

Critical Issues Commentary

A BIBLICALLY BASED COMMENTARY ON ISSUES THAT IMPACT YOU

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APOSTLES AND PROPHETS AND THE FOUNDATION OF THE CHURCH

BY BOB DEWAAY

“And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fulness of Christ” (Ephesians 4:11-13)

Today a popular movement is making brash claims about itself. The movement claims that God is raising up a huge wave of end times prophets and apostles who will be instrumental in subduing entire nations and eventually the whole world before Christ returns. They claim that those of us who do not submit to this “prophetic-apostolic” movement will be judged or moved out of the way.¹ These apostles and prophets will be so powerful that people will be struck dead if they show up at their meetings with sin in their lives.² The new apostles and prophets will have power over nature itself.³ They will be a “new breed of man” with revelations, power, and prophetic insight not seen since Christ Himself was on earth.⁴ Bill Hamon who makes all these claims includes himself in this category of a “new breed” apostle: “In 1994 at CI’s eighth annual IGOP Conference I accepted God’s ‘commissioning’ as one of His new breed of restored last-days apostles.”⁵ He claims to have, “one thousand pages of type-written prophecies” that prophecy that Hamon is an apostle and prophet.⁶

The key proof text that underlies this movement is **Ephesians 4:11-13** cited above. In this article we will examine this passage in its Biblical context to see if it predicts a new breed of apostles and prophets who will empower the church to take dominion over the world before Christ returns. The passages tells

us that God gave the church apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers until we achieve the unity of the faith and the fulness of the stature of Christ. The claim that Hamon, C. Peter Wagner (who wrote the forward to Hamon’s book) and others are making is that the church has failed to fulfill this calling through most of church history because we have only had the last three of these ministries. Supposedly we need the “signs of an apostle” and new revelations of prophets to finally propel the church into its glorious state of perfection before Christ returns.

THE FOUNDATION AND THE BUILDING

In interpreting **Ephesians 4:11**, there is a question about what Paul means by the terms “apostles and prophets” in this passage. The questions are several: are these authoritarian prophets and apostles who gave us the New Testament revelation, are they apostles and prophets in a functional sense only, or are they fully revelatory and authoritative apostles and prophets who Paul envisions to be continually raised up throughout church history. Each of these possibilities needs to be examined in the context of the Book of Ephesians and the New Testament.

The best place to start is with what Paul has said earlier in Ephesians about apostles and prophets. The first such mention is in **Ephesians 2:19, 20** “So then you are no longer strangers and aliens,

but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God’s household, having been built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner stone.” This passage uses a building analogy that is carried on in **Ephesians 4:11-13** where he uses the phrase “building up.” The word in **Ephesians 4:11** is from the base of the same Greek word that was used in **Ephesians 2:20**. Here in **Ephesians 2** apostles and prophets are the foundation with Christ being the cornerstone.

This passage has several interpretive issues. The first is: does it mean **1a**) “the foundation that the apostles and prophets lay,” or **1b**) “the foundation that consists of the apostles and prophets”? The second issue is, “who are the prophets here, Old Testament ones, New Testament ones, or ‘the apostles as prophets’”? We shall address these questions one at a time. I believe that Paul means that Christ as the cornerstone and the apostles and prophets to whom Christ gave the New Testament revelation together constitute the foundation. I will discuss the questions and give evidence for my position.

The reason for the first question is that the Greek can allow either interpretation, so we need to look at the context to decide. In **Ephesians 2** Paul is primarily concerned with the fact that this one building consists of **both** redeemed Jews and Gentiles. The next mention of apostles and prophets in Ephesians is instructive: “*And by referring to this, when you read you can understand my insight into the mystery of Christ, which in other generations was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed to His holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit; to be specific, that the Gentiles are fellow heirs and fellow members of the body, and fellow partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel*” (**Ephesians 3:4-6**). The mystery of the gospel is that God is saving Gentiles as well as Jews and adding them to the church. This was revealed to the “apostles and prophets.” Clearly here it means

the New Testament message in its fullness, as epitomized in the gospel. This does not settle the questions raised in **1a** and **1b** above, but does point to New Testament apostles and prophets.

That apostles could be considered a part of the foundation is evidenced by this passage: "And the wall of the city had twelve foundation stones, and on them were the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb." (**Revelation 21:14**). Another pertinent New Testament passage is **1Corinthians 3:11**, "For no man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ." So the question is, if Christ is the foundation, how can it be that in **Ephesians 2** the apostles and prophets are? The answer lies in the cornerstone analogy, which likely is an allusion to **Isaiah 28:16**.⁷ Here, Christ is the corner stone and His apostles and prophets are the first stones laid that will constitute the foundation. This allusion shows that Paul means "apostles and prophets as the foundation," **1b**.

Several scholars have written astute observations on this. F.F. Bruce wrote, "Apostles and prophets constitute the foundation ministries in the church, not only in **Ephesians** but in **1Corinthians**: 'God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets . . .' (**1Cor. 12:28**). Apostles and prophets, then, might well be viewed as the first stones to be laid in the new building."⁸ Lenski's comments are very enlightening:

In **1 Cor. 3:11** Jesus Christ is called the foundation, not laid by Paul, but by God, not laid in founding this or that congregation, but laid by God once for all, for the church as such, for all time. In **Ephesians** 'the foundation' is to be understood in the same sense, the one laid by God. Then the genitive is appositional: "The foundation which consists of the apostles and prophets," not, indeed of their persons as being the first believers, or of their faith as being the original faith, but of their office as "the apostles and prophets," the recipients of the entire divine saving revelation for inspired transmission to all future ages.⁹

Charles Hodge comments as follows on **Ephesians 2:20**:

[T]here is a true and obvious sense in which the apostles are the foundation of the church; secondly they are expressly so called in Scripture — as in **Rev. 21:14**, besides the disputed passage, **Matt. 16:18**; and thirdly, the figure here demands this interpretation. In this particular passage Christ is the corner stone, the apostles the foundation, believers the edifice.¹⁰

The passage in **Ephesians 2** sees the apostles and prophets as the foundation of the building which is the church. Though Paul does speak of himself as laying a foundation in **1Corinthians 3:10**, the figure is slightly different there. Plus, there was a very important church in the New Testament (the one in Rome) that as far as the Biblical evidence shows was founded by no apostle, but by the witness of individual Christians. Considering all the evidence I conclude that Paul means that Christ as the cornerstone and the apostles and prophets to whom Christ gave the New Testament revelation together constitute the foundation. Throughout church history this one foundation is continually being build upon, but not altered or changed. The reason Paul likely means New Testament prophets is that he mentions them with apostles in **Ephesians 3:5** (previously quoted) as the ones to whom the New Testament revelation was given. This is Paul's meaning in **Ephesians**, though from the rest of the New Testament it is not clear who in particular were these prophets. That has caused some to interpret him as meaning, "the apostles as prophets." The text does not show that he meant this. They are listed separately in several New Testament lists, including **Ephesians 4:11**.

So we have concluded that apostles and prophets in **Ephesians 2:20** are foundations of the church, because of what Christ, the Cornerstone, has done through them by giving them the New Testament revelation. This New Testament revelation that was given to them concerns this basic truth, often repeated in **Ephesians**: "that the Gentiles are fellow heirs and fellow members of the

body, and fellow partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel" (**Ephesians 3:6**). It is the Gospel and all the attendant teachings that are given in the New Testament. We have also concluded that these are New Testament apostles and prophets as referenced by Paul in **Ephesians 3:5,6**.

THE FIVE-FOLD MINISTRY

As we now address **Ephesians 4:11-13** the immediate question concerns his third mention of apostles and prophets in **Ephesians**. I will argue that Paul is speaking of the same people. Is there any evidence from the context for taking apostles and prophets in **Ephesians 4:11** to mean different people from what Paul had in mind in **Ephesians 2** and **Ephesians 3** where he previously taught about apostles and prophets? Keep in mind that his terminology "building up" continues the thought of the church as a building, with a foundation, that is continually built upon. That in itself is strong evidence that Paul is still speaking of New Testament apostles and prophets. The so called "five-fold" ministries of **Ephesians 4:11** were given to the church upon Christ's ascension (**Ephesians 4:8-10**). Their effects will continue on until the end of the age: "until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and the knowledge of the Son of God . . ." (**Verse 12**).

The ministries of the apostles and prophets continue throughout the age only in the sense that they gave us the New Testament revelation that serves as the once for all laid foundation, Christ as the cornerstone. Considering that Paul called Christ the cornerstone, and in **Corinthians** the foundation itself, we can see that the foundation must be laid once for all. Those who claim that there must be a continual giving of apostles throughout the church age for the body to come into the unity of the faith have a huge problem with what Paul taught in **Ephesians**. Obviously many Christ's do not have to be given to the church throughout the church age or at an end time restoration period for Christ to be the cornerstone! So why do we imagine that many apostles and prophets have to be given later in church history for them to be the foundation? Neither the cornerstone nor the foundation need to be

laid more than once.

Therefore, the context provides good reason to take the apostles and prophets of **Ephesians 4:11** to be Christ's apostles and prophets of the New Testament era whose foundational ministries continue to be in effect throughout the church age because of the final and authoritative revelation of truth that was given them. Christ gave them to His church, once for all, and their divinely inspired teachings are final and authoritative. Apostles in particular have certain qualifications that no one today can meet. Charles Hodge explains in his comments on Ephesians 4:11:

First, the apostles, the immediate messengers of Christ, the witnesses for him, of his doctrines, his miracles, and of his resurrection; infallible as teachers and absolute as rulers in virtue of the gift of inspiration and of their commission. No man, therefore, could be an apostle unless – 1. He was immediately appointed by Christ. 2. Unless he had seen him after his resurrection and had received the knowledge of the Gospel by immediate revelation. 3. Unless he was rendered infallible by the gift of inspiration. These things constituted the office and were essential to its authority. Those who without these gifts and qualifications claimed the office, are called "false apostles."¹¹

There is good Biblical evidence for this claim that there were only a limited number of authoritative apostles and it is explained by Orrel Steinkamp's article in this issue of CIC.

TRUE APOSTOLIC AUTHORITY

We can see even within the New Testament itself that apostolic teachings were considered final and authoritative. Jude is a good example. He wrote, "*Beloved, while I was making every effort to write you about our common salvation, I felt the necessity to write to you appealing that you contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints*" (**Jude 1:3**). After describing the practices and teachings of false teachers, Jude returns

to this theme: "*But you, beloved, ought to remember the words that were spoken beforehand by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ*" (**Jude 1:17**). The teachings of the apostles are considered authoritative and having been given once for all. Likewise Paul's writings are called "Scripture" even in the New Testament:

And regard the patience of our Lord to be salvation; just as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given him, wrote to you, as also in all his letters, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which the untaught and unstable distort, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures, to their own destruction (**2Peter 3:15,16**).

Paul told Timothy to transmit his teachings to others who would teach others after them: "*And the things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, these entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also*" (**2Timothy 2:2**). This helps us understand how the building proceeds to be built upon the foundation. Christ's death provided atonement for our sins, once for all, He is the cornerstone. He appointed apostles and commissioned them to communicate the mystery of God (**Ephesians 3:5,6**). As the recipients of the New Testament revelation, they are the foundation of the church, which shall remain throughout the ages. These truths were given to others to teach as Paul told Timothy.

One of the very earliest writings of the church after the death of the apostles saw this process as follows:

The apostles have preached the Gospel to us from the Lord Jesus Christ; Jesus Christ [has done so] from God. Christ therefore was sent forth by God, and the apostles by Christ. Both these appointments, then, were made in an orderly way, according to the will of God. Having therefore received their orders, and being fully assured by the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, and established in the

word of God, with full assurance of the Holy Ghost, they went forth proclaiming that the kingdom of God was at hand. And thus preaching through countries and cities, they appointed the first-fruits [of their labors], having first proved them by the Spirit, to be bishops and deacons of those who should afterwards believe.¹²

This was written by Clement of Rome who may well have been the same Clement mentioned in Philippians 4:3 (the early church considered this to be the case). Likely written around 97AD, this document showed that rather than a succession of apostles, the teaching of the apostles was entrusted to people they appointed. Eventually the canon of the New Testament was agreed upon. The apostles were unique in ministry and authority. There would be no more authoritative apostles after the death of those who Christ appointed. There is no Scripture in the Bible that predicts God will raise up new apostles much later in church history.

Ephesians 4:11-13, taken in the context of Paul's building analogy in Ephesians, shows how the apostles and prophets whom Christ gave the church continue until the consummation of all things. Just as Christ's work continues for ever, so does the work of the apostles and prophets. Through their preaching and teaching, they constituted the foundation of the church once for all. They are still ministering to all of us through their teachings, which are "the faith," the unity of which **Ephesians 4:13** says we are to attain. They and their teachings are the rock solid foundation that enables us to withstand the "waves" and "winds of doctrine" Paul mentioned in **Ephesians 4:14**. The foundation stands strong and authoritative to this day and until will continue to do so.

The evangelists, pastors and teachers who Christ provides throughout church history cannot claim any legitimacy if they depart from the foundation of the apostles and prophets. All true evangelists, pastors and teachers are ministering and building because of what Christ has done once for all and bringing no other message than the "faith once for all delivered to the saints." The

preaching of the true evangelist is nothing more than the message of the gospel that was given by Christ and His apostles. The ministry of the pastor must be to shepherd Christ's flock in a manner consistent with His teachings and example. The teacher must carefully and accurately bring the "whole counsel of God" to those Christ purchased with His blood.

WHEN IS THE BUILDING COMPLETED?

One of the key ideas of the latter day apostles movement is that the church must be fully perfected on earth before Christ can return. Just how this perfection is defined is somewhat unclear. Some have even taught that the church will attain immortality this side of the resurrection. The heretical "Manifested Sons of God" doctrine claims that these passages shall be literally fulfilled before the return of Christ by an end times church with restored apostles and prophets: "For the anxious longing of the creation waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God. . . . That the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God" (**Romans 8:19,21**). Of course, the key agents of the transformation of the earth, the nations, and the church supposedly will be these new super-apostles whose greatness shall make all previous church history look like a grand failure.

Bill Hamon claims that Jesus cannot come back, though He wants to, until the latter day apostles and prophets complete the "restoration process." The proof text for all this is **Acts 3:20-21**: "and that He may send Jesus, the Christ appointed for you, whom heaven must receive until the period of restoration of all things about which God spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets from ancient time."¹³ It is claimed that this "restoration" is about a restored New Testament church with apostles and prophets as powerful as the ones in Acts, if not more so. This may seem like an odd interpretation of Acts 3, but since many are giving it credence, it deserves a close examination.

The statement in **Acts 3:19-21** is taken from a message preached by Peter to a Jewish audience at the temple after the healing of a lame man. Peter preached the gospel to his Jewish

brethren and said to them, "*Repent therefore and return, that your sins may be wiped away, in order that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord*" (**Acts 3:19**). What were they specifically to repent of? — "*But you disowned the Holy and Righteous One, and asked for a murderer to be granted to you*" (**Acts 3:14**). At issue was whether Jesus Christ was truly the promised Messiah, the One who would bring the restoration of Israel as promised in the prophets. The key issue in the minds of 1st century Jews who heard the gospel was this: "If this Jesus (Yeshua) is indeed the Messiah why was he crucified before fulfilling the promises that God gave Israel for a restored Davidic kingdom?"

That a possible restored Israel was the issue here is shown by the disciples' earlier question, before Pentecost: "And so when they had come together, they were asking Him, saying, 'Lord, is it at this time You are restoring the kingdom to Israel?' He said to them, 'It is not for you to know times or epochs which the Father has fixed by His own authority'" (**Acts 1:6,7**). At issue was when the kingdom would be restored to Israel. Jesus did not tell them it would never be restored, but that there was a fixed time. When Peter preached in **Acts 3** and mentioned a restoration that was promised from ancient times by the prophets, it can mean nothing other than a restored Israel, with Messiah as her king. There are dozens of O.T. passages that promise Israel a restoration to her land, salvation, peace, and the reign of Messiah. Since Peter was preaching to unsaved Jews in Jerusalem at the temple, and he referenced a restoration promised in the O.T., how could he be speaking of anything else?

Bill Hamon wants us to believe that Peter told these unsaved Jews that Jesus could not return until the church is restored to the power and glory of the book of Acts. Here are several of the many problems with this interpretation: 1. The church at the time was still in the power and glory of the book of Acts, with **real** apostles present, why would Peter promise a restoration of something that had not been lost? 2. Peter was preaching to unsaved Jews who surely were not thinking about future church history, they had no conception of the church. 3. In the context of Acts the only

restoration that had been discussed was that of national Israel. 4. Peter claimed that Christ (meaning Messiah) was appointed for these Jerusalem Jews, they could find no other Messiah (in their minds meaning political savior) truly from God so they would have to embrace the very One they had turned over to be crucified. 5. The point of "heaven must receive until" was that Jesus is indeed coming back to fulfill yet unfulfilled promises to Israel, but now they must repent and turn to Christ if they are to have any hope.

Sadly Bill Hamon uses **Acts 3:20-21** and **Ephesians 4:11-13** as the foundational passages for his whole theory of church history, with a restoration of apostle and prophets as the key to everything important, but does no serious exegesis of either passage. On these passages, however, hangs his whole theory. Having taken the Acts passage out of context and made it refer to things that had nothing to do with Peter's sermon or his hearer's concerns, Hamon concludes: "The restitution/restoration of the Church started in AD 1517 after more than a thousand years of the Church's apostate condition, called the Dark Ages. On that date came 'The Great Restoration of the Church,' when the Protestant Movement was birthed. Beginning with that date there have been five major restorational movements: The Protestant, Holiness, Pentecostal, Charismatic, and Prophetic Movements."¹⁴ Elsewhere in an expanded chart he adds the Latter Rain Movement, Faith Movement (meaning the Word of Faith teaching popularized by Kenneth Hagin and Kenneth Copeland), and the Apostolic Movement (his of course).¹⁵ The Latter Rain Movement was popular in some Pentecostal circles in the 1940's and was led by William Branham, who was considered heretical by many.

Where is all this heading? According to its leaders, this movement is marching toward a glorious future where a nearly perfected church, unified, powerful, ruling over the nations, and having fully conquered the world will welcome back Christ. Here is how Bill Hamon interprets **Ephesians 4:11-13** as to the future:

[A]ll fivefold ministers must function until Christ's Church is a fully restored Church, a glorious spotless Church, an overcoming-all-things Church, which subdues all Christ's enemies and places them under His feet. If the rapture of the Church takes place before this is accomplished, then declaration would have to be made that these scriptures failed to come to pass, or the apostles, prophets and other fivefold ministries have to continue their ministry after the rapture until these scriptures are fulfilled.¹⁶

The passage will not bear the weight of this interpretation. There is nothing in **Ephesians 4** that shows that "until we all attain to the unity of the faith" is something that will happen only to a few elitist Christians at the end of the church age. It makes more sense to take "we all" to be the entire church, including those who have gone before us. Are we to assume that Paul himself is not included because he happened to live in the first century? This final perfected unity will come about when Christ returns, not before. That the ministries given shall persist until He returns is true, as long as one understands the apostles and prophets to be the Biblical ones whose ministry continues foundationally though they are no longer living on the face of the earth.

What is curious about Hamon's teaching relates to this passage in **Ephesians 4**. According to Paul the result of Christ's giving of apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers is this: "As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves, and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming" (**Ephesians 4:14**). We are being told to believe that the very perpetrators of the winds of false doctrines are the ones who are going to perfect us! The Latter Rain movement was replete with heretical teaching, and the heresies of the Word of Faith movement have been well documented.¹⁷ Yet these are "restorations" according to Hamon.

CONCLUSION

There are no authoritative apostles after the death of the Biblical ones. The Biblical ones continue to serve foundationally through their inspired teachings. Just as Christ continues to be the cornerstone, and Head of the church, though not bodily present, His apostles and prophets continue to be Christ's authoritative teachers. Evangelists, pastors and teachers who are true to Christ have no message but that which has been once for all delivered to the saints. God has given all of these to the church to assure that His purposes for her shall come to pass. However, the completion and perfection must await the return of Christ. Those who are claiming new revelations, new power, new authority, and are claiming apostolic status are false. They are leading us farther from the unity of the faith, not closer to it.

END NOTES

1. Dr. Bill Hamon, *Apostles and Prophets and the Coming Moves of God*; (Destiny Image: Shippensburg PA, 1997) p 248.
2. Ibid. 234.
3. Ibid. 271.
4. see Ibid. 232, 233 for numerous grandiose claims. For example, Hamon writes, "As mentioned earlier, they [end-time prophets and apostles] will manifest all the miracles and judgement ministries of Moses and Elijah and the two prophetic witnesses in Revelation chapter 11." p 232.
5. Ibid. 131.
6. Ibid. 58, 59.
7. "Therefore thus says the Lord God, "Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, a tested stone, A costly cornerstone for the foundation, firmly placed. He who believes in it will not be disturbed" **Isaiah 28:16**.
8. F.F. Bruce, *The Epistles to the Colossians To Philemon and to the Ephesians* in NICNT, (Eerdmans: Grand Rapids, 1884) 304.
9. R.C.H. Lenski, *Galatians Ephesians Philippians* in "Commentary on the New Testament," (Hendrickson: Peabody, original copyright 1937,

Hendrickson edition 1998) 452.

10. Charles Hodge, *Commentary on the Epistle to the Ephesians*, (Eerdmans: Grand Rapids, written 1857, 1994 edition) 150.
11. Ibid. 222, 223.
12. Clement of Rome, *Epistle to the Corinthians, Chapter 42*
13. Cited by Hamon *Apostles and Prophets* page 104, and interpreted as the gradual recovery of the church from the dark ages up through the present time, culminating in restored apostles and prophets.
14. Ibid. 104.
15. Ibid. 107.
16. Ibid. 146.
17. For example see, D.R. McConnell, *A Different Gospel*, (Hendrickson: Peabody, 1988).

THE NEW APOSTOLIC REFORMATION

BY DR. ORREL STEINKAMP

In this paper we discuss New Testament Apostles today from the viewpoint that there is no biblical authority that supports the end time restoration of the office of apostle: therefore, there are no New Testament Apostles today.

Wayne Grudem, a sometimes promoter of current prophetic utterances is absolutely convinced that there are no NT apostles today. He states: "Since no one today can meet the qualifications of having seen the risen Jesus with his own eyes, there are no apostles today. In the place of living apostles present in the church to teach and govern it, we have instead the writings of the apostles in the books of the NT. Those NT scriptures fulfill, for the church today, the absolutely authoritative teaching and governing functions which were fulfilled by the apostles themselves during the early years of the church." (Grudem, *The Gift of Prophecy in the NT today*, p. 276).

BACKGROUND

One of the central new teachings of the Latter Rain Movement of the 1940's and 50's was the so-called restoration of Apostles and Prophets to the overcoming Endtime Church. This restoration teaching percolated on the back burners of the Charismatic Renewal for years, but it was never promoted heavily and no one attempted to systematically implement it on a worldwide scale. Into this vacuum has stepped C. Peter Wagner as a central personality. Wagner has given organizational and promotional impetus to this so-called restoration and has taken bold steps to implement apostolic restoration to a wider Global

Church — as a result he is positioned to have a greater influence than many other promoters of apostolic restoration.

Beginning with his association with John Wimber, Wagner moved quickly into charismatic Christianity. He has systematized certain charismatic spiritual warfare practices and developed his strategic warfare mentality etc. He also promoted what he called the "Third Wave." In this "Third Wave" he saw generic evangelicals getting involved with signs and wonders without adopting traditional Pentecostal Theology. He has a broad Evangelical pedigree and has notoriety as a former missiologist at Fuller seminary. He is the recognized heir and successor to Donald McGavern, the founding father of all church growth teaching. In addition to being a co-founder of the World Prayer Center in Colorado Springs, he is the founding president of Global Harvest Ministries, which is responsible for the "United Prayer Track" of AD2000 and Beyond" as well as many other missions related activities outside the AD2000 organization. The Billy Graham Lausanne conference adopted Wagner's missions/evangelism agenda. And he is now in association with many holdovers from the Latter Rain of the 50's who got a new lease on life in the Charismatic Renewal. Bishop (also prophet and apostle) Bill Hamon is a significant name in this regard.

In Bishop Hamon's book "Apostles, Prophets and the Coming Moves of God: End Times Plan for His Church on Planet Earth," Wagner states, in a forward, that Hamon was influential in nurturing him through what he calls a paradigm shift from traditional Christianity." Hamon expressed this new paradigm in October 1999 when he announced to the "International Gathering of Apostles and Prophets" that "we are seeing prophets and apostles coming forth for a strategic reason...We

are being positioned to lay new foundations for the dawning of a New Kingdom Age. We are in the throws of birthing a whole new order-dispensation...We are about to move from the dispensation of grace to the dispensation of dominion."

Although Wagner and his apostolic friends are generally unknown to rank and file pastors and church leaders, they are, nevertheless, boldly proclaiming their authority in the church. They apparently feel that they are now "positioned" to make authoritative "apostolic declarations" to the wider church. Wagner recently posted on his Website an "Open Memorandum Addressing the Twin Towers War." In the memorandum dated September 14th from C. Peter Wagner, presiding apostle of the International Coalition of Apostles, he made the following statement: "This is the time for apostolic declarations. The church is in a position now, characterized by active and accepted roles of Apostles and Prophets and Intercessors that is has not experienced in 1800 years." Wagner then quoted Prophet Rick Joyner: "What seemed to so many to be an impossible task of restoring Apostolic Christianity to the earth is about to become a reality." With such overreaching optimism, it is not surprising that Wagner and friends have planned to implement their dream.

STEPS IN THAT IMPLEMENTATION

1. *The New Apostolic Roundtable:* Wagner is linked with Twenty-five other Apostles who have been invited to form an international leadership of Apostles. These roles are by invitation only.
2. *The International Coalition of Apostles:* On a lower level they have formed a larger grouping of Apostles. Wagner sees this group growing to about 500. They plan to hold yearly convocations and

summits around the world.

3. *Apostles to the Cities:*

In Wagner's latest book, "Apostles of the City: How to mobilize Territorial Apostles for City Transformation," he calls for each major city to elevate a cadre of Apostles to leadership.

Because Wagner has unlimited funds at his disposal, he is able to make quite an impact. Is all this money and effort called for, or is it an expensive game of "let's pretend" in the church. The answer to that question is based on one fundamental question: **Is there any biblical authority to teach an end-time restoration of the office of apostle?**

PAUL, THE LAST APOSTLE

Today, we occasionally speak of people as apostles—usually limited to pioneer missionaries. William Carey, for example, has been called the apostle to India. The only reason this term is used is that someone was sent to pioneer a new area with the Gospel. This, of course, is never confused with the foundational apostles of the NT era. In NT times, there was also a loose and broad way to use the word apostle, in the sense of someone sent on a mission of some kind. On these occasions, the word simply means "messenger" or "delegate." In these instances, these delegates (sent ones) are never confused with the special and restricted meaning of a foundational apostle of the church.

NT QUALIFICATIONS OF FOUNDATIONAL APOSTLES

NT apostles were required to be eyewitnesses of the resurrected Jesus. This is indicated in Acts 1:22 when Peter insisted that the replacement of Judas "must become a witness with us of His resurrection." Paul (1 Cor. 9:1) defended his apostleship by saying, "Am I not an apostle? **Have I not seen the Lord?**" In recounting those to whom Jesus

appeared, Paul says: "After He was seen by James and then by all the apostles, then "last of all" he was seen by me also as one "born out of due time" (I Corinthians 15:8). Paul was "untimely born" in the sense that Jesus had appeared to the other apostles before his ascension. Paul, converted by a miraculous post-ascension appearance of the resurrected Jesus, also saw the risen Lord, albeit later in time than the other apostles. The phrase "last of all" seals the case that Paul was the last apostle. "Last of all" grammatically can only be an adverb describing something that is last in a series. This is even more certain when there is a group of adverbs (then...then...and last of all). In Paul's mind he was the last of all the apostles. Surely he would be surprised to hear that he wasn't really 'last of all.' Who were these foundational apostles? First there were the initial twelve with Matthias replacing Judas. Second, apparently there were a very few more who had seen Jesus and been commissioned by Him. Acts 14:14 calls both Barnabas and Paul apostles. James, the brother of Jesus, is called an apostle in Galatians 1:19. Andronicus and Judas were called apostles in Romans 16:7. Most commentators see them as apostles in a functional and broad meaning. I found no commentators who referred to them as foundational apostles. If, indeed they were foundational Apostles, they could have been among the 500 people who saw the risen Jesus on one occasion (I Corinthians 15).

The generation that followed the last biblical apostles never ever considered the continuation of the office of apostle. Apparently the word of Paul, the last apostle convinced them. The so-called end-time restoration of apostles has no biblical authority. The only possible authority is "further revelation" given to the prophets of the Latter Rain and those who have taken up further rev-

elation: beyond the scriptures. The choice is simple, do we believe Paul was right when he said he was the last apostle or do we believe latter day prophets who have pronounced on their own authority, a restoration of apostles at the end of the age? For me, Paul settles the question once and for all.



ABOUT DR. ORREL STEINKAMP

Orrel and Gini Steinkamp served with the Christian Missionary Alliance as missionaries in Viet Nam for 13 years. After Viet Nam fell, they were re-assigned to Australia. Later they served for 13 years in Redwood Falls, Minnesota with the Assemblies of God. Orrel Publishes "The Plumblin" which critiques the current popular revival and prophetic movements.

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