

# Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

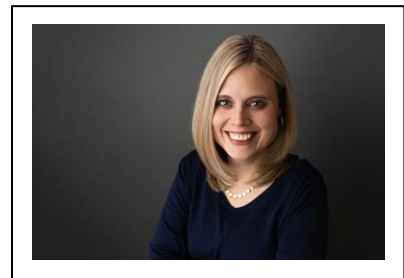
## The New Apostolic Reformation: Influence and Teachings

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### OVERVIEW

A heterodox movement in Protestant Christianity known as the “New Apostolic Reformation”<sup>1</sup> (NAR) — also known as the “apostolic-prophetic movement” — gained vast influence among Pentecostal and charismatic churches worldwide, beginning in the late 1990s. The people who are part of this burgeoning movement follow present-day apostles and prophets who claim to govern the church and give new divine revelation that is needed to set up God’s kingdom on earth.



### SIZE AND INFLUENCE OF THE NEW APOSTOLIC REFORMATION

#### *NAR CHURCHES AND ORGANIZATIONS*

Many people will not recognize this movement by its formal name — the “New Apostolic Reformation” — including even many of the movement’s participants. The lack of name recognition can be explained, in large part, because the movement is not governed by one official denomination or organization.

Rather, the New Apostolic Reformation is made up of hundreds of churches and organizations that are led by apostles and prophets who share a distinct theology. Many of these churches and organizations have joined “apostolic networks.” These apostolic networks are made up of, in some cases, hundreds of churches and organizations that submit to the leadership of a single apostle, such as Harvest International Ministry—a network of over 12,000 churches and organizations under NAR apostle Ché Ahn.

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<sup>1</sup> C. Peter Wagner, an NAR apostle, coined the name “New Apostolic Reformation.” Wagner describes how he came up with this name in his book *Churchquake!: How the New Apostolic Reformation Is Shaking Up the Church As We Know It* (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 1999), 34-37.

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Despite its lack of name recognition, the movement's growth is staggering. The NAR movement is responsible for much of the explosive church growth occurring in Africa, Asia and Latin America.<sup>2</sup> Leaders of many of the world's biggest churches promote present-day apostles and prophets, including David Yonggi Cho (Yoido Full Gospel Church in South Korea with one million people), E.A. Adeboye (Redeemed Christian Church of God in Nigeria with five million people), Sunday Adelaja (Embassy of the Blessed Kingdom of God for All Nations in Ukraine with 20,000 people), and César Castellanos (International Charismatic Mission in Columbia with 60,000 people).

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Though the NAR movement has seen the most growth in the Global South,<sup>3</sup> it has also gained considerable influence in the West. In Australia, the NAR movement has taken over an entire denomination, the Assemblies of God in Australia.<sup>4</sup> In the United States, approximately three million people attend NAR churches — that is, churches that overtly embrace NAR teachings.<sup>5</sup>

Influential NAR churches in the United States include Bethel Church in Redding, California (pastored by apostle Bill Johnson), Harvest Rock Church in Pasadena, California (pastored by apostle Ché Ahn), and MorningStar Fellowship Church in Charlotte, North Carolina (pastored by apostle/prophet Rick Joyner). In fact, NAR churches can be found across the United States, in virtually every large city and small town.

Beyond those churches that have overtly embraced NAR teachings, a large number of independent charismatic churches in the United States promote NAR beliefs and engage in NAR practices, in varying degrees. One notable example is New Life Church in Colorado Springs, Colorado — a megachurch founded by the former president of the National Association of Evangelicals, Ted Haggard. During Haggard's leadership of New Life Church, he sat as an apostle on the International Coalition of Apostles and worked closely with NAR apostle C. Peter Wagner to co-found the World Prayer Center at New Life Church — which has served as a hub for NAR-style spiritual warfare practices. Today, under new leadership, NAR teachings continue to be promoted, though primarily through smaller classes and small group studies.

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<sup>2</sup> This fact was confirmed to the author of this article in personal correspondence with Dr. Todd Johnson, the director of the Center for the Study of Global Christianity at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary.

<sup>3</sup> Africa, Asia and Latin America.

<sup>4</sup> The story of the NAR takeover of the Assemblies of God in Australia is chronicled in a book written by David Cartledge, *The Apostolic Revolution: The Restoration of Apostles and Prophets in the Assemblies of God in Australia* (Chester Hill, NSW, Australia: Paraclete Institute, 2000).

<sup>5</sup> This estimate was provided to the author of this article by Dr. Todd Johnson, the director of the Center for the Study of Global Christianity at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary.

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In addition to churches, a number of influential “evangelical” organizations based in the United States are also run by NAR leaders. These include the International House of Prayer in Kansas City, Missouri (NAR teacher Mike Bickle); Healing Rooms Ministries in Spokane Washington (apostle Cal Pierce); and Aglow International in Edmonds, Washington (apostle Jane Hansen Hoyt). They also include TheCall, which has drawn hundreds of thousands of people to prayer and fasting rallies in large cities throughout the United States (prophet Lou Engle).

## THE NAR AND THE MEDIA

The NAR movement has its own global television network, founded in 1995, called GOD TV — which broadcasts NAR teachings in more than 200 nations.<sup>6</sup> In addition to GOD TV, Trinity Broadcasting Network — the world’s largest religious television network — regularly features the teachings of NAR apostles and prophets.

Charisma Media — a Pentecostal-charismatic publishing empire based in the United States — has played a major role in popularizing the teachings of the NAR movement through its book publishing arm, Charisma House, and its flagship magazine, *Charisma*.<sup>7</sup>

Apostles and prophets have also utilized the Internet to promote NAR teachings. Before widespread use of the Internet, people had to travel far, and at great financial cost, to attend NAR revivals. Today, they can participate online. For example, in addition to the thousands of people who attended U.S. prophet Todd Bentley’s healing revival in Lakeland, Florida, in 2008, many more watched online.<sup>8</sup>

One NAR organization that has a large online following is the International House of Prayer (IHOP) in Kansas City, Missouri. Thousands of people watch IHOP conferences online and the sessions of prayer and worship that are broadcast live — 24 hours a day, seven days a week — from the IHOP “Prayer Room” at the Kansas City, Missouri, headquarters. And another NAR organization, the Elijah List, serves as an online clearinghouse for the NAR movement, daily e-mailing prophecies and teachings from NAR leaders to more than 135,000 subscribers.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> “Biography,” God TV, <http://www.god.tv/node/5> (data retrieved on 11 December 2012).

<sup>7</sup> The founder and CEO of Charisma Media, Steve Strang, has deep ties with the NAR movement, including having served as an apostle on the International Coalition of Apostles.

<sup>8</sup> Rick Runion, “Florida Outpouring: Internet Draws Thousands to Lakeland Revival,” 18 May 2008, *The Ledger*, <http://www.theledger.com/article/20080518/NEWS/805180341> (data retrieved 12 February 2013).

<sup>9</sup> “What is the Story of the Elijah List?,” The Elijah List, <http://www.elijahlist.com/ourhistory.html> (data retrieved 11 December 2012).

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## THE NAR AND POLITICS

Though NAR teachings have had the most influence in Pentecostal and charismatic churches, the reach of the NAR movement extends beyond those churches and into politics. For example, in the United States, NAR prophets — such as Cindy Jacobs, Rick Joyner, and Lou Engle — have joined forces with political leaders to promote conservative causes, such as laws opposing abortion and homosexual marriage.

One notable example of this partnership is “The Response” — a highly publicized rally held at Reliant Stadium in Houston, Texas, on August 6, 2011. Though this event was organized by NAR leaders including Lou Engle and Mike Bickle, it was depicted by the major media as representing a broadly “evangelical” voice. The organizers also claimed the event was non-political, yet it had a clear agenda to support Texas Governor Rick Perry’s bid for the U.S. presidency.<sup>10</sup>

And, in Uganda, NAR leaders have wielded significant influence in the government, including the promotion of a controversial bill that would provide stronger sanctions against homosexuality.<sup>11</sup> Thus, critics of the NAR movement include not only traditional Christians, but also secular liberals, who fear that NAR leaders are seeking to set up theocracies in Uganda, the United States, and other nations.

## TEACHINGS

### RESTORATION OF APOSTLES AND PROPHETS

The distinctive teaching of the New Apostolic Reformation is that God has restored the governmental offices of apostle and prophet to the church.

According to NAR leaders, when the church was birthed in the first century A.D., God intended for it to be always governed by living apostles and prophets. Yet, the

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<sup>10</sup> The NAR leadership behind the event went undetected by much of the mainstream media because the NAR movement has exhibited a remarkable ability to fly under the radar. Nevertheless, some of the mainstream media did report on the NAR leadership behind the event, including MSNBC. See the article written by Brian Tashman, “Maddow Helps Expose Rick Perry’s Radical Ties,” 8 July 2011, Right Wing Watch, <http://www.rightwingwatch.org/content/maddow-helps-expose-rick-perrys-radical-ties> (data retrieved 12 February 2013).

<sup>11</sup> Bruce Wilson, “Prayer Cures AIDS, Claims Uganda Health Minister Tied to New Apostolic Reformation,” 1 September 2011, Talk To Action, <http://www.talk2action.org/story/2011/9/1/154039/1835> (data retrieved 11 December 2012); Waymon Hudson, “American Evangelical Lou Engle Promotes ‘Kill the Gays’ Bill at Sunday’s Rally in Uganda,” 4 May 2010, The Huffington Post, [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/waymon-hudson/american-evangelical-lou\\_b\\_560819.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/waymon-hudson/american-evangelical-lou_b_560819.html) (data retrieved 11 December 2012).

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continuation of these two offices has not been accepted by the vast majority of Christians following the earliest years of the church's establishment. Today, in place of living apostles and prophets, most Protestant churches are governed by pastors, elders, and denominational executives.

But NAR leaders teach that God began restoring the office of prophet to the church in the 1980s and the office of apostle in the 1990s. C. Peter Wagner — one of the movement's most influential U.S. apostles — teaches that 2001 A.D. marked the beginning of the "Second Apostolic Age," when the proper church government — headed by living apostles and prophets — was finally restored.<sup>12</sup>

Now that the church is under the leadership of living apostles and prophets, it can complete its primary task — the Great Commission, which has been redefined by NAR leaders as a commission to take dominion, or sociopolitical control, of the earth.<sup>13</sup>

## **FIVEFOLD MINISTRY**

The term "fivefold ministry," as it is used by NAR leaders, refers to the teaching that Christ has given five, ongoing, formal offices to govern the church those are, the offices of apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor, and teacher. The primary passage of Scripture that is used to support this teaching is Ephesians 4:11-13, which says:

<sup>11</sup>So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, <sup>12</sup>to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up <sup>13</sup>until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. (NIV translation)

According to the NAR interpretation of this passage, the word "until" in verse 13 indicates that all five offices must continue governing the church until the church attains to the goals stated in that verse — those goals being unity and maturity. It is believed that these goals have not yet been attained. Thus, all five offices — including the offices of apostle and prophet — are still needed.

It should be noted that "unity" in verse 13 is seen by NAR leaders as an "apostolic unity" of Christians that can be attained only as they submit to the leadership of NAR apostles.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> C. Peter Wagner, *Changing Church* (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 2004), 9.

<sup>13</sup> C. Peter Wagner, *Dominion!: How Kingdom Action Can Change the World* (Grand Rapids, MI: Chosen Books, 2008).

<sup>14</sup> C. Peter Wagner, *Apostles Today: Biblical Government for Biblical Power* (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 2006), 127-129.

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And “maturity” is seen as a type of miracle-working ability that can be attained only by those people who will have received the entire body of new revelation given by the NAR apostles and prophets. That is to say, as a result of having received the new revelation, these people will have “matured” or developed the extraordinary miraculous powers needed to subdue the earth.<sup>15</sup>

It also should be noted that not all people who use the term “fivefold ministry” today are referring to the NAR belief that there are five, ongoing, formal offices that govern the church. This term is also sometimes used by people who are not part of the NAR movement — especially by some Pentecostals — to refer to their belief that there are five primary types of “ministries” or “spiritual giftings” that Christ has given to *edify* the church. But in this traditional Pentecostal understanding, those who perform these ministries or possess these spiritual gifts are not seen as *governing* the church. Rather they are seen as merely contributing their ministries or giftedness to strengthen the church.

## **APOSTLES**

The primary role of apostles, as taught in the NAR movement, is to govern the church. They are seen by many NAR leaders as filling the highest office in church government above prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers. Thus, they are often referred to as the movement’s “generals.”

Like prophets in the NAR movement, apostles can give new divine revelation. But their distinct task is the implementation of the new revelation given by NAR apostles and prophets.<sup>16</sup> Thus, they receive new revelation, determine its proper application in the church, and instruct their followers on how to properly respond to the new revelation.

## **PROPHETS**

The primary role of prophets, as taught in the NAR movement, is to receive new divine revelation.<sup>17</sup> Thus, prophets are seen by many NAR leaders as filling the second highest office in church government second only to the apostles.

Though prophets are often viewed as second in authority to apostles, it should be noted that some prominent NAR leaders, such as prophet Bill Hamon, see prophets and

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<sup>15</sup> Bill Hamon, *Prophetic Scriptures Yet to Be Fulfilled: During the Third and Final Church Reformation* (Shippensburg, PA: Destiny Image Publishers, Inc., 2010), 151. See also Bill Hamon, *Apostles, Prophets and the Coming Moves of God: God’s End-Time Plans for His Church and Planet Earth* (Santa Rosa Beach, FL: Destiny Image Publishers, Inc., 1997), 233-236, 243-250.

<sup>16</sup> Wagner, *Dominion*, 27.

<sup>17</sup> The “new” truths being revealed are also sometimes referred to as “lost truths” that NAR prophets are restoring to the church.



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apostles as equal partners.<sup>18</sup> This difference aside, most NAR leaders, including Hamon, teach either explicitly or through implication that apostles and prophets together fill the two highest offices in church government.<sup>19</sup> The reason for their greater authority is because these two offices alone receive and implement new divine revelation. Pastors, teachers and evangelists — in contrast — do not generally receive new revelation, according to NAR leaders. Thus, their roles are limited to teaching the new revelation that has been received by the NAR apostles and prophets and the older revelation contained in the Bible.<sup>20</sup>

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NAR prophets are not expected to be 100 percent accurate in their predictions. Thus, they still can be considered legitimate prophets even when they make errors.<sup>21</sup> Critics of the NAR movement believe this toleration of false prophecies is in direct contradiction to the Bible's teaching that a key sign of a false prophet is giving erroneous, or false, predictions ([Deuteronomy 18:20-22](#)). Some NAR prophets who have made highly publicized, erroneous predictions — yet still are considered true prophets — include Kim Clement and Rick Joyner.<sup>22</sup>

Yet, the majority of prophecies given by NAR prophets today are not specific predictions. Rather, most of their predictions are worded so vaguely that it would be difficult to determine whether or not they were ever fulfilled. Critics of the NAR movement view

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<sup>18</sup> Bill Hamon, *Prophets and the Prophetic Movement* (Shippensburg, PA: Destiny Image Publishers, Inc., 2001), 160.

<sup>19</sup> It should be noted that some NAR leaders, such as C. Peter Wagner, attempt to downplay their teaching that apostles and prophets hold higher — that is, more authoritative — offices in church government than pastors and other fivefold ministers. Nevertheless, those same NAR leaders contradict themselves by teaching that pastors participating in apostolic networks should submit to the network's apostles. See, for example, the book by C. Peter Wagner, *Churchquake*, 98-99, 122. Thus, in actual practice (if not always in overt teaching), apostles and prophets are seen as holding the highest offices in a hierarchical church government structure.

<sup>20</sup> Hamon, *Apostles, Prophets and the Coming Moves of God*, 123-125.

<sup>21</sup> The teaching that true prophets can err can be found throughout NAR literature. See, for example, this teaching given by one of the most influential prophets in the NAR movement, Bill Hamon, in his book *Prophets and Personal Prophecy* (Shippensburg, PA: Destiny Image Publishers, Inc., 2001), 125-126.

<sup>22</sup> Kim Clement has made a number of false predictions, including that Osama bin Laden would be captured by Easter 2004 (though he later attempted to revise his original prediction). See his original prediction, "311 Prophecy: The Beginning of An Unusual Chain of Events," 12 January 2004, The Vault by Kim Clement, <http://kimclementvault.com/prophesyread.asp?num=204&keyword=laden> (data retrieved 12 February 2013). Rick Joyner, together with Bob Jones, predicted in 1997 that Los Angeles would be destroyed in nine months by earthquakes and terrorist attacks. See the article written by Cedric Harmon, "God's Lightning Rod," 31 March 2001, *Charisma Magazine*, <http://www.charismamag.com/life/156-j15/features/issues-in-the-church/303-gods-lightning-rod> (data retrieved 18 December 2012).

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this practice — of giving vague, non-specific prophecies — as a tactic designed to cover up failed prophecies.

## **GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM**

The “Gospel of the Kingdom” is the NAR teaching that God, through Christ’s death and resurrection, has made the way for Christians to take dominion of the earth. This is a redefined gospel in contrast to the gospel of salvation from sin that, historically, has been taught by evangelicals.

Many NAR apostles and prophets teach that there are two gospels being taught by Christians today — those being, the “gospel of salvation” and the “gospel of the kingdom.” The “gospel of salvation” primarily addresses the good news that God, through Christ’s death and resurrection, has provided a means of salvation from sin. But this is an incomplete gospel, according to NAR leaders. They teach that the “gospel of the kingdom” is a more complete gospel, which not only addresses God’s provision for salvation from sin, but also His provision for taking dominion.<sup>23</sup>

## **DOMINIONISM/ KINGDOM NOW**

NAR apostles and prophets teach that it is the task of the church — under the leadership of apostles and prophets — to take dominion of the earth.<sup>24</sup> According to NAR teaching, God originally gave humanity dominion of the earth a dominion that was lost at the Fall. Since that time, God has been seeking a people to reclaim that lost dominion. Christ’s death on the cross and victory over Satan made the task of retaking dominion possible.

Thus, NAR apostles and prophets claim that it is now God’s desire for the church — under the leadership of apostles and prophets — to take dominion of the earth in preparation for His return. This task will be accomplished with the help of miraculous powers wielded by the NAR apostles and prophets and their followers. This NAR teaching — which emphasizes the importance of supernatural powers for subduing the earth — is a distinct variety of dominionism known as the “Kingdom Now” teaching.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Wagner, *Dominion*, 67-68; Johnny Enlow, *The Seven Mountain Prophecy* (Lake Mary, FL: Creation House, 2008), 41.

<sup>24</sup> Wagner, *Dominion*; Bill Hamon, *Prophetic Scriptures Yet to Be Fulfilled*.

<sup>25</sup> Another variety of dominionism, “Christian Reconstructionism,” also teaches that humankind’s dominion is being restored. But Christian Reconstructionism emphasizes that dominion will be reclaimed primarily through political means, rather than through supernatural powers.



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NAR leaders claim that the Lord's Prayer, found in Matthew 6:9-13 and Luke 11:2-4, provides biblical support for NAR teachings on dominionism. Regarding this prayer, apostle C. Peter Wagner writes:

Jesus taught us to pray that God's Kingdom would come and His will would be done on earth as it is in heaven. To that end, in these present times the urgent mandate of God to the Church is to actively engage in transforming society.<sup>26</sup>

Yet, it should be emphasized that, when NAR leaders talk about "transforming society," as Wagner does here, they are not speaking merely of efforts to positively *influence* culture. Rather, they are speaking of efforts to take control of the earth's societal institutions — that is, dominionism. This becomes more obvious when one understands another major NAR teaching known as the "Seven Mountain Mandate." (see below)

But when their dominionist teachings have been exposed by the media or other critics of the NAR movement, NAR leaders often attempt to downplay those teachings. For example, following "The Response" political rally in Houston, Texas, some major media organizations exposed the dominionist views of the event's organizers. In response, Wagner wrote an article published by *Charisma* magazine, titled "The Truth About the New Apostolic Reformation." In the article, he attempted to portray the dominionist goals of the NAR movement as goals merely to positively "influence" culture, not control it.<sup>27</sup> But Wagner's article was misleading since dominionism — in the form of sociopolitical control — is taught boldly in the literature of the NAR movement, including Wagner's own books.<sup>28</sup>

In fact, NAR leaders claim that taking dominion of nations has always been the task of the church and is, in fact, the true meaning of the Great Commission. That is to say, they view the Great Commission as a commission to make disciples of *entire* nations, not just individuals living within those nations (as has been the traditional evangelical understanding of the Great Commission).<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Wagner, *Dominion*, 5.

<sup>27</sup> C. Peter Wagner, "The Truth About the New Apostolic Reformation," 1 November 2011, *Charisma Magazine*, <http://www.charismamag.com/site-archives/1475-1111-magazine-articles/features/14580-the-truth-about-the-new-apostolic-reformation> (data retrieved 18 December 2012).

<sup>28</sup> An article written by Joel McDurmon documents examples of these dominionist teachings. See the article: Joel McDurmon, "Seven Mountains Dominionism: 'Not the Same Brand,'" 8 September 2011, *The American Vision*, <http://americanvision.org/5130/seven-mountains-dominionism-not-the-same-brand/#.UAWplPWZiSo> (data retrieved 27 December 2012).

<sup>29</sup> Wagner, *Dominion*, 72-73.

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Yet, not all NAR leaders admit to promoting dominionism. Some NAR leaders, such as Mike Bickle of the International House of Prayer in Kansas City, Missouri, directly deny that they are promoting dominionism or, what he calls, “Dominion Theology.”<sup>30</sup> But despite his denial, Bickle’s teachings are in line with “Kingdom Now” dominionism, including his teaching that the end-time church will cleanse the earth of evil. According to Bickle, this feat will be accomplished by end-time Christians — under the leadership of apostles and prophets — who will say “prophetic” prayers that will release the Great Tribulation judgments on the kingdom of the Antichrist.<sup>31</sup>

Also, it should be noted that NAR leaders use differing terminology to describe dominionist goals that are very similar. For example, some prominent apostles, such as Wagner, state that the church has been tasked with building God’s kingdom on earth now. Other NAR leaders, such as prophet Bill Hamon, attempt to make a distinction between the “restoration” of the earth to pre-Fall conditions (which he believes is the task of the church now) and setting up God’s earthly kingdom (which he believes will only be completed fully after Christ returns).<sup>32</sup> But Hamon is not clear as to the exact difference between restoring the earth and setting up God’s kingdom. In both scenarios, the followers of apostles and prophets are urged to seek sociopolitical control. Thus, it seems that the distinction is artificial and misleading.

## SEVEN MOUNTAIN MANDATE

Many NAR apostles and prophets claim that God has revealed a new strategy for taking dominion of the nations — a strategy they call the “Seven Mountain Mandate.”<sup>33</sup> According to this revelation, the way to take dominion is by taking control of the seven most influential societal institutions — called “mountains” — which are identified as government, media, family, business/finance, education, church/religion, and arts/entertainment.

Speaking of this teaching, U.S. prophet Johnny Enlow writes:

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<sup>30</sup> “Affirmations and Denials,” International House of Prayer, <http://www.ihopkc.org/about/affirmations-and-denials> (data retrieved 18 December 2012).

<sup>31</sup> See Mike Bickle’s 12-part series titled “Book of Revelation,” Mike Bickle, <http://mikebickle.org/resources/series/the-book-of-revelation> (data retrieved 18 December 2012).

<sup>32</sup> Hamon, *Prophetic Scriptures Yet to Be Fulfilled*, 41-42, 213.

<sup>33</sup> This teaching is also known as the “Seven Mountain Prophecy.”

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*I've shared that the mountains were the infrastructural columns of our societies that it's the Lord's plan to raise His people up to take every social, economic, and political structure of our nations.<sup>34</sup>*

Enlow identifies government as the most important institution “because it can establish laws and decrees that affect and control every other mountain.”<sup>35</sup> Thus, he believes God is in the process of raising up apostles to “possess” this critical mountain.<sup>36</sup>

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Some of the well-known promoters of the Seven Mountain Mandate in the United States include C. Peter Wagner, Lance Wallnau, Johnny Enlow and Os Hillman. Yet, it bears repeating that, when confronted with NAR dominionist teachings, these same NAR leaders deny that the Seven Mountain Mandate is about controlling society.<sup>37</sup> Nevertheless, their writings have made it abundantly clear that, at least for many NAR leaders, the Seven Mountain Mandate is, indeed, about controlling society.<sup>38</sup>

## **STRATEGIC-LEVEL SPIRITUAL WARFARE**

“Strategic-level spiritual warfare” is an NAR strategy for spiritual warfare. It involves the attempt to cast out powerful evil spirits — called “territorial spirits” — that are believed to rule over geographical regions of the earth and societal institutions. The strategy is based on the NAR belief that territorial spirits must be cast out before the “Gospel of the Kingdom” can go forth successfully and the church can take dominion.

The attempt to cast out territorial spirits is known as “strategic-level spiritual warfare” because it is seen by NAR leaders as more strategic than other types of spiritual warfare practiced by more traditional evangelicals. These more traditional types of spiritual warfare emphasize prayer, knowledge of Scripture, and resisting temptation — and occasionally attempting to cast out demons from individuals. But they do not include attempting to cast out high-ranking demons that exert influence over millions of people.

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<sup>34</sup> Enlow, *The Seven Mountain Prophecy*, 43-44.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 62.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 67.

<sup>37</sup> A video featuring Johnny Enlow, Lance Wallnau and Os Hillman — titled “Is the Seven Mountain Message Dominionism?” — is featured on Vimeo, <http://vimeo.com/28961430> (data retrieved 12 February 2013). This video — which has been excerpted from the Change Agent Video course produced by Os Hillman — attempts to dispel fears that the Seven Mountain Mandate is about taking control of society.

<sup>38</sup> The “Seven Mountain Mandate” is clearly portrayed as a mandate to control society in NAR books such as *The Seven Mountain Prophecy* (Creation House) by Johnny Enlow and *Dominion* (Chosen) by C. Peter Wagner. Also, Joel McDurmon has written an article showing how the Seven Mountain Mandate is an agenda to control society: Joel McDurmon, “Seven Mountains Dominionism: Not the Same Brand,” 8 September 2011, *The American Vision*, <http://americanvision.org/5130/seven-mountains-dominionism-not-the-same-brand/> (data retrieved 27 December 2012).

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Yet, NAR leaders claim they find support for strategic-level spiritual warfare in the Bible, such as in the Book of Daniel, which shows that specific evil spirits exerted control over the kingdoms of Persia and Greece (Dan 10:13, 20).<sup>39</sup>

A number of NAR practices are associated with strategic-level spiritual warfare. These include the following:

- *Spiritual Mapping*

Spiritual mapping is the practice of conducting research into the history of a specific city or nation to discover the identity of the territorial spirit that rules over that particular geographical region of the earth. Once the identity of the territorial spirit is determined, then other practices of strategic-level spiritual warfare are used to cast it out.

To help discover the identity of a territorial spirit, NAR leaders will seek to determine the major sins committed in a specific city or nation. For example, does a city have an unusual number of strip clubs and adult bookstores? If so, then they may decide that the territorial spirit ruling in that region is a spirit of lust. Or do the majority of people living in a certain nation practice witchcraft? If so, then they may decide that a territorial spirit of witchcraft is ruling there.

Many NAR leaders, such as apostle C. Peter Wagner, believe it is important to discover the specific name of a territorial spirit in order to cast it out. Sometimes only the functional name of a territorial spirit may be discerned, such as “spirit of lust” or “spirit of greed.” But other times the proper name may be discerned. One example is when two major NAR organizations in the United States — the Reformation Prayer Network led by prophet Cindy Jacobs and the Heartland Apostolic Prayer Network led by apostle John Benefiel — determined that the identity of the territorial spirit ruling over the United States was the pagan goddess Columbia. So, in the fall of 2011, these two organizations teamed up for a 40-day NAR campaign, called “DC40,” to wage strategic-level spiritual warfare against the spirit Columbia.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> The Bible does seem to teach the existence of territorial spirits—that is high-ranking demonic spirits who rule over specific geographical regions of the world. Yet, it does not teach that God’s people should seek to directly confront those territorial spirits. The prophet Daniel did not confront territorial spirits.

<sup>40</sup> “Christian Group Directs ‘Spiritual Warfare’ Against PaganGoddess,” 25 July 2011, PNC-Minnesota Bureau, <http://pncminnesota.com/2011/07/25/christian-group-directs-spiritual-warfare-against-pagan-goddess/> (data retrieved 27 December 2012).

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Though spiritual mapping is a popular practice in the NAR movement, it is also sometimes practiced by other people outside this movement. These people do not believe that the purpose of spiritual mapping is to identify territorial spirits. Rather, they believe the purpose is to create spiritual profiles of cities or regions. These profiles are then used as guides to help people pray intelligently and specifically for the needs of the people living in those regions.<sup>41</sup>

- *Warfare Prayer and Warfare Worship*

Warfare prayer and warfare worship are NAR practices in which prayer and musical worship as viewed as spiritual weapons, and they are employed to combat territorial spirits and call down judgment on unbelievers.

Seeing prayer and worship as aggressive weapons is an innovation of the NAR movement. In contrast, more traditional evangelicals have viewed their acts of prayer and worship as directed primarily toward God.

An influential NAR organization that engages in warfare prayer and warfare worship is the International House of Prayer (IHOP), founded by Mike Bickle, in Kansas City, Missouri.<sup>42</sup> IHOP has popularized the idea of “24/7 prayer rooms” that have popped up in cities throughout the United States and the world. In the prayer room at the IHOP base in Kansas City, “intercessory missionaries” have engaged in non-stop, around-the-clock prayer and musical worship every day since its doors opened in 1999. Bickle teaches that such prayer rooms will play a pivotal role in the end time, when the prayer and worship coming from these rooms will release God’s end-time judgments — killing millions of unbelievers.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Clinton E. Arnold, *3 Crucial Questions About Spiritual Warfare* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1997), 175-177.

<sup>42</sup> For IHOP’s view of prayer and worship as weapons wielded to defeat God’s enemies, see Mike Bickle, “The Revelation of Jesus: Bridegroom, King, and Judge (Rev. 1),” Part 2 of the 12-part series *Book of Revelation*, 13 September 2008, Mike Bickle, [http://mikebickle.org/resources/resource/63?return\\_url=http%3A%2F%2Fmikebickle.org%2Fresources%2Fseries%2Fthe-book-of-revelation](http://mikebickle.org/resources/resource/63?return_url=http%3A%2F%2Fmikebickle.org%2Fresources%2Fseries%2Fthe-book-of-revelation) (data retrieved 12 February 2013). For IHOP’s view of worship as a weapon wielded to defeat territorial spirits, see Mike Bickle’s article “Releasing PowerSongs of Beautiful Holiness,” 8 January 2000, Ebookbrowse, <http://ebookbrowse.com/releasing-power-songs-of-beautiful-holiness-000108-doc-d188205516> (data retrieved 12 February 2013).

<sup>43</sup> Mike Bickle, “Overview of the Book of Revelation,” Part 1 of the 12-part series *Book of Revelation*, 30 August 2008, Mike Bickle,

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- ***Prayerwalking***

Prayerwalking is the NAR practice of forming a team of people to walk through a neighborhood or city and engage in warfare prayer against the territorial spirit ruling over that particular geographical region.

NAR leaders also organize more extensive prayerwalks that involve traveling through an entire country or even a continent. These extended prayerwalks are sometimes called “prayer journeys” or “prayer expeditions.” For example, during the A.D. 2000 Movement, the United Prayer Track — led by C. Peter Wagner — sent 250 “prayer teams” on prayer journeys through the countries of the 10/40 Window (the region of the world situated between the latitudes of 10 degrees and 40 degrees north, encompassing North Africa, the Middle East and sections of Asia to Japan).<sup>44</sup>

Yet, it should be noted that prayerwalking has become a popular practice, even among churches that are not part of the NAR movement. Thus, not all churches that practice prayerwalking are seeking to cast out territorial spirits. Rather, some churches may view prayerwalks simply as actions designed to help them better focus their prayers for their neighborhood or city.

- ***Identificational Repentance***

Identificational repentance is the NAR practice of repenting of corporate sins that are believed to have “polluted the land.” That is to say, NAR leaders believe that corporate sins such as slavery, genocide or abortion have given territorial spirits “entry points” by which they have gained control of cities and nations.

So, in order for a territorial spirit to be cast out of a region, the corporate sin that gave the evil spirit entry must first be confessed. Then reconciliation must occur between the offending party and the offended party. Such times of confession and reconciliation occur during solemn NAR assemblies, attended by representatives of both parties. For example, NAR leaders determined that the atrocities committed against Native Americans by the United States government had given territorial spirits an entry to rule over the United States.

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[http://mikebickle.org/resources/resource/61?return\\_url=http%3A%2F%2Fmikebickle.org%2Fresources%2Fseries%2Fthe-book-of-revelation](http://mikebickle.org/resources/resource/61?return_url=http%3A%2F%2Fmikebickle.org%2Fresources%2Fseries%2Fthe-book-of-revelation) (data retrieved 12 February 2013).

<sup>44</sup> “AD2000 United Prayer Track Launches Praying through the Window II: “The 100 Gateway Cities,” 1 March 1995, Mission Frontiers, <http://www.missionfrontiers.org/issue/article/ad2000-united-prayer-track-launches-praying-through-the-window-ii-the-100-g> (data retrieved 11 August 2011).

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So, during an assembly in 2007, known as TheCall Nashville, Senator Sam Brownback of Kansas — representing the people of the United States — apologized to Native American leaders in attendance, who accepted the apology on behalf of Native Americans.<sup>45</sup>

## THE GREAT END-TIME TRANSFER OF WEALTH

Many leaders in the NAR movement teach that, before Christ returns, God will transfer control of the world's wealth from the hands of the wicked to the hands of the NAR apostles. The purpose of this wealth transfer is so that the church will have the financial resources it will need to establish God's earthly kingdom. This teaching is often referred to "the great end-time transfer of wealth."

## THE GREAT END-TIME HARVEST

NAR leaders also teach that, prior to Christ's return, a worldwide revival will occur in which an unprecedented number of people will convert to belief in Christ. They teach that these conversions will be the greatest spiritual harvest of souls in church history and will occur largely as the result of people seeing miracles performed by NAR apostles, prophets and their followers. NAR leader Mike Bickle — of the International House of Prayer in Kansas City, Missouri — estimates that one to two billion people will convert to Christ during this time.<sup>46</sup> This NAR teaching is often referred to as the "Great End-Time Harvest."

## SUPERNATURAL POWERS

NAR leaders teach that they and their followers will develop vast supernatural powers and will perform miracles that will surpass those performed by the biblical apostles and prophets<sup>47</sup> and even those performed by Jesus during his earthly ministry.<sup>48</sup> These

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<sup>45</sup> The ceremony can be viewed on a YouTube video titled "The Call Nashville Senator Brownback," YouTube, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=is0KfyriSfA> (data retrieved 11 August 2011).

<sup>46</sup> Mike Bickle, "The Revelation of Jesus: Bridegroom, King, and Judge (Revelation 1)," Part 2 of the 12-part series Book of Revelation, 13 September 2008, Mike Bickle, [http://mikebickle.org/resources/resource/63?return\\_url=http%3A%2F%2Fmikebickle.org%2Fresources%2Fseries%2Fthe-book-of-revelation](http://mikebickle.org/resources/resource/63?return_url=http%3A%2F%2Fmikebickle.org%2Fresources%2Fseries%2Fthe-book-of-revelation) (data retrieved 12 February 2013).

<sup>47</sup> Rick Joyner, *The Final Quest* (Charlotte, NC: MorningStar Publications, 1996), 137, 145; Rick Joyner, *The Apostolic Ministry* (Wilkesboro, NC: MorningStar Publications, 2004), 162-163. See, also, Mike Bickle, "Why We Must Understand the Seven Churches in Revelation 2-3," Part 3 of the 12-part series Book of Revelation, 5 September 2008, Mike Bickle, [http://mikebickle.org/resources/resource/2847?return\\_url=http%3A%2F%2Fmikebickle.org%2Fresources%2Fseries%2Fthe-book-of-revelation](http://mikebickle.org/resources/resource/2847?return_url=http%3A%2F%2Fmikebickle.org%2Fresources%2Fseries%2Fthe-book-of-revelation) (data retrieved 12 February 2013).

<sup>48</sup> Wagner, *Dominion!*, 107.

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miracles will include amazing feats such as healing every single person inside hospitals and mental institutions simply by laying their hands on the buildings and having command of the laws of nature, including gravity.<sup>49</sup>

## MANIFEST SONS OF GOD

One of most radical teachings in the NAR movement is known as the “Manifest Sons of God.”<sup>50</sup> According to this teaching, the people who continue to receive the new revelation given by NAR apostles and prophets will gain more and more supernatural powers until they eventually become “manifest” or unveiled as “sons of God.” These manifested sons of God will overcome sickness and death and execute God’s judgments on earth.<sup>51</sup>

NAR leaders claim that this teaching is taught in the Bible in Romans 8:19, which reads:

For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. (King James Version translation)

The Manifest Sons of God teaching was originally promoted by leaders of the post-World War II Latter Rain movement, such as William Branham and George Warnock. More contemporary promoters of this teaching include U.S. prophets Paul Cain, Rick Joyner and Bill Hamon.

Hamon, for example, teaches that the manifested sons of God will be patterned after the original son of God, Jesus Christ. He also teaches that the worldwide church will be a type of corporate Christ, which will be the “full expression of Christ Jesus as Jesus is the full expression of His heavenly Father.”<sup>52</sup> Thus, the Manifest Son of God teaching is denounced by its critics as heretical since it appears to deify human beings.

A related teaching — promoted by Hamon — is that the rapture of believers will occur only when NAR followers receive the last piece of new revelation given by NAR apostles

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<sup>49</sup> Joyner, *The Apostolic Ministry*, 41; Rick Joyner, *The Harvest* (Pineville, NC: MorningStar Publications, 1989), 27; Rick Joyner, “Abiding in the King Produces Kingdom Authority,” 28 September 2012, The Elijah List, [http://www.elijahlist.com/words/display\\_word.html?ID=11425](http://www.elijahlist.com/words/display_word.html?ID=11425) (data retrieved 3 January 2013).

<sup>50</sup> “Manifest Sons of God” is one of the names used in the NAR movement to identify a special group of Christians who by following present-day apostles and prophets will obtain superhuman powers. Other names include “new breed,” “overcomers,” “Joel’s Army” and the “Elijah Generation.”

<sup>51</sup> Hamon, *Apostles, Prophets and the Coming Moves of God*, 265-266. See also George Warnock, *The Feast of Tabernacles* (The Church in Action, 1951), chapter 14. Warnock is a theological pioneer of the Manifest Sons of God teaching.

<sup>52</sup> Hamon, *Prophetic Scriptures Yet To Be Fulfilled*, 39-40; Bill Hamon, *The Day of the Saints: Equipping Believers for Their Revolutionary Role in Ministry* (Shippensburg, PA: Destiny Image Publishers, Inc., 2003), 73-74.

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and prophets — instantaneously giving them immortal bodies with superhuman powers.<sup>53</sup> Thus, Hamon appears to be teaching that the rapture is not something God does for Christians, but is something they accomplish for themselves as they gain more and more secret knowledge revealed by the NAR apostles and prophets.

## SCRIPTURES MISUSED TO SUPPORT NAR TEACHINGS

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### *EPHESIANS 4:11-13*

The primary Scripture passage used to support the perpetuation of the offices of apostle and prophet is Ephesians 4:11-13.

In contrast to NAR leaders, more traditional evangelicals have generally understood this passage in one of two ways — neither of which supports the NAR belief in the present-day offices of apostle and prophet.

The first major way this passage has been understood is to be referring to the first-century apostles and prophets who, like those mentioned in Ephesians 2:20, played a foundational and temporary role in the history of the church. Thus, according to this understanding of the passage, it does not teach the perpetuation of apostles and prophets.

The second way this passage has been understood is that it *does* teach that God will continue to give apostles and prophets — along with evangelists, pastors, and teachers — for the building up of the church. However, the apostles and prophets who continue to be given do not hold formal offices or have the same level of authority as the original Twelve and Paul. Rather, present-day apostles can be compared to missionaries and church planters, not to people who rule the church. And present-day prophets are those who share words of edification and encouragement for individuals or local churches, but do not give revelation that is binding on the universal church.

Those who hold to the second understanding of Ephesians 4:11-13 recognize the fact that there were different types of apostles in the first-century church. The word “apostle” had a somewhat flexible range of meaning, much as the English word “messenger” does today. The word “messenger” can refer to a person who is sent by another person, by an institution, or by God. In a similar way, some apostles in the early church were sent directly by Christ, such as the Twelve and Paul. Others were sent by churches. Those apostles sent by churches did not have the same level of authority as those sent directly

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<sup>53</sup> Hamon, *Apostles, Prophets and the Coming Moves of God*, 265.

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by Christ. Thus, it is this less authoritative type of apostle that God continues to give to the church today, according to this interpretation of Ephesians 4:11-13.

## **EPHESIANS 2:20**

Another verse that is cited often by NAR leaders to support the present-day offices of apostle and prophet is Ephesians 2:20. But most traditional interpreters believe the apostles and prophets mentioned in this verse were those who played a historical role in the founding of the first-century church.

## **1 CORINTHIANS 12:28**

NAR leaders also point to 1 Corinthians 12:28 to support the present-day offices of apostle and prophet. But — while this verse does identify apostles and prophets as playing an important role in the church — it says nothing about them holding formal offices or governing the church.

## **MATTHEW 6:9-13 AND LUKE 11:2-4**

One of the main passages used to support the NAR claim that the church is tasked with taking dominion is the Lord's Prayer found in Matthew 6:9-13 and Luke 11:2-4. Yet, this prayer simply expresses a desire that God's kingdom be established; it says nothing about how or when it will be established. So, it cannot properly be used to support NAR teaching.

## **ACTS 3:21**

Another verse used to support NAR dominionism is Acts 3:21. NAR leaders claim that it teaches that Christ will not return to earth until the church has restored the earth to its original design before the Fall. Yet the traditional understanding of this verse is that God the Father will send Christ to restore "all things" not that the church will accomplish the restoration.

## **1 CORINTHIANS 15:24-25**

Yet another passage NAR leaders use to support their teachings on dominionism is 1 Corinthians 15:24-25. They claim this passage teaches that Christ, *through the church*, will reign and defeat His enemies before His Second Coming.<sup>54</sup> But this passage does not say that these feats will be accomplished through the church. Rather, it teaches that Christ Himself — after His Second Coming (see verse 23) — will reign and defeat his enemies.

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<sup>54</sup> Wagner, *Dominion*, 73.

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## HISTORY OF THE NEW APOSTOLIC REFORMATION

Though it is called the New Apostolic Reformation, the movement's teachings are not new, but are actually very old. Throughout church history, groups on the fringes of Christianity have attempted to restore the offices of apostle and/or prophet, including the Montanists (second century), the Irvingites (1830s), and the Apostolic Church (early 1900s).

More recently, the restoration of the offices of apostle and prophet was taught by the leaders of the Latter Rain Revival movement of the late 1940s and early 1950s (also called the "New Order of the Latter Rain"). The Latter Rain Revival, which started in Canada, quickly spread to the United States, Europe, and throughout the world. Influential Latter Rain leaders included George Warnock, Franklin Hall and William Branham.

But the popularity of the Latter Rain Revival was short-lived. On September 13, 1949, the General Council of the Assemblies of God in the United States — the largest Pentecostal denomination — passed a resolution that denounced Latter Rain teachings as unscriptural. Soon afterward, the revival died out. Nevertheless, Latter Rain teachings never completely disappeared and later resurfaced under a new name — that is, the New Apostolic Reformation.

The official birth of the New Apostolic Reformation is often said to have taken place May 21-23, 1996, at Fuller Theological Seminary's "National Symposium on the Post-Denominational Church." This event convened by NAR apostle and former Fuller professor C. Peter Wagner drew approximately 500 church leaders, church growth experts and denominational leaders. It first introduced the idea of present-day apostles and prophets to the larger evangelical world.

At the close of the symposium, the panelists are said to have agreed that those two offices continue today.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> Hamon, *Apostles, Prophets and the Coming Moves of God*, 10.

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Holly Pivec operates a blog, called “Spirit of Error” ([www.spiritoferror.org](http://www.spiritoferror.org)), that critiques the teachings of present-day apostles and prophets in the New Apostolic Reformation movement.

Holly is an experienced journalist and researcher, having served as a newspaper reporter, a contributing writer to the *Christian Research Journal*, and as the University Editor at Biola University for nearly 10 years as well as the managing editor of the award-winning *Biola Magazine*. She has more than 200 published articles, many related to the New Apostolic Reformation, church trends and theological issues.

Holly has been researching the NAR movement for over a decade. She has a master’s degree in Christian apologetics from Biola University. She recently co-authored the book [A New Apostolic Reformation?: A Biblical Response to a Worldwide Movement](#) (Paperback)

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