

## CESSATION OF THE APOSTOLIC AND PROPHETIC MINISTRIES

By Rev Dr Quek Suan Yew (201105)

The next major and most influential offspring of the Charismatic Movement, and which ultimately led to the formation of the Third Wave Movement are The Prophets, Prophecy, and The Prophetic Movement and the Twentieth Century Apostolic Ministry. Hamon prophesied,

The Prophets are Coming--Prepare! I believe that this is an age in which God is raising up a multitude of prophets who are anointed and appointed—honest, true, trained, and experientially matured ... Jesus is thrilled at the thought that His prophets will soon be fully recognized and accepted by His Church. When this happens it will escalate the approach of the consummation of the ages. It will accelerate the 'making ready a people for the Lord' so that He can return. It is the prophesying of the prophets that brings the Church from a disorganized Valley of dry bones to a unified coming together with growth and maturity until the Church arises as an exceeding great and mighty army of the Lord (Ezek. 37:1-14).<sup>1</sup>

In this declaration, Hamon claims that modern prophets like himself will prepare the way for the Second Coming of Christ! In his own words, Hamon, who is reputed to be one of the most widely recognized prophetic ministers in the charismatic movement, declared that he has functioned in the office of prophet for over 36 years and has personally prophesied to more than 20,000 believers and hundreds of prominent leaders.<sup>2</sup>

The new Charismatics believe that just as John the Baptist came in the spirit of Elijah to prepare the first Coming of Jesus Christ, now a company of modern prophets will equip the church in the spirit and power of Elijah to prepare the way for Christ's second coming (cf. Mal. 4:5). They believe that the modern prophets have been given an anointing and responsibility to receive from Jesus Christ the proper revelation and application of the Old and New Testament Scriptures. These truths are hidden from the modern church until Christ is ready to reveal it to His church, through the modern prophets.<sup>3</sup> Hamon declares that a new age is coming where God will commission "His Spirit to bring enlightenment on the Scriptures and revelation knowledge concerning the reality and application of that truth."<sup>4</sup>

The modern prophets are indispensable to the modern church. The new Charismatics believe that these prophets will, with incisive clarity of vision, cut through the clutter, to search out the motives and intentions of the members of the church like a probing

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<sup>1</sup>Bill Hamon, **Prophets and Personal Prophecy: God's Prophetic Voice Today**, (Shippensburg: Destiny Image, 1987), 15, 28.

<sup>2</sup>Hamon, **Prophets and the Prophetic Movement**, 76.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., 21.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

laser beam!<sup>5</sup> Like biblical Jeremiah who burst the balloon of false trust in religious ritualism, the modern prophets will bring to the church revelation and clarity concerning God's purpose for their time. "The modern prophets will cause leaders to reexamine their church's activities in light of the new truths the prophets bring. They will execute prophetic surgery on many churches to awaken them to God's present truth. Without the vision and fresh revelation of modern prophets, the church has no hope of ever being restored."<sup>6</sup>

Paulk says, "The prophet is not just one method that God uses; he is the only method He uses to speak to this generation. The prophet is God's only means of informing this generation of new and greater insights into recorded revelation in God's Word. Who will speak to this generation if God does not raise up prophets?"<sup>7</sup>

This new prophetic army of God has been equipped with new revelational power enabling them to direct the people's lives in very intricate detail. It is very common in the circles of the restoration movement for their followers to seek out a prophet if they desire an instant word from God to help them make a certain decision.

A few years ago I was at a wedding where over half the people present were of a restoration charismatic persuasion. The highlight of the wedding came when two restoration prophets stepped forward to close the ceremony by prophesying over the young bride and groom. Apparently, a prophet had given the young couple a personal word prior to the wedding that they were to find two prophets to take part in the ceremony, to "seal the marriage in prophecy," as it were. At the reception after the wedding, I overheard a young man ask one of the prophets for a word from God. The young man explained that he was trying to discern God's will for his life but was having a difficult time. At that moment the prophet took him outside and prophesied over him.<sup>8</sup>

On whether it is biblical to ask a prophet today concerning our daily lives, Hamon says,

You may ask, 'But is it proper--is it scriptural -- for an individual Christian to go to a prophet and expect to receive a specific prophetic word of direction, instruction, or confirmation?' The answer is yes. The Bible provides numerous examples of people, especially those in leadership, going to a prophet and asking for a 'thus saith the Lord' about a particular situation.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>Terry Virgo, **Restoration of the Church**, (Columbia: Cityhill Publishing, 1985), 106.

<sup>6</sup>Moriarty, 97.

<sup>7</sup>**The Wounded Body of Christ**, 51.

<sup>8</sup>Moriarty, 98.

<sup>9</sup>**Prophets and Personal Prophecy**, 71.

Schools have popped up training new and young prophets the ropes of the trade. The new Charismatics believe that it is important for their young prophets to come under the tutelage of a more mature and older prophet. Instructions include how to hear the voice of God and how to adjust to and handle the “new anointing” of the Spirit. Hamon writes on the training of these young prophets,

Samuel was the senior prophet who had the vision for starting schools of the prophets throughout Israel ... Today there are places being raised up in a similar way for the schooling of prophets. These training centers activating them into their calling and training to become pure and mature New Testament Church prophets.<sup>10</sup>

The vision and purpose of Hamon’s School of the Prophets is fourfold: (1) defining and determining twentieth- century prophets within the church; (2) teaching and portraying different levels of the prophetic ministry--spirit of prophecy, gift of prophecy, office of the prophet, laying on of the hands and prophecy of the presbytery; (3) the blessings and dangers of personal prophecy--wise and experientially proved criteria and guidelines; and (4) determining the true and mature prophet by evaluating the man, his manners, his message, and his ministry.<sup>11</sup>

The apostolic ministry is just as vital as that of the prophets’. The new Charismatics believed that they have found the secret of church building and advancing God’s kingdom. It is the restoration of the apostolic ministry. The modern apostle and in some cases a company of apostles will be based in a local church. Their ministry is to establish new churches or to oversee the rebuilding and ongoing development of existing churches. God has as it were reactivated them to fulfill His great plan of establishing His kingdom on earth for Jesus’ return.

The ministry of the modern-day apostle is to travel from church to church to assess the church’s situation and rectify any problem immediately. He has no qualms about bringing in hard-hitting messages from the Lord to the local congregation who do not see their own faults. This he does with fierce prophetic insights. He corrects spiritual coldness, doctrinal instability, faulty practices, etc. and any problems that can unobtrusively become part of a church’s life. He believes that his duty is to safeguard the churches under his care. He protects them from impending dangers of legalism, false doctrines, and many other problems of the present day church.

Restoration apostle Terry Virgo, who is in charge of an apostolic team overseeing sixty churches in Great Britain, India, South Africa, Switzerland, Holland, and Mexico, has this to say concerning the need for the apostolic ministry,

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<sup>10</sup>**Prophets and the Prophetic Movement**, 106.

<sup>11</sup>Taken from Bill Hamon, “Brochure for the School of the Holy Spirit and Prophets Seminar,” **Christian International Ministries**, n.d.

The elders often feel trapped within the framework and long for an outside voice to authoritatively proclaim the way forward. Indeed, it is very often the elders who feel the need for the apostolic ministry. ... Traditional churches are feeling the pressures of new life. Charismatic gifts are emerging; a desire for freer worship is being expressed. How are leaders to proceed? Many are facing such issues and do not know which way to turn. Conferences for likeminded pastors will not provide the full answer, nor will charismatic organizations. God's way is to give apostles and prophets. He has simply appointed men with different gifts to do different jobs.<sup>12</sup>

It is up the churches today if they wish to grow or die a slow death. Churches which accept these modern apostles will mature into bastions of God's power and glory. Those who resist will fall by the wayside. The new Charismatics believe that, "just as the ministry of the apostle and prophet founded the Church, so shall the ministry of the apostle and prophet put the finishing touches on the Church."<sup>13</sup>

With the restoration of the full fivefold ministry into the churches, there will also be a restoration of many signs and wonders. In fact the church today will see a greater and more spectacular array of supernatural performances. The restored church of the last days will literally dwarf the first-generation church in terms of her miraculous abilities! The new Charismatics claim that,

The gift of miracles will be restored to its full function during the next restorational movement. All the gifts which have already been restored and are active in the Church will be brought to a higher level of performance . ... The working of miracles will cause creative miracles among the maimed and deformed. New limbs will grow back where they had been removed or never developed. ... As needs arise, the working of miracles will enable the Church to 'walk of water,' be transported by the Spirit from one geographical location to another as Philip the Evangelist; multiply the loaves and fishes to feed the multitudes when there are no other resources; supernaturally, preach to a nation in its own language; have supernatural preservation during calamities; be miraculously directed, and involve a greater number of incidents of people being raised from the dead.<sup>14</sup>

One of the more prominent offsprings of the new Charismatics is the *Signs and Wonders Movement*. The founder is John Wimber.<sup>15</sup> Who was Wimber?

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<sup>12</sup>"The Apostle Is No Optional Extra," **People of Destiny Magazine** (January/February 1984):11.

<sup>13</sup>Hamon, **The Eternal Church**, 347.

<sup>14</sup>Hamon, **The Eternal Church**, 343-44.

<sup>15</sup>Some have said that Wimber was not a believer. [John W. Robbins, **Pat Robertson: A Warning to America**, (Jefferson: The Trinity Foundation, 1988), 100.] Others have praised him for being a "man of integrity, of warmth, humility and courage" and thus a Christian. [John White, **When the Spirit Comes with Power: Signs and Wonders Among God's People** (Downers

In 1963, a young jazz musician by the name of John Wimber made a profession of faith in Jesus Christ. In 1970, he joined the staff as an assistant pastor at the Yorba Linda Friends Church (Quaker) in Yorba Linda, California.

In 1974, Wimber left the pastorate of Yorba Linda Friends Church to join the staff of the Charles E. Fuller Institute of Evangelism and Church Growth at Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, California. For four years he studied factors that lead to church growth. He was impressed by the statistics which showed that the most dramatic growth was being enjoyed by Pentecostal and charismatic churches. Wimber's attitude toward signs and wonders greatly changed, not because of his study of Scripture, but as a result of the reported growth of Pentecostal and charismatic churches.

Wimber's wife had become a charismatic. She had undergone what she called a "personality meltdown" through the work of the Holy Spirit to change her attitude toward charismatics (Carol Wimber, "Hunger for God: A Reflective Look at the Vineyard Beginnings," *The Vineyard Newsletter*, Vol. 2, No. 3, Fall, 1987, p. 1).

The man who would have the most impact on Wimber's philosophy was C. Peter Wagner, alleged expert on church growth, and a strong proponent of signs and wonders for the purpose of church growth. Affiliations at Fuller convinced Wimber to study the relationship between spiritual gifts and evangelism. The result was his development of what he called "power evangelism," predicated upon the supposition that the Gospel is largely ineffective unless accompanied by signs and wonders.<sup>16</sup>

Wimber's ministry is called the Vineyard ministries. Wimber believed that the proclamation of the gospel must be accompanied by signs and wonders just as Jesus did in His day. The church must do likewise for people to accept Jesus into their lives. Peter Wagner, a professor at the School of Missions at Fuller Theological Seminary, is another proponent of the signs and wonders message. Wagner was the one who labelled the new Charismatics "the Third Wave" in 1983. This was to distinguish it from "the First Wave" (Pentecostal Movement) and "the Second Wave" (charismatic movement). He acknowledged that the Holy Spirit did work in all three movements.

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Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1988), 172.] "The church is filled with cynics who shoot from the hip by calling into question a brother's relationship with the Lord because he does not happen to fall into complete agreement with their theological system. John Wimber may be controversial, and he may be wrong in some significant doctrinal areas, but he is most certainly a Christian. Those who really know him affirm his humility, tender spirit, and godly character. However, the rapid growth of the movement has left many Vineyard churches without fully developed, responsible leaders." [Moriarty, 101]

<sup>16</sup>Albert James Dager, "John Wimber and The Vineyard," <http://www.rapidnet.com/~jbeard/bdm/exposes/wimber/john.htm>.

Wimber's background and theology were influenced by a host of people of varied different backgrounds and beliefs. There were many other influences whom Wimber cited in his teachings: (1) Agnes Sanford—pantheist and “mother” of inner healing in the churches; (2) Ruth Carter Stapleton (former President Jimmy Carter's sister)—disciple of Agnes Sanford, who claimed that one could be “born again” by listening to greater music or gazing upon certain works of art; (3) Dennis and Rita Bennett—disciples of Agnes Sanford, and early pioneers of the charismatic movement; (4) John and Paula Sanford—pantheists, and disciples of Agnes Sanford; (5) Francis MacNutt—Roman Catholic charismatic priest, disciple of Agnes Sanford, proponent of inner healing methodologies; (6) Michael Scanlan—Roman Catholic charismatic priest, disciple of Agnes Sanford, proponent of inner healing methodologies; (7) Kenneth E. Hagin— “father” of the word-faith movement, mentor of Kenneth Copeland, and disciple of E.W. Kenyon, whose theology was heavily influenced by science of mind teachings; “Space does not allow for more except to say that Wimber often sprinkled warnings about the New Age, the occult, and erroneous charismatic suppositions as if his power evangelism methodologies were removed from them. This, coupled with his listing in his bibliography the words of men like Kurt Koch and Doug Groothuis, acted as a smoke-screen.”<sup>17</sup> John Wimber died on November 17<sup>th</sup>, 1997, the result of a fall that caused a fatal brain hemorrhage. He was 63.

Vineyard churches sprung up all over the nation including Canada. The leaders of the Vineyard churches were weak and very susceptible to any false teachings. For example, two restoration Charismatics, Mike Bickle and Bob Jones (not the fundamentalist founder of Bob Jones University), joined the Association of Vineyard churches after they came under scrutiny for making false prophecies and applying occultic philosophies in their teachings.<sup>18</sup> Wimber and a team of Vineyard pastors and seminarians interviewed and examined them and took them into their fold. The concluded that their practices were sound! This is a sample of what Bob Jones did.

He often lays hands on someone so he can feel what they feel and “move prophetically through all five senses.” Sometimes he sees pictures; sometimes he hears words or other sounds. He says that the presence of the Lord often smells to him like roses, and that certain kinds of sin, such as witchcraft, have their distinct smells. At times he may even have an impression of some taste with a prophetic meaning.<sup>19</sup>

Jones also confessed to sexual misconduct with two women where he manipulated the women and also to bring division into the church. This was made public in a six-page time line circulated throughout all the Vineyard churches and certain Christian media around the

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<sup>17</sup>Ibid.

<sup>18</sup>“Kansas City Fellowship Joins Vineyard,” **Charisma Magazine** (July 1990): 34.

<sup>19</sup>Paul Thigpen, “How is God Speaking Today,” **Charisma Magazine** (September 1989): 53-54.

world. They believe that this is the way to rebuke a fallen leader in the Vineyard churches, a measure commensurate with his visibility and ministry.

### MEANING OF TERMS:

PROPHETS are defined as persons who foretell and forth-tell. To foretell means that he reveals future things from God. To forth-tell means that he preaches against sins and what the Lord had laid in heart to preach. The example in the Bible that succinctly and clearly defines the ministry of the prophet was 1 Samuel 3:18, “And Samuel told him **every whit, and hid nothing from him**. And he said, It is the LORD: let him do what seemeth him good.” [emphasis added] the catch phrase of every prophet is “Thus saith the LORD.”

In the general sense when a pastor or a believer preaches God’s Word he is forth-telling and when he preaches future events like those taught in the Book of Revelation he is regarded as foretelling then in the general usage of the word “prophet” he can be called a prophet of God. But in the strict sense of the word as used in the Bible the prophetic ministries have ceased. These were the individuals whom God had chosen to write Scriptures and do special miracles like Elijah and Elisha.

There will be false prophets today as there were false prophets in the past. For example in Jeremiah 28:1-4, “And it came to pass the same year, in the beginning of the reign of Zedekiah king of Judah, in the fourth year, and in the fifth month, that **Hananiah the son of Azur the prophet**, which was of Gibeon, spake unto me in the house of the LORD, in the presence of the priests and of all the people, saying, **Thus speaketh the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel**, saying, I have broken the yoke of the king of Babylon. Within two full years will I bring again into this place all the vessels of the LORD’S house, that Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon took away from this place, and carried them to Babylon: And I will bring again to this place Jeconiah the son of Jehoiakim king of Judah, with all the captives of Judah, that went into Babylon, saith the LORD: for I will break the yoke of the king of Babylon.” [emphasis added]

The term APOSTLES simply means “one who is sent.” In the general usage of the word it could include anyone who has been sent. For example in Acts 14:14, “Which when the apostles, Barnabas and Paul, heard of, they rent their clothes, and ran in among the people, crying out,” where Barnabas was also called an apostle. The difference between the apostles of Christ like Peter and Paul is that that they were sent directly by Christ Himself whereas Barnabas was sent by the church of Jerusalem. Therefore in the general usage of the word, our church’s missionaries can be called apostles as there were sent by the church.

The Apostles like Peter and Paul must fulfill these requirements as described by Peter in Acts 1:15-23, “And in those days Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples, and said, (the number of names together were about an hundred and twenty,) Men and brethren, this scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost by the

mouth of David spake before concerning Judas, which was guide to them that took Jesus. For he was numbered with us, and had obtained part of this ministry. Now this man purchased a field with the reward of iniquity; and falling headlong, he burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out. And it was known unto all the dwellers at Jerusalem; insomuch as that field is called in their proper tongue, Aceldama, that is to say, The field of blood. For it is written in the book of Psalms, Let his habitation be desolate, and let no man dwell therein: and his bishoprick let another take. **Wherefore of these men which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, Beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that he was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection.** And they appointed two, Joseph called Barsabas, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias.” [emphasis added]

## CRITIQUE JACK DEERE’S THEOLOGY

Jack Deere’s understanding of the apostolic ministry for today’s church is as follows:

(1) The gift of apostleship is not a spiritual gift in the same sense as healing and miracles. Paul never applies the word *charisma* to apostleship [Paul did not mention apostleship in 1 Cor 12:8-10]. Deere argues that a person can perform the acts of an apostle without being called an apostle! He says that in the New Testament there were “fifteen apostles: the Twelve plus Paul, Barnabas, and James. Very likely Silas was a sixteenth apostle. Perhaps Andronicus, Junias, and some other unnamed apostles (1 Cor 15:7) ought to be added to this list.”<sup>20</sup>

(2) The apostle Paul had set out three requirements for apostleship, the first being the foundational one. As such there must be a specific call and commission from the Lord Jesus Christ (Galatians 1:1; Romans 1:1, 5; 1 Corinthians 1:1; 2Cor. 1:1). The second and third requirements are stated in 1 Corinthians 9:1-2. He must have seen the Lord Jesus Christ. The third is not a requirement but rather a characteristic of apostleship i.e. the effectiveness of the apostle’s ministry especially in the planting of churches.

(3) Deere gave these five characteristics that make up a New Testament apostle. They are: (a) He must learn to suffer (cf. 1 Cor 4:9-13; 2 Cor 4:7-12; 6:3-10; 11:23-33; and Gal. 6:17). The theological purpose behind the suffering is given in 2 Corinthians 4:7, “But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.” (b) He has special insight into divine mysteries. “They have divine insight into the mystery of Christ (Eph 3:1-6)” and “into the mystery of godliness (1 Tim 3:16)” and “into the mystery of Israel’s conversion (Rom 11:25-32)” and Paul had even seen visions and heard revelations which he was not permitted to speak on earth (2 Cor 12:1-4, 7). (c) He demonstrates signs and wonders as he proclaims Jesus Christ (cf. Luke 24:49; Acts 1:8). (d)

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<sup>20</sup>Deere, 243. These are examples cited by Deere in support of his total number of apostles (p. 243). Paul and Barnabas were called apostles in Acts 14:4, 14; James, the Lord’s brother called an apostle by Paul in Gal. 1:19 cf. 1Cor. 15:7.



He must be blameless in his integrity (cf. 1Cor 1:12; 2:17; 4:2; 7:2). (e) He has apostolic authority (cf. Matt 10:1; Mark 3:15; 6:7; Luke 9:1).

**Here is a critique of Deere's view** of present-day apostleship. Deere reveals his confusion in the understanding and application of biblical apostleship when he said, "I do not know of anyone today whom I would want to call an apostle in the same sense that I would call Paul an apostle. I am not willing, however, to rule out this possibility, because I do not think the Scriptures rule it out."<sup>21</sup> It must be understood that the apostolic ministry is unique and it was temporary like all other gifts. Deere's observations of the characteristics of an apostle are correct although not exhaustive. Furthermore, some of these characteristics are not distinctively for the apostles alone but for all believers. For example all believers are called to suffer for Jesus' sake. Philippians 1:27-30 says,

Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel; And in nothing terrified by your adversaries: which is to them an evident token of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that of God. For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake; Having the same conflict which ye saw in me, and now hear to be in me."

Based upon the nature and function of the apostolic ministry as seen in Scripture we say that it has ceased. There cannot be apostles today. Therefore no biblically sound church can use the title of an apostle in the church today.

MacArthur rightly observes the six reasons for the cessation of the apostolic ministry. They are: (1) the church was founded upon the apostles; (2) apostles were eyewitnesses to the resurrection; (3) apostles were chosen personally by Jesus Christ; (4) apostles were authenticated by miraculous signs; (5) apostles had absolute authority (when they wrote and preached the Word); and (6) apostles have an eternal and unique place of honour.

The study of the epochs of Biblical miracles and the purposes of Jesus' and the apostles' miracles mentioned above argues for the cessation of the miraculous gifts. Genuine signs and wonders have ceased when the Word of God was completed and the Church of God established. It is only at the end times will there will be a resurgence of signs and wonders, but counterfeit ones. Buswell rightly said,

It is a reasonable opinion, not controvertible by any clear attested facts, that God generally ceased to work through "sign" miracles when the NT was finished; and that it is His will that the "miracle of grace," the witness of the Spirit, answered prayer, and supremely, the written Word, shall be the chief sources of knowledge of Himself for His people during this age.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Deere, 251-2.

<sup>22</sup>Buswell, 1:181.

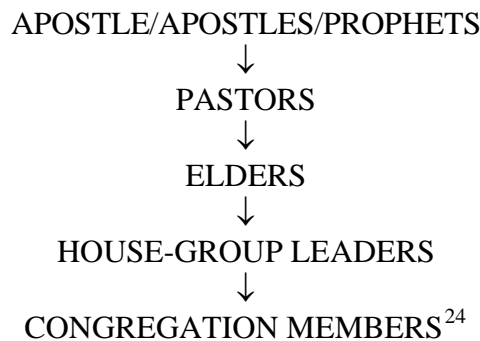
The true miracles of God as recorded in the Scriptures are essential to Christianity not because the church made them up to be such. They are miracles because the God who revealed Himself to us in Scripture is a God who can and did do miracles.

If Jesus Christ is not God manifest in the flesh, our faith is a silly myth. If He did not arise from the dead in bodily form, the grave being empty and His appearance being recognizable, then we are yet in our sins and of all men most miserable. If the miracle of grace is not verifiable, the transformation of the life of the one who puts his faith in Jesus as his Lord and Saviour, then our Christian gospel is a miserable fraud.<sup>23</sup>

## DEFINING A POWERFUL CHURCH TODAY

The Charismatic View of a present day powerful filled church:

The principle leaders and originators of the movement came out of Fort Lauderdale, Florida. They are: Bob Mumford, Charles Simpson, Derek Prince, Don Basham, and Ern Baxter. To achieve their goal of complete and total discipleship, they taught a pyramid form of church government. Different levels will shepherd one another for the purpose of discipleship.



The Proof text used to support the restoration theology is Acts 3:19-21, “Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: **Whom the heaven must receive until the times of**

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<sup>23</sup>Ibid.

<sup>24</sup>The congregation makes up the base of the pyramid. Above them on the pyramid were the house-group leaders whose job was to oversee the church members to ensure that each is disciplined properly. Next in line, above the house-group leaders were the elders who hold the house-group leaders accountable for their own lives and the lives of those under their authority. This was followed by the pastors who hold the elders accountable. Finally on the top of the pyramid were the apostles who were accountable to one another.

**restitution of all things**, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.” [emphasis added]

The Charismatics interpret the phrase, “until the times of the restitution of all things” as the restoration movement. They believe that for the Second Coming of Christ to become a reality, the restoration must occur. To them this restoration refers to the bringing back of the apostolic and prophetic ministries into the local churches.

The critique of this view: Firstly, there is no mention of the restoration of the ministries of the prophets and apostles at all in this context. The apostles were still alive then for this was the message preached by the apostle Peter at Temple precinct in Jerusalem (cf. Acts 10-11). Secondly, the “restitution” will not be done by man. It will be the work of God. God Himself will restore all things not some things before the return of Christ. This restoration refers to the Rapture and the First Resurrection and the millennial kingdom period (cf. Romans 8).

## CONCLUSION

The apostolic and prophetic ministries in the New Testament were very special ministries. God raised the apostles just as He had raised the prophets of the Old Testament for a specific purpose. They were the people through whom God used to not only to preach His Word but also to write them down in order that future generations might know who God is and what He has done. The Bible says in Hebrews 1:1-2, “God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, <sup>2</sup>Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds.” 1 Thessalonians 2:13 adds, “For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe.” 2 Timothy 2:2 confirms, “And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.

A revival of the prophetic and apostolic ministries further dilutes the Word of God over and above what the many modernistic translations have already done. The authority of the Word of God is reduced by the minute. It is not uncommon today to find many Charismatic pastors preaching Sunday after Sunday from their pulpit a word from God which they claim to have been given to them by God in the morning or the night before.<sup>25</sup> The shocking thing is that these churches are attended by thousands of people who readily accept what these pastors proclaimed week after week as if it is the very word

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<sup>25</sup>In the past 10 years of ministry, I have listened to more than three hundred messages of Charismatic preachers. They carried the Bible in their hands but never turn to them. Those who do, take the Bible out of its context. They would make the Bible say what they want the Bible to say. Many times these pastors would not turn a single page of the Bible and begin their message by saying, “This morning the LORD asked me to tell you . . .” With these words they would proclaimed boldly as if it was the voice of God the people were hearing.

of God. The total lack of discernment in these churches is mind boggling. Managers and Chief Executive Officers of multi-national companies with university degrees would attend these meetings and lap up all that comes forth from the pastor's mouth like a hart pants after a cool water brook!

The sad part is that this phenomenon is growing all over the world. The readiness to replace the Bible with man's word has bred a generation of professing Christians whose foundation are experiences and the words of sinful men. The restoration of the prophetic and apostolic ministries sounds nice and biblical but it just another ploy of the evil one to deceive the naïve and gullible. Believing a lie to be the truth is a very painful and potent deception. The greatest pain of all is that this deception has an eternal consequence. The eternal consequence is the rejection by Jesus Christ on the day of Judgement and be cast into the Lake of Fire. AMEN.