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What Christians Need to Know about the New Apostolic Reformation

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You may have heard of the New Apostolic Reformation sometimes referred to as NAR. This movement has taken hold in some circles of Christianity, primarily in the charismatic arm of the Christian faith. If you are not familiar with this movement, I want to give you some perspective to simply help you understand what Christians need to know about the New Apostolic Reformation.

What Is the New Apostolic Reformation?

The New Apostolic Reformation was a term that was coined by C. Peter Wagner who passed away in 2016. He is considered to be the “father figure” of this movement. What you will not find in the NAR is an official website or church membership because this is not an officially recognized denomination. It is an arm that has sprung from within the charismatic movement in the church. What you will see within the movement is that there are several core beliefs. The problem with many of them in my opinion is that they take them beyond even what Scripture intended. I will go over some of these core beliefs to help you understand what you as a Christian need to know about the New Apostolic Reformation. I am going to approach this in two ways. The first is to lay out the beliefs, and then the second is to give you a perspective on how you should view them.

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The New Apostolic Reformation Beliefs

1 – Apostolic Governance

This is the belief that there is a restoration of modern-day apostles who function in the same capacity and with the same authority as the first-century apostles. Included in this role is governance over churches and the ability to receive extra-biblical revelation along with the capacity to perform miraculous signs and wonders.

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2 – The Role of Prophets

According to NAR beliefs, prophets are alive and functioning in the church today. A scripture that you will hear from people who believe they have this prophetic ministry is [Amos 3:7](#), “Surely the Sovereign Lord does nothing without revealing his plan to his servants the prophets.” This is not just a foundational scripture to people involved in New Apostolic Reformation, but this is true of anyone who claims to have a prophetic ministry.

3 – Dominionism

This is the belief that the role of the church is to bring the kingdom of God to the earth. Here is a quote from C. Peter Wagner on this very topic. “When Jesus came, He brought the kingdom of God and He expects His kingdom-minded people to take whatever action is needed to push back the long-standing kingdom of Satan and bring the peace and prosperity of His kingdom here on earth.”

4 – Theocracy

This is the way dominion will be achieved on the earth. Here is another quote from C. Peter Wagner. “The way to achieve dominion is not to become “America’s Taliban,” but rather to have kingdom-minded people in every one of the Seven Mountains: Religion, Family, Education, Government, Media, Arts & Entertainment, and Business so that they can use their influence to create an environment in which the blessings and prosperity of the Kingdom of God can permeate all areas of society.”

5 – Extra-Biblical Revelation

According to NAR prognosticators, God is still providing revelation that flows outside of what God has already revealed in his word. Now according to C. Peter Wagner, these revelations have to be in agreement with Scripture, but you will discover that is often not the case.

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6 – Supernatural Signs and Wonders

Within NAR circles and to be fair other charismatic movements, miracles, signs, and wonders are still in operation and viable for the church today. If you are moving in an apostolic office, then these miraculous signs and wonders should follow you.

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How Should a Christian View These New Apostolic Reformation Beliefs?

The challenge many Christians will have in evaluating NAR beliefs is that the beliefs tend to mix in the truth of Scripture with some error. Let's look at some of these and what you should be mindful of.

1 – Apostolic Governance

The role of apostles in the modern-day church is one of debate often between some in charismatic circles (who are the ones who will often believe this office continues as it did in the first century) and those in non-charismatic circles (who are the ones that believe this office has not continued.) When you look in the new testament there were specific requirements for those to hold this office in the first-century church. In the book of Acts after Judas had died, the decision was made to replace Judas as an apostle. In searching for that replacement here were the requirements that were laid out.

“Therefore it is necessary to choose one of the men who have been with us the whole time the Lord Jesus was living among us, beginning from John's baptism to the time when Jesus was taken up from us. For one of these must become a witness with us of his resurrection.” – [Acts 1:21-22](#)

The biblical requirements of an apostle were to have been with Jesus the whole time of his ministry on the earth and to have been an eyewitness of his resurrection. The word apostle means one who has been sent on a mission. While this role of an apostle can still exist in the modern-day church, clearly no one can meet the other requirements. Therefore a modern-day apostle is one who is sent to take the gospel or start churches in new areas but they are in no way equivalent to the apostles of the first-century church.

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2 - The Role of Prophets

It is true that God has given to the church apostles and prophets.

“So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the [pastors](#) and teachers, to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up.” – [Ephesians 4:11-12](#)

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As we have just seen, while apostles may still exist their function has changed. What is often misunderstood, especially in NAR thinking, is the role of prophets. First and foremost a prophetic ministry is not primarily about prediction. It is most often about proclamation. Simply put a prophet is one who declares the word of the Lord. Where I believe many go wrong with NAR thinking is they put too much emphasis on the words of these “prophets”, which unfortunately as we have seen recently, have not been very biblical or very accurate. Always remember the Holy Spirit dwells within you and he can lead you and direct you in the steps you need to take. There is no need to depend on the words of prophets to know what God would desire you to do.

3 – Dominionism & Theocracy

I am going to put these together because they go hand in hand. While it's true Jesus taught us to pray your kingdom come, the understanding of that by those in the NAR is often misguided. The focus is often a political one and not a spiritual one. Here is what Jesus said about his kingdom.

Jesus said, “My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jewish leaders. But now my kingdom is from another place.” – [John 18:36](#)

While yes we are called to be salt on the earth, we should be preserving godly character, godly morality, and godly principles in the earth. The goal is not so that Christians can rule this world and thereby usher in God's kingdom. The ushering in of God's kingdom in the earth will only happen when Jesus returns. It is at that point that he will establish his kingdom on the earth.

4 – Extra-Biblical Revelation

Hopefully, I don't have to say much here but this is one of the most dangerous teachings. What Christians need to know about New Apostolic Reformation teaching is that extra-biblical revelation is not godly revelation. The canon of Scripture is complete. Everything we need to know about our faith God has already given to us. Don't take my words for it, God said it himself.

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“I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this scroll: If anyone adds anything to them, God will add to that person the plagues described in this scroll. And if anyone takes words away from this scroll of prophecy, God will take away from that person any share in the [tree of life](#) and in the Holy City, which are described in this scroll.” – [Revelation 22:18-19](#)

What we need is not new revelations about what God is saying. We need simply to rely on and find truth and understanding in what God has already said. Some in this movement mistakenly put the words of these “apostles” on the same level of Scripture and that is not only reckless but dangerous as well.

5 – Signs and Wonders

If there is one thing Christians need to know about the New Apostolic Reformation is that there is a great emphasis on signs and wonders. While I believe God can and does still do miraculous things, I believe there is too much emphasis placed on these things within this movement. While part of our faith is experiential, those experiences must be rooted in the principles and teachings of scripture. Too often in these types of movements, people fall victim to experiences that do not line up in any way with what God has revealed in his Word.

I want to share with you a simple principle that will help you. This will help you whether you believe the gifts of the Holy Spirit as listed in [1 Corinthians 12](#) are in operation today or if you think they are not. The Holy Spirit always moves in cooperation with the Word of God, never outside of it. When the Holy Spirit is moving, he will always be in alignment with the Bible. The reason this is true is because if he didn't how could we ever effectively test the spirits as we are called to do. The standard for testing is the Bible. Unfortunately, many in this movement elevate the reliance on signs and wonders sometimes even above Scripture. What you may soon discover when you pull back the curtain is these are not really true signs and wonders at all because they don't align with Scripture. As I said before part of your faith can be experiential, just make sure those experiences are rooted and grounded in the Word of God.

While there are elements of the NAR that line up with Scripture there are many that don't and that is the problem. When you are evaluating any supposed move of God, the deciding factor is not zeal or enthusiasm, even though these things often accompany them. The deciding factor is the Word of God. If what is happening within these movements does not line up and agree with the Word of God, then I can assure you the Holy Spirit has nothing to do with it.

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