA board members] views. [The CCA board member] has a loving and reasoned approach toward our Reformed brethren.

The CC pastor who also happens to be a CCA board/council member says that:

This is a challenging time for CC with an obvious shift and transition of leadership coming in several areas of ministry. **Change is coming** and that has always been a fearsome threat for **the old guard** of any multigenerational organization including the church. The decision is do we fight tooth and nail for the proven "**status quo**" or do we enter a lengthy conversation about the future with respect and patience? Some want to dialogue and some want to fight...George is not a spokesman for CC and his Email's reflect **the fighting fundamentalist** thrusting his sword into the ground scanning the horizon for the "enemy."

Oddly enough, those who chastise me for suggesting that there is an effort to redirect the Calvary Chapel movement (doctrinally and practically) are also the same people who chastise me for being unwilling to accept the doctrinal and practical changes that they are calling for in the Calvary Chapel movement. Even more strange to me are those who say that pastor Chuck does not really want those who are trying to take Calvary Chapel in another direction (doctrinally and practically) to leave the Calvary Chapel movement. This is despite what they admit he has said over and over. How many times does Pastor Chuck need to say that if you no longer agree with us, "don't go away mad, just go away"? How many times does Chuck need to say that if you have new and better ideas, doctrines and direction, go for it! Just do not call it Calvary Chapel?

As for evidence (inside and outside of Calvary Chapel) of efforts to encourage a new and more "Reformed-Friendly and Ecumenical Calvary Chapel, the leader of the anti-Chuck blog (concerning his choice to replace Pastor Chuck at CCCM) said that one of the men (now on the board of CCA):

...Has already been established as the successor to Chuck at Calvary Chapel of Costa Mesa.

A few days later, on June 4th of 2012, the first day of the CCSPC, he said that this same CCA board/council member was:

...Positioning [and that] Bryson will be trying to undermine this...

On June 6th of the conference, in accordance with his *interpretation* of the 2012 CCSPC, he declared that:

...There is a shift in the wind. **George Bryson probably didn't enjoy it...**

Why do you suppose that an outspoken advocate of Calvinism and a harsh critic of Pastor Chuck would say that **George Bryson probably didn't enjoy this shift?** Shift *from what* and *to what*? A young man, who is known for his anger, offensive language and a deep bitterness toward Pastor Chuck (and most things Calvary) went so far as to say that this same CCA board/council member:

...Is **the anti-Bryson**. He comes across as very intelligent, thoughtful, balanced and secure in himself (a quiet confidence). **I like him**. He comes across very well, like he is just looking to be himself and serve the Lord... Wow. I... (hate to admit it) I am really liking [this CCA board member]. ...There is freedom to move about the Cabin... That means diversity and differences of opinion are to be expected and allowed w/o the Bryson Inquisition etc... [This CCA board member] is the one who really stood out, IMO, in a good way. CCCM, under his leadership, really isn't pushing for more, more, more... [He] sounds very pastorly and concerned about the people at CCCM and the responsible tone he expressed on the "reformed" issue was telling (and good).

How can we explain the fact that someone so unhappy, angry and even bitter with pastor Chuck Smith could be so happy with what he thinks this CCA board/council member said or did at the conference? Perhaps it is because a Reformed-leaning CC Senior pastor (on this same blog) said that:

[This CCA board/council member] is very balanced, open-minded and a good listener/leader. I have much respect for him and would be happy to see him/someone like him lead CC...

What makes him seem so open-minded... or such a ...good listener/leader? Could it have anything to do with the fact that under the oversight of this board/council member (before he was a CC board/council member):

The tables (and store) [at the CCSPC] had a broad arrangement of great books ranging from those by IX Marks (Mark Dever) to Driscoll and Keller's...

Isn't this the kind of things that were said about the previous CCSPC under oversight of this same CCA board member? Concerning the 2011 conference, another CC pastor boasted that:

This year's SPC bookstore was like Piper's Desiring God conference bookstores. [There were] tons of resources for the non-fearful readers. [To the Reformed blogger he said] you would have loved it.

Piper's conference and book stores are distinctively Reformed. Another CC pastor tweeted about the:

Kind words about... Pastor Mark [Driscoll] Tim Keller and Francis Chan from Senior CC leadership. [The senior leadership said] they are friends & partners in the gospel... [Calvary Chapel pastors were] given permission to **build bridges** with other tribes [like Acts 29 and the Gospel Coalition].

The leader of this anti-Chuck blog explained on his anti-Chuck blog that:

In the history of every movement there are definable turning points from which the direction of a movement or lack of same... is determined. Calvary Chapel experienced one of those definable moments last week [at the 2012 CCSCP]...

He went on to say that:

[The 2012 CCSPC] didn't produce a clear winner, but it did produce a survivor: ...This one signaled a new openness that's part of the new attitude [this CCA board member] brings to the table.

The lead blogger went on to say that:

Another part of the new attitude was the expressed desire...to "build bridges, not walls" with people of other traditions [like Mark Driscoll and Ed Stetzer], including the dreaded "New Calvinists" and possibly old ones [like R. C. Sproul Sr. and J.I Packer] too.

Although the lead blogger seemed to be singing the praises of this CCA board member (something normally reserved for those CC pastors he called friends) he also appears to be troubled about Pastor Chuck. According to the lead blogger, Pastor Chuck needs to step aside and let the era of openness and bridge building begin. He actually complained that:

...Chuck Smith...will never step down, and will die in the pulpit if possible...at the expense of the movement.

He then says:

When the discussion turned from the movement to the mother ship, [the CCA board member], in my opinion, became a leader. He calmly, graciously but firmly asserted that he was already **the co-pastor** of Calvary Chapel Costa Mesa and intended to stay in that position. He said that knowing that very close to him were men who had recently conspired to take that position from him...

It should be kept in mind that this “positioning” to replace Pastor Chuck took place in front of the largest annual gathering of CC senior pastors. Thus, any talk that the so-called “rank and file” CC pastors are oblivious to what was/is going on inside Calvary Chapel is difficult to take serious. Just weeks earlier, Pastor Chuck told Greg Laurie, with thousands of other folks listening, his replacement at CCCM was a matter still open to God’s leading. The blog leader was clearly not happy with that arrangement. According to the blog leader, under the leadership of men like this CCA board member, a new era would be ushered in. He said that CCCM, under the leadership of his choice, CCCM could be:

...A CC that was based on love for the brethren and Bible teaching without the rancor and isolationism that has set in with time.

According to the blog leader:

...The young pastors in the [CC] movement are responding to this message of [the CCA board member] as are many of the rest of the rank and file.

He went on to say that although a battle was fought at the 2012 CCSPC conference:

There are those who want to keep fighting and they will...some split is inevitable after Smith is gone. The question before the house is how many ways will it split? If the pastors support [CCA board member], the splits will be minimal and there is much to be hopeful about. If they don't, this may have been the last real Calvary Chapel Senior Pastors Conference.

In other words, get behind the lead bloggers choice or it may be the end of Calvary Chapel as you know it. Those who want to keep fighting must have something they want to keep fighting for or against. What could that be? The lead blogger said:

We have every reason to be cautiously optimistic. I emphasize the word cautiously...there is some strident opposition to this direction from some...but at least a sizable portion has heard our message and acted on it.

Our message? Apparently the lead blogger sees this CCA board member as someone who shares his message. The most anti-Chuck and anti-Calvary member of this blog community said to the lead blogger that:

...The Good Guys can't change the bad guys, but they also know they can't survive (long term) with them...and they have certainly taken a proactive step in saying, "ENOUGH of this bad behavior". I am stoked. I'll support the good CC and good CC leaders and encourage this direction. If there's a group in greater CC that doesn't get on board, oh well. Let them do their own thing. They'll reap what they sow (eventually).

The lead blogger cautions that:

These things that concern us will not change overnight. There will be incremental and evolutionary changes [in CC], but there will be bloodshed before every one of them.

Concern us? Were these CC good guys representing the matters that concerned the lead (anti-Chuck) blogger and those who agreed with him? Another blogger on this blog said:

I saw the panel discussion much like what happened in Acts 15 when Paul & Barnabas went to Jerusalem to contend against the Judaizers. I think the apostles in Jerusalem were partly responsible for having allowed those

Judaizers to infiltrate the gentile churches without check or accountability. Once confronted by Paul & Barnabas, I believe the Holy Spirit brought conviction and a clear line was drawn. I saw [this CCA board member] following the lead of James in the early church. He is truly marked with an apostolic type of authority. The line of accountability and liberty within the movement will not go unchallenged just as it wasn't in the early church. Paul was fighting off "dogs" in his life after Christ.

Still another blogger said:

...Leadership happened as this article reports. Addressing issues as they did... means a breakthrough in the wall of the "no talk rule" so prevalent in many families...I wholeheartedly agree that there's a line there that establishes who would work with [the CCA board member] and who won't and those who are digging in against him are making a big mistake because [the CCA board member] brings much to the party.

The most anti-Chuck and anti-Calvary blogger said that:

...The good news is that attention is being paid, no matter how it got done, who did it, etc. [The lead blogger] deserves a lot of credit for his patient advocating for changes as well. I think the shift is clear and good...and the battle is already won in that a significant Group within CC "gets it" and is going in a good direction and learning from the mistakes of others. If a Group from within CC goes the same 'ol' direction and keeps doing their thing, they'll reap what they sow...at least the good guys have put their stake in the ground and are taking a stand for a good direction. Those two things are huge. So are the things I heard from the CCSPC twitter feeds of what was emphasized this time around...Transparency is good. Addressing issues head-on is good. [This CCA board member] put his stake in the ground and is leading well, IMO. Hope it continues. The bad guys are going to do what they do. The good guys shouldn't allow them to define the Movement...

Concerning his view of Calvary Chapel, he also said that he was:

Very glad to see guys like [this CCA board member]...step up and lead in good directions on a variety of issues. What we're seeing now (in CC) is the fruit of Michael's patient work... The Good Guys have said "enough!" and are asserting their Leadership in "their" Movement. We need to continue to encourage this and support this and promote this. There will be plenty to report on later of what happens when the Bad Guys do what they do. I'm convinced now, that there is much good in CC and that CC has great days ahead for promoting the Gospel, as long as the Good Guys lead and make the distinctions between what is right and wrong in their Movement.

Is this anti-Chuck, anti-Calvary blogger really saying that the changes he thinks are happening in Calvary Chapel and that he believes were reflected in the 2012 CCSPC, are the fruit of the lead bloggers patient work? Here is what he says:

...Here's how and why [the CCA board member] Group wins: [He] has the young guys...the young guys are the future. The old dudes are going to die off soon. The church planters [of CCPN] are planting the seeds for CC's future...and the guys I'm following from CC who are doing the planting...sure appear to be good guys, promoting good things.

Yet another blogger added that:

It was great to hear Keller and even Driscoll get an honorable mention. The days of thinking that CC is the only tribe worthy of the kingdom are gone and that's a healthy change. I especially enjoyed the honorable mention as Bryson hopefully realized that he's picking a fight that he can't win.

What is the fight Bryson can't win? Is it about a new bridge building emphasis that requires CC to build a bridge to Mark Driscoll and Acts 29? Does this bridge building to Driscoll and Acts 29 require that CC pastors be allowed to teach the Reformed doctrines of salvation and damnation? Are we ready to accept (from a CC pastor) *I have repented from not drinking alcoholic beverages*? Does this bridge building mean that a Calvary Chapel pastor can now teach that Christ did not savingly die for any of the sins of many sinners?

Is it possible that these bloggers and their fellow bloggers are trying curry favor with the CCA board/council member, making it appear that he is more tolerant of

Calvinism than he really is? What kind of bridge building does the CCA board/council member want to do with regard to Driscoll and his Reformed theology or Driscoll's *the Bible goes better with beer* emphasis? Does the CCA board member believe that Calvary Chapel is a big enough and diverse enough tent to make room for a Calvary Chapel pastor who is also a Calvinist? Are we all being played by these two anti-Chuck bloggers or does the CCA board member really want to lead us down a road that these two board bloggers would approve? Is it possible that the CCA board member is hoping to build bridges to people, doctrines and ideas that Pastor Chuck would never approve of?

It is reasonable to expect that a new leader of any church will bring with him some new ideas. But is it necessary that he brings with him openness to the ideas and doctrines of Driscoll and Acts 29? Driscoll of Mars Hill and the other churches in the Acts 29 network of churches say that:

We are Reformed in our view of salvation

They say that:

We believe that God's saving grace is ultimately irresistible.

They also say that:

Jesus died to provide payment for all, but **only in a saving way for the elect.**ⁱ

They also insist that:

While God desires the salvation of all, He applies the payment to the elect, those for whom He chose for salvation.ⁱⁱ

Finally, I am not unaware that I may not "win" these battles. I know that I am up against people with resources way beyond anything I have access to. I am up against folks much better financed and much better known. But I am not responsible to win these battles and do not consider my detractors as enemies. Nevertheless, I do believe that I am obligated to fight (as much as I am able) for a Calvary Chapel that is free of Reformed pastors (now and in the future) and one in which the Pastors are independent and their churches are self-governed. I am also

aware that I am not alone and many other CC pastors agree with my concerns though I do not know how many. In Christ, George

P.S. Please do not misunderstand me. While several CCA board/council members have taken a stand against me and others who have chosen to **Stay the Course**, many of the CCA board/council members are as **Stay the Course** (doctrinally speaking) as I am. Some of them are as gifted for and as committed to the cause of Christ, as anyone on planet earth and I count them dear brothers in Christ and true partners in the work of our precious Lord.

ⁱ Mark Driscoll and Gary Breshears, *Doctrine::What Christians Should Believe*, Crossway, 1300 Crescent Street, Wheaton, Illinois 60187, 267