

UNITY? MAYBE NOT AT THIS TIME

There have been feelers and also outright clamors for the reunification of the two factions in Couples for Christ. It is indeed a noble cause and every Christian would want to live out what the Lord has been preaching in scripture of being one with each other and with Him. However, there are qualifications to such a state and it is actually an end result of a process that cannot be short-circuited especially when the focus of the unification effort is two parties in conflict. The following are the reasons we need to reflect on and see if there is merit in holding out first until a more opportune time presents itself in the future:

The process of reconciliation

When we speak of process, it takes a step-by-step procedure that builds on a foundation that when executed well and thoroughly enough will bring about the desired change. Reconciliation is such a process. Even the Catholic Church teaches that we cannot have shortcuts in the sacrament of reconciliation. We need to present ourselves to a father confessor and not go directly to God. There is a lot of merit to this doctrine since facing someone, a co-sinner, is an act of humility as well as an opportunity to dialogue and bring out the necessary phases in the process – something that does not happen in one-way arrangements.

To be sorry (or to repent) If we want to be united, then there has to be repentance on the wrong that has been done by the offending party. Even if there was no ill will involved, the fact that you have hurt someone, you can at least say sorry for the pain you have caused. To this date, there has not been any repentance or indication of being sorry from any of the council members or those who have maligned people from the Easter Group/The Restoration Movement or CFC-FFL.

To acknowledge one's responsibility over the misconduct – Nobody seems to want to admit the fault of conducting a witch hunt in the Home Office or for having tarnished the reputation of individuals by going public on what they perceived as wrongdoing. If something wrong has been done, the community pattern has always been to confront the person or bring someone else to stand witness against him if he fails to listen. There is no signing of affidavits to attest to the veracity of an allegation.

To make reparation or retribution - There is such a thing as penance for the sins that we have committed. If there is a wrongdoing that we have made, then we have to make reparation for whatever damage we have done. If we stole money, then we have to pay it back. If we destroyed someone's reputation, then we need to find a way to restore it. The present conflict has brought deep damage to the emotions and sensibilities of people. Yet, nothing has been done so far to mend the brokenness brought about by the conflict.

To promise not to repeat the offense – Since there is no owning of the offenses at this time and also being sorry for the damage, then there is no basis for promises. All these will be just empty words if ever they are delivered to the aggrieved parties.

To ask for forgiveness – Again, no ownership, no promises, and no asking of forgiveness. We should be able to ask forgiveness for our sins. However, since there is no acknowledgement, then asking for forgiveness is an exercise in futility.

A contaminated culture

Although very few would like to admit it but the culture of CFC has taken a severe downturn in the past few months. People were compelled to take a position in the conflict, made to sign affidavits, bear false witness or make allegations that cannot be substantiated, broadcast criticisms and unchristian exchanges in the internet. It will be difficult to “cleanse” such a culture without everyone agreeing that there is indeed an existing problem. It will be helpful to start all over again and get people to commit to a new way of life rather than revise the present. What is needed is an overhaul and not a band-aid kind of treatment.

Deception

The deception has been so great that people are beginning to question the authenticity of members and leaders. The experience in the past six months has led people to mistrust one another. Each other's emotional bank accounts are totally withdrawn. It will take more concrete steps to break the trend such as sincere acts of changes, particularly from CFC-GK.

The unknown ulterior motives

It is still puzzling how people of good nature were able to conduct themselves in unchristian and unkind behavior. After so many years of training and being in fraternal relationships, the whole idea of betrayal and aggression are unfathomable. One can only surmise that there is an end that justified whatever means were employed. And unless those "ends" are clearly acknowledged and confronted, there will always be speculation, and any attempt at unity with a string of doubt in place will only result in disaster.

The case of the abusive husband and battered wife

The present situation is analogous to a husband who habitually beats his wife. Since the wife apparently also has a weakness which compels her to allow the abuse of her husband, she too has a need for healing/therapy. However, unless the two individuals are separated, the risk of injury, further emotional damage, and even homicide are imminent. It is therefore prudent to separate the two for the time being until they undergo individual therapy and can be cleared to live together again. CFC-GK and CFC-FFL are two such "individuals." The hurt that has been inflicted has been very serious. No amount of intervention will start the healing process unless the two are given respite to assess themselves and move on to growth. Then they will have the opportunity to rethink their relationship once the disorders are addressed and they can take steps to reunification.

IT IS HIGHLY PROBABLE BEHAVIOR FOR THE ABUSIVE SPOUSE TO REASSURE THE OTHER THAT HE WILL NOT DO IT AGAIN. UNLESS HE HAS A GREAT DEGREE OF AWARENESS AND WENT THROUGH THERAPY, HE IS BOUND TO REPEAT THE ABUSE. LIKEWISE, THE ABUSED SPOUSE WILL SUCCUMB TO SUCH WOOING UNLESS SHE RECOGNIZES THAT THE PROBLEM IS DEEPER THAN WHAT IT SEEMS TO BE AND THE THREAT TO LIFE IS VERY REAL.

Contributed by: Bro. Gary Faustino/ 28 August 2007