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Equipping Principles For Spiritual Warfare

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This past decade has seen an unprecedented wave of books, articles and ministries focussing on the issue of spiritual warfare. It can be treated in almost 'fad like' fashion along with issues such as the New Age and the latest renewal movement. However, even a cursory reading of the scriptures reveal a significant focus on spiritual warfare in the life of Christ and the teachings of the early Church.

How are these teachings to be applied and taught today in our present Western context? How do we prepare our missions candidates and pastors to both practice and teach appropriate principles of spiritual warfare? What is an Anabaptist contribution to the discussion of spiritual warfare?

Clearly the scope of the topic exceeds the present limitations of this paper. Therefore, we will limit our focus to a brief background of our Western worldview as it affects spiritual warfare, the importance of proper order in acquiring spiritual 'knowledge', an examination of four realms of spiritual warfare, an Anabaptist contribution to the discussion, and finally, the training/discipleship implications.

In his excellent book **God At War**, Gregory Boyd makes the point that although the scriptures provide a clear presentation of a warfare worldview we have been conditioned in the West to read the scriptures through our materialistic and rationalistic orientation. A contrast exists between our Western - materialistic and rationalistic bias and the heightened spiritual awareness of other cultures (pp18-29).

Youth Mission International teams serving alongside the church in other parts of the world have experienced this contrast. During ministry with the MB church in Congo, YMI teams have been exposed to clear and practical teaching from the Congo church on how to both resist the works of the enemy and pray for those afflicted by him. Believers openly ministered to those serving the powers of darkness. The fast growing Mennonite Church in Ethiopia similarly trains it=s young leaders in the *One Year For Christ* program to resist the enemy and see those bound by evil spirits freed. Is this merely an unenlightened throwback to their pre-Christian spiritist roots? Or is it a faithful response to Christ=s statement that he has given us authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy (Luke 10:19)?

Is it possible that our chronocentrism - our tendency to assume that the worldview we hold at the present time is the ultimately true worldview - is limiting our ability to perceive and apply the teachings of the scriptures in this critical area? Boyd makes the point that the early church prior to Augustine had an understanding of evil that included personal spiritual beings with the ability to oppose the will of God. Augustinian tradition (post fourth century) has tended to view angels merely as agents who invariably carry out God's sovereign will. The post-Enlightenment naturalistic worldview rejects such beings outright (Boyd pp. 61-62).

The modern evangelical Western worldview deeply shaped by both the enlightenment and Augustine's view of God's sovereignty (omnipotence over all evil) is unable to explain the spiritual beings referred to in Daniel 10 whose resistance of the angel Michael delayed a message Daniel was to receive. Are there territorial spirits - fallen angels - committed to opposing God's work in the world?

The much broader issue of evil emerges in this discussion. Is the problem of evil an issue of God's providence as an omnipotent being and thus His character? Or is the problem of evil one which includes fallen angels with free will who oppose the work of God and His Church?

Clearly the latter perspective involves a much more active role for the church in addressing spiritual warfare. Rather than a fatalistic resignation to the sovereign will of God in allowing evil, the scriptures call the people of God to "Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you." (James 4:7; 1 Pet 5:9).

A passive response to the works of darkness in our lives results in undisciplined thoughts from which flow behaviour and character. Frequently, Christians respond to spiritual warfare from a position of fear, somehow believing that resisting the enemy will encourage his influence in their lives. Nothing could be farther from the truth. The victory Christ won on the cross establishes our authority over the enemy. Unless claimed and established in daily resistance over temptation, this victory is limited to salvation. Believers have the opportunity to grow in Christ-like character through the renewing of their minds and the transformation of their attitudes and behaviour. Spiritual warfare is the first half of this renewing process. The inability to actively resist that which is evil in our lives sabotages the reception of God's truth.

A university student had been a Christian for about a year. During the months following her conversion she experienced great joy and freedom from the episodes of depression and suicidal thoughts that had characterized her life prior to knowing Christ. Then, after about eight months, the manic depressive periods began to return. She had been immersed in the scriptures and a worshipping community but had never been taught that she had to resist destructive thoughts.

As the counsellor listened to her story she suddenly exclaimed, "If one more person tells me I have to believe and apply the truth about how God loves me and accepts me I'm going to scream. I know the truth. It is just not making a difference." The counsellor urged her to actively resist the enemy of her soul.

As she began to realize that spiritual transformation was more than just a question of embracing truth and also included resisting the enemy, hope began to rise up within her. Many believers, like this student, have not been instructed in the basics of spiritual warfare including the establishment of who they are in Christ and the importance of resisting evil -- not just embracing the truth.

When we consider the spiritual safety of those under our care, we know we are not to fear the enemy. Yet most of us know just enough about spiritual warfare to avoid confrontations when possible.

As we consider helpful principles for training disciples of Christ in this area, we will want to consider all that Scripture has to teach us. However, we do well to look first at Jesus' example. His preparation of the twelve disciples in Luke 9 includes a pointed reference to their power and authority over the demonic realm in the context of sharing the good news of the kingdom of God. The same authority is acknowledged in debriefing the seventy-two disciples later in Luke 10:17-24. Jesus wanted them to know they had spiritual authority.

However, Jesus goes on to gently rebuke the disciples for focussing on their various deliverance stories. It is human nature to dwell on the more sensational aspects of ministry. To focus on our relationship with the Father and our knowledge of him, however, requires discipline and maturity. This balance between ministering in spiritual authority and power, while not getting distracted by it, is still a challenge for us today.

SPIRITUAL KNOWLEDGE

In Hosea 4:6 God declares through his prophet: "My people are destroyed from lack of knowledge" (NIV, *passim*). God's people were religious, yet their religion was not tied to obedience. They had more knowledge of evil than good. Similarly, Christians today can become destroyed through a lack of knowledge. And in this area of discipleship, order is important.

We require first of all knowledge of the Father and his incredible love for us as his covenant people, leading to the truth about our identity and positional authority in Christ, followed by a knowledge of our hearts (the true nature of our inner life), and concluding with an awareness of the nature of the enemy and his schemes.

Knowledge of the Father

Jesus points out to his disciples that a relationship with the Father is hidden to the "wise and learned" but "revealed . . . to little children" (Luke 10:21). The disciples were to rejoice, not that the spirits submit to them, but that "your names are written in heaven" (Luke 10:20). Spiritual pride blocks us from understanding the value of our relationship with the Father, but it can also open the door to a fascination with spiritual warfare. In particular there can be dependence upon technique and strategy rather than upon the Father. Biblical knowledge is always tied to obedience and not merely to intellectual assent. To know the Father is to obey him. Jesus reminds us "apart from me you can do nothing" (John 15:5).

There is nothing the enemy wants to block or disrupt more in the life of Christ's disciples than our daily communication and love relationship with the Father through Jesus. Knowledge of spiritual warfare technique is dangerous without a growing knowledge of the Father expressed in daily dependence and obedience.

Knowledge of Our Identity and Authority in Christ

The knowledge of our authority and power in the spiritual realm flows out of our knowledge of the Father. We have been called heirs of God and are part of his family. He protects us by the power of his name (John 17:11).

"God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus" (Eph. 2:6). Through this revelation of our position in Christ we know the "hope to which he has called" us, the "riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints" (our value to God), and "his incomparably great power for us who believe" (Ephesians 1:18-19). These truths put the experience of spiritual warfare in its proper context.

Spiritual authority has been given to the believer through the finished work of Christ on the cross (Matt. 28:18-19; Col. 2:13-15; Eph. 6:10-11). Believers are called to apply this authority that Christ won for them through actively resisting harmful thoughts and the enemy's attacks (Col. 3:5-11; 1 Pet. 5:8-9; Jas. 4:7).

Knowledge of Our Hearts

With the often-used picture of our hearts being a home in which Christ comes to take up residence, we are invited to surrender daily every area of our lives to his control. Renovation and ongoing surrender under the leading of God's Spirit are evidence we know Jesus is the new owner of the house.

Humility leads us to acknowledge that our hearts are "deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it?" (Jeremiah 17:9). The disciple prays with David, "Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way within me, and lead me in the way everlasting" (Ps. 139:23-24).

Responsibility must be taken personally for our sin issues. Like David we must declare, "I have sinned" (2 Sam. 12:13). We cannot blame the enemy for our own wilful transgressions. Bitterness, anger, pride, fear, and lust all involve choices of our will. Repentance involves confession (acknowledging sin against others and God), turning from sin (our will is engaged), and choosing God's way. Jesus linked our forgiveness of others to our own reception of forgiveness (Matt. 18:35). In many cases a person's freedom is linked to their willingness to forgive someone who has hurt them.

Knowledge of the Enemy

Jesus pointed out that, although he came that we "might have life, and have it to the full," there was also the "thief" who comes to "kill, steal and destroy" (John 10:10). Revelation 12 similarly presents the enemy as a devourer, accuser, and deceiver. Jesus' unexpected rebuke of Satan working through Peter (Matt. 16:21-23; Mark 8:31-33) is an illustration of how subtle spiritual warfare can become. Paul pointed out that unforgiveness must be dealt with in the body of Christ "in order that Satan might not outwit us. For we are not unaware of his schemes" (2 Corinthians 2:11). Jesus gives us knowledge of the enemy and his schemes for our protection.

Believers under the control of the Holy Spirit cannot be "possessed" by the enemy. However, Paul warns that without renewal in our minds and an active, daily "putting off" of the old nature and "putting on" of the nature of Christ, we can give the devil a "foothold" (Eph. 4:20-27) or way of influencing our lives.

"Footholds" can exist in the lives of disciples even though ownership of the house belongs to Jesus. Demonic footholds can be distinguished from periodic sin (everyday house dirt).

Footholds are established when we are unable to stop repetitive wilful sin through simple confession. We are instructed in situations like that to "confess our sins to each other and pray for each other that you might be healed" (Jas. 5:16). When we recognize their presence we respond to these sin footholds much as to an unlawful squatter. They must be evicted.

Jesus said when you sweep a house clean and put it in order, it is important that the house is then filled (Luke 11:24-26). The lies of the enemy must be replaced with the light of God's truth. Jesus' warning that demons return sevenfold to retake space they have lost has been documented in countless counselling relationships. It is often much harder in matters of spiritual warfare to hold ground than to take it. It is essential to have a growing knowledge of the Father and of our identity and authority in Christ, as well as regular spiritual house cleaning to complement our knowledge of the enemy's nature and ways.

SPHERES OF RESPONSIBILITY AND AUTHORITY

The spiritual knowledge summarized above must be applied within various spheres of responsibility and authority. This begins with our personal lives, extends to our families and church, and finally reaches to the world around us. Disciples have positional authority in Jesus. However, it is their level of surrender and obedience to the Lord Jesus that determines their experiential level of authority in spiritual warfare (application of authority in power).

Casualties are possible. The danger with the proliferation of teaching on the subject of spiritual warfare, and in particular that of intercession against "principalities and powers," is that it can arm immature believers with information and models for which they are not ready.

From a relatively immature intercession/spiritual warfare group that I witnessed in a local church setting several years ago, one member now suffers from extreme paranoid delusions, another is in an asylum for the criminally insane (he was formerly a local church elder), another is suffering from depression and delusions of seeing demons everywhere, and the final member has moved away and switched churches. It is hard to believe that four spiritually zealous and committed believers with no history of the above-mentioned ailments could all get off track so quickly.

This story can undoubtedly be repeated in mission field settings and churches around the world. Frontline evangelism and intercessory prayer is warfare. Without proper submission to authority, instruction, and guidance, we flounder and become casualties in the battle. Proverbs tells us "it is not good to have zeal without knowledge, nor to be hasty and miss the way" (Proverbs 19:2).

Personal Sphere

The first and most basic sphere is that of the personal mind and will of each believer. The believer is given spiritual "weapons" to "demolish strongholds" in our minds and to "take captive every thought and make it obedient to Christ" (2 Corinthians 10:4-5). Strongholds of fear, lust, bitterness, and anger can be built up in the minds of believers. Without a clear recognition of their existence and an understanding of how to apply the spiritual weapons that have been given to demolish them, these strongholds persist and influence destructive behaviours that limit spiritual freedom, destroy marriages and families, and discredit ministries.

The authority to "bind and loose" in the spiritual realm (Matt. 16:18-19) is given in the context of the advance of Christ's Church against the gates of Hades. The enemy's strongholds are no match for a believer who actively submits to Christ and resists the enemy. When Jesus rightly perceived the satanic origin of Peter's resistance to the cross, he verbally rebuked the enemy (Matt. 16:23).

Recently a teenager was brought to me by her youth leader following a youth rally. In a ministry of prayer, I had opportunity to witness the dramatic changes that result from recognizing one's authority in warfare.

The teen struggled with anger toward an absentee father and a variety of other relational issues. Although a confessing Christian from a "successful" Mennonite home and church-going family, she was bulimic and suicidal. Her parents and youth leaders were helpless to change her destructive behaviour. After gently and repeatedly telling her that Jesus loved her, the teen was finally able to raise her eyes to meet mine. As we asked the Holy Spirit to show us the root of the oppression in her life, the girl was reminded of a prayer she had offered to Satan during a particularly difficult time in her home eighteen months before. This seemingly innocuous prayer in her bedroom had initiated a very destructive period in her life.

She was initially unable to verbalize the name of Jesus and renounce her prayer to Satan. Finally, with the Holy Spirit's assistance, she blurted out, "Can I say something?" and she stood to her feet. With the tenacity of a fighter she declared, "Jesus is my Lord and Saviour and in his name I bind you Satan and command you to flee my life, now!"

The breakthrough was immediate, and strongholds of death, anger, fear, and bitterness were quickly renounced and broken. The change in this girl's countenance, eating habits, and personality has been overwhelming. She is "holding the ground" through the daily infilling of the Holy Spirit, the Word of God, and resistance of thoughts that represent old strongholds. Are all eating disorders demonic in origin? Probably not. Is all warfare just spiritual? Clearly not.

The Scriptures teach that we battle the ways of "the flesh, the world, and the devil" (Eph. 2:1-2; Rev. 12:17). The interrelationship among those three aspects of the battle requires that we be "self-controlled and alert" (1 Pet. 5:8). We frequently deal with the symptoms of spiritual warfare, such as the suicidal thoughts and bulimia in the previous story. But the ministry of the Holy Spirit is often critical in revealing root issues and incidents, which are the "legal basis" for spiritual oppression. This is less a formula than it is another expression of our dependency on Christ, without whom we can do nothing.

Without personal freedom in Christ from destructive thought and behaviour patterns, believers will have limited authority to engage in warfare in the subsequent three spheres of responsibility.

Family Sphere

The second sphere of responsibility for spiritual warfare is the family. Christian marriage is a picture of Christ's relationship with his bride, the Church, and as such is a point of attack for the enemy. Lust and a lack of self-control are referred to by Paul in 1 Corinthians 7:5 as a prime target of the enemy in marriages. Similarly, an attitude of dominance or disrespect (1 Pet. 3:7)

blocks the prayer life in a marriage and represents another target. Humility and submission one to another represent a protection against darkness while the "days are evil" (Eph. 5:8-21).

Husbands and wives must pray for each other and even do battle for each other in addressing strongholds when necessary. Instead of living in darkness Paul calls us to live in the light (Eph. 5:11). By bringing strongholds of fear or lust into the light and interceding for each other, marriages are taken to a new level of oneness and freedom. A lack of willingness to live in the light and address strongholds in a marriage can result in vulnerability to spiritual attack in a family. Numerous missionaries, pastors, and spiritual leaders have fallen because of an unwillingness to practice the principles of submission to Christ in one another and resistance of the enemy in their marriages.

I recently had the opportunity to pray with a church elder that was addicted to Internet pornography. His repeated private confessions were powerless to break the foothold. It was only when he brought the issue into the light and confessed to another brother, and together we resisted the enemy, that the power of this foothold was broken in his life. What he did not realize was that his son had also come to me for prayer some weeks previous. The son confessed getting a girlfriend pregnant and then taking her to an abortion clinic where the "evidence" was disposed of.

We need to consider whether the sins of the parents--potential footholds--are visited on the children to the third and fourth generation (Exodus 34:7) even under the new covenant, and what the impact of the spiritual law of "sowing and reaping" (Gal. 6:7-8) might be on generational sin.

Church Sphere

The third sphere of responsibility in the area of warfare for the believer is that of the body of Christ. However, it must be noted again that we will have limited freedom to intercede for each other at this level if we are living in defeat in our marriages or personal life. Paul frequently called on the churches to pray for him in his ministry (2 Corinthians 1:8-11), recognizing that Satan could frustrate and even block him (1 Thessalonians 2:18). Without intercession and warfare the schemes of the enemy to block ministry at the local church level proceed unhindered.

The final piece of the armour given in Ephesians 6:10 is that of intercession and prayer for the saints. We must be on guard for each other. "Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective" (Jas. 5:16).

Footholds that impact the church include relational sin in areas of bitterness, slander, and gossip (Eph. 4:29-32). Repentance is our most powerful weapon to confront these footholds. The freedom to confront and confess relational sin is spiritual warfare. The "accuser of the brethren" (Rev. 12:10) who often accuses us through each other will be overcome by our application of the blood of the lamb and willingness to repent. Similarly, a pro-active commitment to live "at peace with all men" (Rom. 12:18) is a form of defensive warfare that thwarts the schemes of the enemy to divide the saints.

When leadership teams, in particular, apply this commitment to not speak of each other negatively and remain loyal to each other, they are arming themselves against the accuser. Ministries led by personnel who are loyal to each other and guard their tongues experience much freedom from the enemy's relational attacks. Without "relational baggage" we are free to pray together and lay down our lives for each other.

The prayer ministry of the Church is one of the ways in which we develop in maturity and responsibility in Christ's kingdom. Jesus is looking for an active praying Church that function as his ambassadors on the earth. Satan is opposed to this role. Similar to the people of Israel, God has allowed the enemy to remain in the land to teach us responsibility and to reveal our hearts (Judges 2:21--3:4). We are being prepared to rule and reign with him in the age to come (2 Tim. 2:12; Rev. 20:6). This is our training ground. "However, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?" (Luke 18:8).

Societal Sphere

Perhaps one of the reasons the Church in the western world has had such limited influence on the "principalities and powers" is because of our inability to walk in the light in the previous three levels of spiritual warfare. Without freedom personally, in our marriages, and in the church, we have a limited effectiveness or even desire to engage in intercession for our cities and nations. Those who do learn and begin to apply some fresh principles of intercession for their city or nation without walking in freedom at the previous three levels cannot withstand the "counterattack" and fall away from their course of action.

The Scriptures do not provide clear instruction in the area of confronting territorial spirits (Dan. 10). This in itself should be a warning against creating our own practical theology based on what works somewhere else. Clearly the Latin American, African, and Korean churches have "won back" territory from the enemy and have much to teach us in the west about "territorial warfare." However, we must start to learn these principles where the Scriptures start: with us as individuals in the renewing of our own minds and relationships.

Having said that, the answer to misuse is not avoidance but proper instruction. We cannot allow fear to continue to keep us immature about spiritual warfare. Jesus stated, "I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it" (Matt. 16:18). We are to pray that his kingdom would come and his will be done on earth as it is in heaven (Matt. 6:10), precisely because his will is presently not being done on earth. The advance of Christ's kingdom is warfare against a determined opponent: "The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work" (1 John 3:8). When Satan offered Christ the kingdoms of the world if he would only worship him (Luke 4:5-8), Jesus never challenged Satan's ability to offer those kingdoms. Christ's victory, however, would come another way: the way of the cross. "Having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross" (Col. 2:15).

While some persons go into great detail delineating the differences in role and function of the various levels of spiritual authority listed by Paul in Ephesians 6:12, what is important for our purposes is that this unseen enemy does exist and that he is organized. His organization along geographical lines seems to correspond to the earthly political and human powers that he

attempts to control. Further, it seems logical that prevailing cultural gods or deities, such as the goddess Artemis in Ephesus (Acts 19), gain their power to influence a particular region through direct or indirect worship.

These prevailing cultural sins renew the covenants with powers of darkness often through annual festivals or ceremonies. Many who live in the two-thirds world can clearly articulate the identity of their regional deity. It must, however, be stated that God and not the enemy has determined the "places where they (the nations) should live" (Acts 17:26).

Given the reality of a geographically organized enemy, we have an opportunity to walk the streets of our cities and intercede for those blinded to the truth of Christ. We have an opportunity to join with the Church gathered and to jointly intercede for our regions, as is happening in cities across North America. We can also intercede together with the Church in other parts of the world. When combined with Christian witness and loving demonstrations of Christ's kingdom community, this intercession is powerful.

Our adversary understands power, influence, fame, and wealth. He does not understand death to self and servanthood. There is a role for "binding and loosing" (Matt. 16:18-19) in our proclamation of Christ's kingdom rule. However, this must not be at the expense of our kingdom servanthood and loving community "displacing" the kingdoms of this world. Our proclamation of the victory of the cross must be made in the Spirit with which that victory was won. There is no room for spiritual "Rambo's with an attitude" in this area of evangelism, spiritual warfare, and intercession.

Humility, godly character, and a demonstration of Christ's power should provoke the world to ask "the reason for the hope" we have (1 Pet. 3:15). However, kingdom living by itself rarely opens blinded eyes (2 Corinthians 4:4). Similarly, intercession without a demonstration of kingdom living is incomplete (John 13:35). Kingdom community, when combined with intercession and warfare against the one who "blinds" the minds of unbelievers from the light, has the ability to powerfully advance the kingdom.

AN ANABAPTIST CONTRIBUTION TO SPIRITUAL WARFARE

While this is only an introduction to the discussion, there are several theological emphases that Anabaptist's can offer to the broad topic of spiritual warfare.

As Hans Kasdorf and others so clearly pointed out in *Anabaptism and Mission* (Wilbert R. Shenk, ed., Scottsdale, PA: Herald, 1984), the theological core of the early Anabaptists was radical obedience to the great commission's call to go and make disciples of all nations. H. W. Meihuizen states that these early evangelists were commissioned as "Christian Knights" (*Anabaptism*, 89), borrowing a term first used by Erasmus. When captured and flogged before magistrates, these evangelists publicly stated their forgiveness of their enemies. These "knights" were clearly in a war. However, they were not battling flesh and blood in their proclamation of Christ's kingdom rule.

Paul stated "our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the

heavenly realms" (Eph. 6:12). Others have noted that if we do not wrestle against "principalities and powers," we will fight against flesh and blood. This has been the history of the Church through the ages. And here we should include the Mennonite Church. In our battle against unjust societal structures and systems in the pursuit of peace, we have too often opted for battling in the "flesh and blood" dimension. We have failed to invest in the warfare of intercession and prayer.

The example of Christ invites us to be active in both the spiritual and physical realms. The kingdom proclamation is of an anointing to "preach good news to the poor . . . freedom for the prisoners . . . recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour" (Luke 4:18-19). Jesus addresses the physical and spiritual nature of both the problem and the cure.

The early Anabaptist evangelists were warriors who integrated this seen and unseen nature of the battle. The present spiritual warfare discussion could benefit from a greater emphasis on this integration. The seen and unseen nature of the battle was evident at the cross with both the demonic forces of hell and the Roman soldiers surrounding the crucifixion.

At the cross we also see the paradox of the suffering servant and the victorious warrior who "led captives in his train" (Eph. 4:8). Anabaptists have tended to focus on the suffering servant and not on the victorious warrior. Both are accurate in a fuller understanding of Christology and its import for the church.

We now have an opportunity to call the larger Church to an engagement using Christ's way of addressing evil. The Church's proclivity towards triumphalism and a prideful attitude in spiritual warfare will be challenged as we remember that Christ's greatest victory over Satan occurred through obedience to the Father unto death. We will cease warring against flesh and blood as we take up the weapons of love and forgiveness.

The victorious suffering one will lead us to battle against the real enemy who seeks to block the rule of Christ in our lives, marriages, churches, and world.

Training/Discipleship Implications

1. While numerous churches and leaders within the Anabaptist Church have participated in training seminars dealing with spiritual warfare on a personal level through ministries such as "Freedom in Christ" (Neil Anderson) and others, we have not systematically trained our mission personnel or pastoral candidates in this important area of discipleship. Where fear of excesses has held us back we must acknowledge the far more serious consequences of sending unprepared "knights" to the frontlines. Every worker should receive systematic training (biblical, anthropological and prayer based) in spiritual warfare prior to commissioning for assignments.
2. We have much to learn from what the Lord is teaching our brothers and sisters in Latin America, Africa and Asia about spiritual warfare. Our western worldview colours how we read the scriptures with regard to this area of teaching and discipleship and limits the kind of freedom the Lord wants in our mission efforts. Too many missions efforts are being blocked by relational brokenness at a personal and conference level, depression amongst workers, unexplained sickness and other seemingly "reasonable" issues that could have their origin in the enemies

kingdom. Unfortunately, we are all too easily “unaware of his schemes” (2 Cor 2:11). We have unique opportunities in this generation to learn at the feet of our brothers and sisters in other parts of the world in this critical area of discipleship.

3. In light of the “geographical nature” of spiritual warfare and increasing interest on the part of individual congregations to get involved in short term missions, we should encourage/facilitate intercession and prayer teams from local congregations to visit various established and emerging church planting and missions locations. These prayer ministry teams serve to “soften the spiritual ground” and augment the present evangelism and service missions efforts.

In light of the importance of mature believers engaging in this kind of intercession, some level of local congregational discernment would be important in determining the composition of these teams. Factors such as freedom and right standing in the four areas of warfare listed earlier would be more important than age in determining “maturity”. Similarly, the need for a common understanding of the principles and practice of intercession as well as cross-cultural ministry on the part of the members of an intercession team are important. A common orientation alongside someone with a heart for intercession immediately preceding the intercession trip could help facilitate this preparation.

The challenges of resourcing our mission workers with “on site” support in the area of prayer ministry and spiritual discernment require a shift in mission administration funding and strategy. Leaders gifted in discernment and prayer ministry as well as program planning and cross-cultural ministry are needed. It would be helpful if mission organizations identified resource people in this area to serve the challenges faced by their field personnel.

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Prayer Counseling Guide (For Christian workers)

The foundation of this counseling guide is a **dependency on Jesus, His word and the ministry of the Holy Spirit** as counseling takes place. The counseling experience is an interaction between the counselee, the Lord Jesus and the counselor. This is not a formula. Our eyes must be on Jesus throughout the counseling session.

Recognize

1. With your eyes open, observing the counselee, begin simply by honoring the Name of the Lord Jesus, thanking Him and agreeing with Him for what He wants to do. Then invite His Holy Spirit to be present to counsel and lead (John 14:16, 16:13). Ask Jesus to bind any influences of the evil one that would distract, block or blind any of you who are praying. Thank the Lord Jesus for what He will accomplish in your prayer session. With this active dependency on Jesus affirmed - continue to follow His lead and pray "INTERACTIVELY" by:
2. Asking the **individual** what they want prayer for. If they don't know - ask them what they are experiencing or were experiencing during prayer. Ask what experiences (thoughts, feelings, needs, desires) led up to their request for prayer. (BRIEF INTERVIEW)
3. Ask if you could pray with them about their request, need, or insight (i.e. get the consent of their will). If they agree, ask if you can "check in on them" during the course of your prayer to ask questions and find out what is going on.
4. Begin to interact **with the Lord Jesus** because He is here! (Matthew 18:20). Ask Him, by the power and presence of His Spirit, to bring into the *light* anything that needs to be revealed regarding the person and their need. Also ask that the Lord reveal anything related or unrelated that would bring about the freedom He desires for this person.
5. In the same prayer move from request (intercession) to more direct use of authority by saying: "In the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ I command any spiritual influence opposed to Jesus Christ and His Kingdom to be revealed to this person's mind. In the Name of Jesus I command you to come into the light of Christ and loose any hold you have on this person that keeps them from their freedom and knowing the love and truth of Christ." Remember to say what you mean (be specific), and mean what you say.
6. Take note of any visual or other observations as you pray with your eyes opened. Things to look for include: eye movement, expressions on the face (countenance), clenching of fists, body movements, indications of pain, etc.
7. Ask the person, "How are things going? As I am praying for you what are some things you are experiencing--thoughts that came to mind, images, *pictures*, feelings, *voices*, memories, words, bodily sensations, smells, taste, agitation, dizziness, confusion, fear, etc."

8. Watch and listen carefully for their response each step of the way. Most of the time a thought, for example, is simply disregarded as insignificant. Ask them again to recall what things were coming to mind during the time you were praying.
9. Listen carefully for their response and ask questions for clarification. Take each of their responses (thoughts, feelings, etc.) and test them, hold them up to the light of God's Truth according to Hebrews 4:12,13 and 2 Corinthians 10:3-5.

Responsibility

10. Address each thing (thought, sin, lie, memory, etc.) that surfaces in prayer and deal with it according to the Word of God (i.e. if sin then confess aloud; if a lie, reject it and confess the truth aloud; if a memory, invite Christ to enter it, bring understanding and the revelation of truth surrounding it and heal it, etc.) Again, pray to God and use the authority He's given you to bring matters further into the light, to break or cut off the power and influence of darkness. Have the counselee pray, confess and renounce as described below.
11. For the person to experience freedom over what is being revealed they may need to do one, or all of the following (not exhaustive):
 - 11.1 Confess - admit the truth aloud, whether it is something they did (sin) and/or something that happened to them (sin done to them). Admit it happened, that it was wrong and that they want to be forgiven or to forgive and be freed from all influences that came through this experience. They may need to also reject lies or untruth they believe and confess the Truth about what God says.
 - 11.2 Renounce (2 Corinthians 4:2) - have the person verbally say something to the effect of, "I renounce (cut off) and completely separate from all spiritual influences associated with (involvement in particular sin, believing a particular lie; sexual unions; traumatic experiences, etc.)"
 - 11.3 Forgive - in many cases a person's freedom is linked to their willingness to forgive someone who has hurt them. Refer here to the handouts by Neil Anderson and lead them through the steps to forgiveness by explaining what it is and what they need to do. After they have offered forgiveness, then command aloud that, "all spiritual influences that have had an inroad through unforgiveness or through the sin that brought about this state I now command to loose *this person* and leave them now in the Name of Christ. I now send you to Jesus to be judged and cancel all effects of your presence and influence in the Name of Jesus."
12. If there is a struggle or you don't seem to be getting anywhere, then there is some reason that the spiritual influence still remains attached (if it is a spiritual matter vs. psychological). Ask the Lord to reveal to the person what the lie is that they believe that keeps them from their freedom. Ask them what comes to mind. If there is still a struggle then ask the Lord Jesus to

reveal if there are any unclean spirits behind the lie. Ask Jesus to bring them out of darkness into the light.

13. If there is an indication that unclean spirits are present (through visible physical manifestations, clearly interfering with the person's mind, etc.) Ask the Lord Jesus to reveal their identity and reveal their entry point.
14. These entry points could be very clear to the person you are praying with as the Lord brings them to mind. These temple-defiling sins must be repented for and renounced before the unclean spirits can be resisted. A helpful list of defiling sins include involvement in the occult, cults or other religions is included in the Steps to Freedom Prayer Guide (Anderson)

Resist

15. Lead the person through prayers of repentance, renouncing (all covenants, oaths or ties to the unclean spirits if applicable) and resisting. The person must exercise their authority in Christ in binding/resisting these unclean spirits themselves. Agree with the counselee's prayer aloud and command the spirit to leave in Jesus' name, sending them to Christ in order to be judged.
16. Continue inquiring of the Lord and seeking His counsel with the person you are praying for. Ask Him to continue to reveal and bring issues and influences into the light. Continue to pray authoritatively in response, all the while interacting with the person in regard to what they are experiencing.

Renew

17. Ask the Lord to **fill** this person with His Holy Spirit, to wash them and cleanse them from all effects of darkness. Inquire of the Lord as to when to conclude. Ask the Lord for His cleansing, peace and protection to remain on each person. Conclude by thanking and worshipping the Lord.
18. Like a house that is swept clean (Luke 11:24-26) they must learn to how to make use of rooms previously occupied by others. **Daily** nurture, encouragement and prayer are needed so that the counselee learns to "live in Christ, rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith" (Colossians 2:6,7). It's not unusual for the counselee to face unusual spiritual attacks in this period of "holding the ground" from the attempt of the enemy to retake it.