

Strongholds over a nation – some thoughts for reconciliation teams

What is a stronghold? It is a place of fortified authority. We encounter this word in 2 Corinthians 10:3-5 which speaks of God's unconventional weapons for pulling down strongholds. What are they?

Ephesians 4:27 speaks of sin giving Satan a foothold if we don't repent. Corporate sin (a sin which is common and predominant) in a nation gives rise to a stronghold – an evil hold on a nation, like a thick dark cloud blocking out the sun. This in turn has an effect on the population, making it hard for them to respond to God's love and to sin even more, so the process goes on and on like a vicious cycle.

Ephesians 6:12 reminds us that we are not wrestling against flesh and blood but against rulers, authorities, powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. 2 Corinthians 2:11 We are not to be unaware of the devil's schemes. Satan only has the authority that mankind gives him through sin.

Romans 6:16 Whatever we keep yielding to we become its slave.

Example: UK Stronghold of unbelief – rejecting the spiritual realm, self-reliance, independence. Consequence: very few true Christians, it's often hard to sense God's presence, some churches find it hard to believe in the work of Holy Spirit, it's hard to get spiritual breakthroughs, very few healing miracles taking place. (This was also seen in Nazareth and Capernaum, and even Jesus could not work many miracles there.)

If Satan is looking for ways to destroy the reconciliation teams, the easiest way is to use the stronghold that is already over the nation, because we are so used to it and vulnerable to it. It is so 'normal' that we are not aware of its power over us or its destructiveness.

Can you think of any strongholds in your nation? The way to find out is to think of the sins that are predominant, that are very common.

How could Satan use this to try to influence your team?

How do we overcome national strongholds?

- by searching our hearts to see if we are affected ourselves
- by repenting, and renouncing the stronghold's effect on our lives
- by the renewing of our minds, bringing every thought captive to Jesus. 2 Corinthians 10:3-5
- by deliberately seeking to live in the opposite spirit.
- by praying for special protection for our families, our teams and being watchful so that they are not affected
- by praying for our nations.

But a note of caution: we alone cannot come against these strongholds, and are not commanded to do so. Some people have been presumptuous and tried to take on these strong powers and have really suffered for it. Our part is to live righteous lives. We can certainly have personal victory – the One who is in us is greater than he who is in the world (1 John 4:4). We do have authority over all the power of the enemy so that nothing can harm us (Luke 10:10). We overcome the enemy by the blood of the Lamb, the word of our testimony and not loving our lives so much as to shrink from death (Revelation 12:11). But we need to be wise and not take on something that God has not asked us to do.