

19/07/2001 – This is a transcript of a talk given by Philip L. Powell in BRISBANE, Australia on Thursday July 19, 2001. It is available on a C90 audio as the first of four talks relating to modern false movements within Charismatic and Pentecostal Churches. The four talks are recorded on one audio tape and available for a cost of \$5 (Australian dollars) plus postage. They are also part of four video recordings, which feature messages by Jacob Prasch. This first talk by Philip Powell is on the video entitled ¹“*The Vow of the Nazarite*” obtainable at a cost of \$25 (Australian dollars) plus postage. Orders to - Christian Witness Ministries (CWM), PO Box 353, LOCH SPORT VIC 3851 - fax +61 (0)3 5146 0270. You may fax or mail your Credit Card (Visa, Bankcard or Master Card only) details plus your full address and your order will be processed as promptly as possible.

Who Is The Foundation of the Church – CHRIST or Modern Day Apostles?”

Where do Peter Wagner, John Lewis, Mark Conners and Ben Gray Fit In?

From Our Side – There are two Basic Texts, which establish the Truth. FIRSTLY Paul’s statement in:

1 Cor 3:11: “*For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ;*”

And SECONDLY what he wrote in:

2 Cor 11:13: “*For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ.*”

From The Other Side –There are two areas of Confusion based on what Paul wrote in Ephesians chapters 2 and 4: FIRSTLY

Eph 2:20: “*{WE} are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone;*”

And SECONDLY

Eph 4:11-12: “*And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; (12) For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:*”

Now our topic tonight begs two questions:

HOW HAS THIS ISSUE ARISEN? Why are we tackling it?

I need to give you a **Brief Modern Historical background Report.**

Here’s the background:

Peter Wagner was the slated main guest speaker and Head of a so-called New Movement at the Brisbane based National Apostolic-Prophetic Conference during the period Feb 10-12 last year (2000).

¹ Refer <http://www.christian-witness.org/pdf/briscovers.pdf>

The convenor was pastor Ben Gray who together with AoG pastor John Lewis is hosting another similar event entitled *BURNING HEART* here in Brisbane in August 2001, unless the Lord intervenes and the Conference is cancelled. As an aside I think it is not without significance that this stuff is imported directly from the United States of America where the false Signs and Wonders and the false Faith Prosperity Teaching Movements have largely developed. The advertising blurb of the earlier Apostles and Prophets Conference in February 2000, included the following amazing statement:

“The New Apostolic Reformation is an extraordinary work of the Holy Spirit that is changing the shape of Christianity globally. It is truly a new day! The Church is changing. New names! New methods! New worship expressions. ***The Lord IS ESTABLISHING THE FOUNDATIONS OF THE CHURCH FOR THE NEW MILLENIUM. THIS FOUNDATION IS BUILT UPON APOSTLES AND PROPHETS...***”²

Sadly good men are being carried away with this delusion. For example Bill Newman, one of Australia’s leading evangelical evangelists was quoted as being in support of the event, which included extremists, Mike and Cindy Jacobs who are products of the false Toronto revival as key-note speakers. Amazingly Bill Newman, who has the reputation of being orthodox and highly successful as an evangelist was quoted on the same advertising leaflet as saying: “*This 21st Century Church Conference may well prove to be the most important investment of your time in light of your future ministry. This is one conference not to miss (just imagine if you had missed the day of Pentecost!)...*”

As we pointed out in our journal entitled Contending EARNESTLY for THE Faith³ “none of us is old enough to have been present on “*the day of Pentecost*” and I for one am glad I missed the advertised ***21st Century National Apostolic-Prophetic Conference*** – why? It is because the whole thing is founded upon a false premise. It is sheer heresy. Here is part of their leading statements authored by of course Peter Wagner and those listed in the advertising brochure, who include many of the known promoters of the false Revival Now stuff in Australia, including Brian Houston, Phil Pringle, Mark Conner, John Lewis, Danny Guglielmucci et al. The words of Paul a true apostle are most apt:

2 Cor 11:13: “*For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ.*”

Just step back and look at the statement made by Wagner and Gray. It is totally heretical. Such outrageous heresy cannot possibly be a work of the Holy Spirit, who is the spirit of truth and not of error. Furthermore it simply echoes the false teaching of Rick Joyner and Bob Jones of the defunct Kansas City prophets. Well known and internationally respected Prophecy Teacher, Clifford Hill of UK has identified Bob Jones as an occultist who used his so called “*spiritual powers*” to obtain sexual favours from a number of women.⁴ Why men like Wagner and Joyner continue to rely on someone like Bob Jones is a mystery unless they themselves are also influenced by the occult.

All of that aside, the statement is false for the following reasons:

- 1) **FIRSTLY** true Christianity and the real Church will never change their shape. Our Lord promised that He would build His Church and the gates of Hell would not prevail against it. If Christianity and the Church are changed, in the way that Wagner and his associates suggest, then the gates of hell have prevailed and our Lord was wrong. What they are projecting is “*their*” Church and not Christ’s Church and therefore it is not TRUE Christianity.

² Quoted in the advertising literature

³ Refer <http://www.christian-witness.org/archives/cetf2000/aust00tour2.html>

⁴ Audio tape available from CWM - \$5 plus post

2) SECONDLY the Bible clearly teaches that the foundation of the true Church is our Lord Jesus Christ Himself. Paul wrote in

1 Cor 3:10-11: *“According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise master-builder, I have laid the foundation, and another builds thereon. But let every man take heed how he builds thereupon. For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.”*

These men claim that it is modern end time “*apostles*” who form the basis on which the foundation of this new Church will be built. Their statement doesn’t make sense either logically or theologically. How can “the foundation” of the Church be “built upon apostles and prophets”? Scripture does not claim this even in respect of the original “apostles and prophets”. The clear meaning of Paul’s statement in Ephesians 2:20 in the light of 1 Cor 3:10-11, is that the apostles and prophets were chosen by God to lay the foundation of the Church. They were not the basis on which that foundation was laid, which is what Wagner and his gang claim regarding themselves. This is a fundamental heresy and one that the founders of historic Protestantism refuted to the point of martyrdom. Roman Catholicism teaches that the Church is founded upon Peter. The Reformers, relying solely upon the Word of God, taught that the true Church is founded upon Christ alone. Here is Paul’s statement in context:

Ephesians 2:19-20: *“Now therefore you are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone.”*

These verses clearly refer to the work and witness of the New Testament apostles and the Old and New Testament prophets, who pointed to Christ in what they said and wrote. Christ is the corner stone and the capstone of the building that is His Church for He is “*the alpha and omega, the beginning and ending*”⁵ and for anyone to claim to replace Him in any capacity is not only arrant nonsense but also arrogant heresy. This teaching of Wagner, which is supported by so many Australian Pentecostal leaders, including the President of AoG and the Australian Christian Churches, Brian Houston, MUST be rejected totally no matter who endorses or supports it.

Sadly good men like Bill Newman, who are unaware of the enormous back-ground intrigue that is going on in the Revival Now camp⁶ and who sadly lack the spiritual discernment that is required to avoid deception are being sucked in by all this nonsense, which is simply adding to the current apostasy that is rampant within the Church. We are witnessing exactly what the Bible in 2nd Thessalonians chapter 2 warns us about namely the great falling away otherwise referred to as the Great Apostasy. We read in

2 Thess 2:3 *“Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition;”*
<http://www.christian-witness.org/>

At times it feels that the enemy is deploying a blitzkrieg attack on faith and on the faithful just as Revelation 12:12 implies:

⁵ Revelation 1:8, 11; 21:6 and 22:13.

⁶ See article by Orrel Steinkamp – Refer <http://www.christian-witness.org/archives/cetf2000/aust00tour2.html>

Refer <http://www.christian-witness.org/archives/cetf2000/spiritualism.html>

Refer http://www.christian-witness.org/archives/cetf2000/cess62_3.html

Refer <http://www.christian-witness.org/archives/cetf2000/bsmith.html>

Refer <http://www.christian-witness.org/archives/cetf2000/battle.html>

“... for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knows that he has but a short time.”

Paul, a true and real apostle taught in

2 Tim 3:12-17: *“Yes, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution. But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived. But you continue in the things which you have learned and have been assured of, knowing of whom you have learned them; And that from a child you have known the holy scriptures, which are able to make you wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.”*

Peter another real and true apostle wrote in

2 Peter 2:1-3: *“But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who secretly shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time will not linger, and their damnation will not slumber.”*

The confusion of this so called New Movement of which Peter Wagner is the self appointed head is linked to the fact that it fails to define and/or understand the biblical significance of the word “*apostle*”, which unlike most words translated from the original Greek of the New Testament manuscripts is strictly speaking a transliteration and not a translation. The word “*apostolos*” simply means one who is sent as a representative with authority; in other words an ambassador or envoy. He represents the One who sent him in his unique mission and work. This means that he must be of the same nature and general disposition of the one he represents. If he portrays something different from and foreign to the ONE he purports to represent that very fact marks him as false. In the words of the great apostle himself

“Now if any man have not the Spirit {i.e. the nature or disposition} of Christ, he is none of his.” Or as J B Phillips renders it *“He doesn’t belong to Christ at all”* - Romans 8:9.

This is a great test that we can and should apply to anyone who names the name of Christ. One of the obvious characteristics of these so called end time apostles is their aggressive domination and control of others and their careless indifference to the needs and heart cry of those whom we may describe as Christ’s “*little ones*” whom they so frequently ignore, despise and even spiritually abuse.

Shortly after the Brisbane Conference in February 2000 I was preaching in Melbourne when an elderly and godly looking couple approached me to tell their heart-rending story. Their pastor had attended **National Apostolic-Prophetic Conference** in Brisbane, only to return to demand that all his parishioners sign a pledge of loyalty to him as their “*apostle*”. There were to be no strings attached. The covenant was to be unconditional. The response of this particular couple was a willingness to comply with just one proviso - the pastor must remain biblical in his teaching and demands. They were told there were to be NO conditions. Their commitment must be absolute. They refused and walked away from the local Church, which had been their spiritual home for many years. Anything that begets such arrogance and totally unbiblical practice as was evidenced by that pastor who wanted the title of “*apostle*” cannot be right.

Had the term “*apostolos*” been translated rather than transliterated this grandiose idea of authority and control may have been avoided. But Wagner and his followers fail to grasp the significance of this fact. Their failure is spawning a group of leaders who no longer represent the meek and lowly Nazarene who Himself is “*the Apostle and High Priest of our profession*” to whom the writer to the Hebrews calls our constant attention (Hebrews 3:1). Every one of the New Testament apostles refers to himself as “*a bond slave of Jesus Christ.*” The emphasis in their cases is NEVER on authority and control, but on relationship and association with the Lord Jesus Christ, which produces a nature commensurate with His and moulds character and disposition so that it is clear whom they represented.

This really leaves just the one other Ephesians chapter 4 passage to consider and of course it raises the question as to whether there are true apostles of Christ in Church history and our present time. Accepting our definition, which makes an apostle an ambassador or envoy i.e. a man who has delegated authority to carry out a special task, it would be hard to deny their on-going ministry. Ephesians 4:11 speaking as it does of the five or four-fold (depending on your view about the term “pastor-teacher”) ministry gifts of the ascended Christ for the “*equipping of the saints unto the work of ministry*” certainly appears to support the view that they could be current for two fundamental reasons. FIRSTLY if we allow for pastor-teachers and for evangelists it would appear to be inconsistent to argue the complete end of “*apostles and prophets*” seeing they are all spoken of in the same breath so to speak. SECONDLY the needs of the on-going and present day Church are the same as those of the early Church. In other words saints still need to be equipped for ministry; the body of Christ still needs to be edified i.e. built up and we haven’t yet reached the unity of the faith or the “*stature of the fullness of Christ.*” Paul tells us that Christ gave these ministry gifts to the Church, which is His body with these objects in view.

BUT and here’s the rub – the apostles and prophets of Ephesians 4: 11 do not perform the same function as those of Ephesians 2:20 and this is where Peter Wagner and his followers make their fundamental mistake. In Ephesians 2:20 we are presented with an exclusive group of men to whom was committed the task of laying the foundation of the Church. Their work is done once and for all time. It will not and cannot ever be repeated. The apostles and prophets of Ephesians chapter 2 verse 20 have established THE FAITH, which is once for all committed to the saints. Those who follow, irrespective of what their ministry calling is, are called to contend earnestly for that faith. It is not a developing faith so there can never be anything new. It is a delivered faith and it is delivered once and for all. What Peter Wagner projects and what Ben Gray and John Lewis promote is another gospel. We respectfully and unequivocally call on them to repent and stop misleading the Church.

Let me conclude then with these two scriptures:

Ephesians 4: 7-16: “*But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ. (8) Wherefore he says, ‘When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.’ (9) (Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? (10) He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.) (11) And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; (12) For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: (13) Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ: (14) That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; (15) But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, who is the head, even Christ: (16) From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplies, according to the*

effectual working in the measure of every part, makes increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.”

Jude verse 3: *“Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.”*

We make no apology for naming men. The Old Testament and the New Testament provide us with precedents for so doing. In fact in these days of faith destroying teaching and practice, when men are more concerned about their own position, possessions and persons it is vital that believers in Christ should be so alerted. We must examine what men teach in the light of scripture. We invite that you apply that same standard to us. Some of the things that we will be addressing and some of the names that we will be mentioning pain both Jacob and me greatly. For myself it impinges upon those who have been my friends and colleagues for a number of years. It would be much easier for me to go away and ignore the problem, but before the Lord I cannot do that. When I chose to follow Christ as a child and throughout my youth and ministerial life that now stretches to 41 years in full time ministry I learned to count the cost. Our Lord said that if any of us put anyone before Him and His Kingdom then that person is not worthy of Him. We are not in a popularity contest. We as servants are called to serve the Lord Christ – He is LORD of all.