



A Fifteen Hundred Dollar Cat or an Apostle? By Bob DeWaay

A farmer in southern Iowa used to tell story of a man who claimed to have owned a \$3,000 dog. When asked how he knew his dog was worth that much the man answered, "Because I traded it to the neighbor for two \$1,500 cats." So it goes with the apostles and prophets of the resuscitated Latter Rain movement. They know they are apostles and prophets because they declare each other to be such. How do you know you are an apostle? "A prophet told me." How do you know he was a prophet? "An apostle told him." Today there are thousands of individuals telling each other they are apostles and prophets.

In his book *Apostles and Prophets and the Coming Move of God*, Bill Hamon (one of the speakers at the Azusa street centennial) claims to have received thousands of prophecies that say that he is both an apostle and a prophet. Hamon writes, "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. This was in fulfillment of more than twenty prophecies during the last twenty-five years that contained statements such as, 'called to be an apostle.'" These 20 or more statements came from "apostles and prophets."

The new breed of restored apostles is Latter Rain terminology. The Latter Rain movement was popular in the 1940's under the leadership of William Brahnham. Brahnham was a heretic who denied the Trinity and had other serious false teachings like the "Serpent's Seed" teaching and the claim that the Manifested Sons of God were certain elite Christians that would appear in history. The main claim of the Latter Reign heresy was that God was restoring the "five fold" ministry to the church as part of a restoration process that began with the Reformation. This meant that there would be latter day apostles and prophets who would bring in a powerful end times revival which included miraculous signs and wonders. They saw the Azusa street revival as merely part of the restoration process and claimed that traditional Pentecostalism did not go far enough. As I mentioned in a previous article, the Assemblies of God rejected this movement as heretical in its earlier iteration.

After becoming nearly unknown from the late 1950s to the early 1980s the latter day apostles and prophets movement is back with a vengeance. There are thousands of people today claiming to be apostles and prophets with supernatural revelations from God. C. Peter Wagner is one of them; he wrote the book *Apostles and Prophets and The Foundation of the Church*. In this book Wagner claims that the foundation of the church is not the Biblical apostles and prophets with Christ as the Cornerstone as taught in Ephesians 2:20; but rather living apostles and prophets currently on the scene of history. For a refutation of that claim with Biblical exegesis, click [here](#). Wagner came to the movement not as a Pentecostal healing evangelist like Brahnham, but as a professor from Fuller Seminary. This gave the movement more credibility. Nevertheless Wagner's claims are just as unbiblical.

It is important to know that these latter day apostles and prophets have declared themselves exempt from the objective, Biblical tests. They say that they do not have to be perfectly accurate in their prophecies as Deuteronomy 18 requires. In fact, they do not even have to be orthodox in their doctrine as Deuteronomy 13 requires. What they must

be is popular and accepted in their own circles of prophets and apostles. And it helps if they can do signs and wonders.

I know from interacting with some individuals in this movement that submitting to the authority of Scripture is of little concern to them. They are masters at finding allegorical meanings that have nothing to do with the passage under consideration. For example, a representative of one version of this movement claimed that they were the new wineskin and that I was not willing to affirm them because I was stuck in the “old wineskin.” When I told him that Jesus was not comparing two versions of the church when he used that analogy, but the church of which He was the head with old covenant Judaism, he showed no interest in such trivialities as Biblical exegesis and context. He knew he was using the wineskin example correctly because God had told him this was the way it was.

By rejecting objective, Biblical criterion for validity, the apostles and prophets movement becomes self-referential. Wagner writes, “Once the prophet hears the message of the hour from God, this message must be delivered to the apostle” (*Apostles*: 96). But since in their scheme of things, the prophet does not have to be accurate in his predictions and the apostle does not have to have seen the resurrected Christ and been personally commissioned by Him, they only have each other’s subjective impressions to determine who these apostle and prophets are.

With a self-referential system, one can trade two alley cats for a stray mongrel dog and declare them to be worth thousands of dollars. That kind of system needs no proof of pedigree. Likewise, with the self-referential apostles and prophets system, two heretics can declare each other an apostle and prophet. No further evidence is necessary than their own words. In spite of this, they want the rest of us to submit to them so that the Latter Rain revival they predict will sweep the earth. Moses told us how to deal with such persons: “*When a prophet speaks in the name of the Lord, if the thing does not come about or come true, that is the thing which the Lord has not spoken. The prophet has spoken it presumptuously; you shall not be afraid of him*” (Deuteronomy 18:22).

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