

## What is NAR?

A constant refrain is “Hate is wrong. Hate is a sin.”

In a deeply divided country, expressions of hate abound on the internet. For Christians, we are mandated to walk by faith filled with the Holy Spirit. As we know, the fruit of the Holy Spirit contains love.

**Galatians 5:22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,**

**Galatians 5:23 gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.**

As Herman repeatedly said, “Love is observant of a need. Love attempts to fill that need.”

There is a critical need in the nation for healing. As Christians, we should be at the forefront of attempting to heal the nation. We have the assets and the power through the Holy Spirit.

This effort is as simple as walking in faith dependence upon the Holy Spirit. There may be opportunities presented by the Holy Spirit requiring our effort in the Holy Spirit.

I witnessed a woman at Walmart, recently, who observed a couple in front of her having trouble paying for their groceries. It was obvious that they were not trying to scam the system. Their debit card was apparently empty. The husband was clutching a single \$20 dollar bill in his hand which was not sufficient to cover the remaining bill. The woman behind the couple stuck out her hand with her own credit card. “Here use this.”

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With the bill paid, the couple was overwhelmed with gratitude. Here is healing.

God will provide the opportunities. But do not use the opportunity as if it was here I'll pay your groceries now listen to the gospel. It might happen that way. Or it may be days later that the couple will ask questions of why someone would do such a thing. Let God the Holy Spirit guide you.

Now for the topic of this lesson: What is the New Apostolic Reformation?

The first question you may ask is “Why should there be a whole lesson on the “New Apostolic Reformation (NAR)?” Why is it that important? The easy answer is that it is in local churches. It is in politics. It is international. The “White House Faith Office” was established by Presidential Executive Order 14015 of February 14, 2021<sup>1</sup>. Paul White-Cain was appointed as Special Government Employee and Senior Advisor of the newly created White House Faith Office<sup>2</sup>. She shares many of the views of the NAR. There are periodic media stories on the NAR and it's influence in government. It is both religious and political, sometimes a dangerous combination.

Here are two views on NAR from people whose opinions I respect. I previously quoted them. I do so again because what they say is powerful and to the point.

“You have a heretical movement today that is called the New Apostolic Reformation. And it is very very sad because you find a lot of the people that are associated with that to be extremely focused on politics. Yet we are not having an apostolic reformation. As we'll see this morning there

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1 <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2021/02/18/2021-03424/establishment-of-the-white-house-office-of-faith--based-and-neighborhood-partnerships>

2 <https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/2025/02/president-trump-announces-appointments-to-the-white-house-faith-office/>

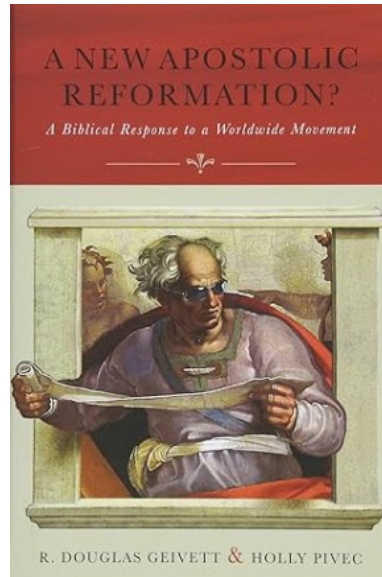
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has been no apostle since the death of the apostle John in approximately 95, 96 AD. And yet, many of these individuals are out there. And they are often linked with dominion theology and post-millennial theology and theonomy which emphasizes bringing back the Mosaic Law for today. And there are a lot of problems with all those things. The New Apostolic Reformation isn't restricted to a denomination or a particular group. It's just sort of a fluid group. There actually is an outstanding book that has been written about this on the New Apostolic Reformation, written by a couple of graduates from Talbot Seminary and Biola. And it's outstanding. And it indicates what a lot of the problems are. And one of the problems that I had during the previous presidential administration was a large number of those, not everyone, but a large number of those who were a part of the so called Christian Council or Evangelical Council that surrounded President Trump all bought into the New Apostolic Reformation. Now not everyone did but a number of them did. And as I always say, we have to remember that a right thing done in a wrong way or for a wrong reason is wrong. Only a right thing done for the right reason and the right way is right. And this was extremely troublesome to me when I understood just how theologically flaky and heretical some of those people were that surrounded the president. Now not all of them. Franklin Graham and Robert Jeffers up at First Baptist in Dallas and several others were fairly solid. But a large number were very fringe, at best. OK. So we have to understand some of these particular issues.<sup>3</sup>

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3 <https://www.deanbible.org/bible-class-listing/message/139-the-apostles-and-prophets-b> (transcribed from the audio)

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Andy Woods of Sugarland Bible Church (and also president of Chafer Theological Seminary) says this briefly concerning the New Apostolic Reformation:

“The definition of “apostle” has become very important in our day, because we now have the New Apostolic Reformation. You’ve heard of this, right? The NAR. It is centered there in Bethel Church in Redding, California. Their whole movement is centered around the fact that today we have modern-day apostles.”

“If you have modern-day apostles, then the canon of Scripture can’t be closed. Because it’s the Lord Who gave the apostles the authority to pen His Word. So the moment you open the door to modern-day apostles, you are also opening the door to what we would call an open canon of Scripture.<sup>4</sup>”

Here is the intro to the article from Wikipedia. Note that non-Christians are in some cases in a near panic because they think that the NAR is trying to take over the governments of the world.

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4 <https://slbc.org/sermon/2-peter-003-grow-up/>

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“**The New Apostolic Reformation (NAR)** is a Christian supremacist theological belief and controversial movement associated with the far-right that combines elements of Pentecostalism, evangelicalism, and the Seven Mountain Mandate to advocate for spiritual warfare to bring about Christian dominion over all aspects of society, and end or weaken the separation of church and state. NAR leaders often call themselves apostles and prophets. The movement was founded by and is heavily associated with C. Peter Wagner.<sup>5</sup>”

New Apostolic Reformation.

**New.** This movement was started/constructed/put together by C. Peter Wagner. I didn't find an exact date for the founding. It was more of a movement that Peter Wagner started. It has blended elements from many sources: Pentecostalism/Restorationism, Church Growth Movement, Dominionism. It was gaining momentum in the 1990's and is now entwined with the Trump administration.

**Apostolic.** The emphasis of this movement is on the spiritual gift of apostle. As Andy Woods pointed out, that would mean, based upon the Biblical paradigm that the canon of Scripture is open to additions, even if NAR denies this. There are many present day apostles recognized by the movement world-wide. They are organized to manage the Church and expand into the seven areas of society known as the seven mountains.

**Reformation.** The thrust is to change the church of today under the stewardship of the apostles.

It was my intention to do an in-depth exposition of the New Apostolic Reformation. However, this topic requires more than an hour to delve

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<sup>5</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New\\_Apostolic\\_Reformation](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_Apostolic_Reformation)

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into the nuances of it. As a result, this lesson is just a peak at this movement.

So, what is NAR? It is a movement within the Christian community that espouses certain doctrines that are considered by many to be heretical. These include present day spiritual gifts of prophecy, apostleship, healing and tongues, methods of church growth and dominionism. It is important to know why many consider this movement to be heretical. It is important to know about this movement if it is indeed heretical because it is expanding through local churches, has increasing political impact and is expanding throughout the world. The NAR has brought together several elements from different movements into a single movement with great effect. Key topics that need to be addressed:

**Continuationism.** “Continuationism is the belief that all the spiritual gifts, including healings, tongues, and miracles, are still in operation today, just as they were in the days of the early church. A continuationist believes that the spiritual gifts have “continued” unabated since the Day of Pentecost and that today’s church has access to all the spiritual gifts mentioned in the Bible.<sup>6</sup>”

**Restorationism.** Some recognize that the spiritual gifts we call “temporary” appeared to cease. So they say that they are now being “restored.” Again, from Wikipedia:

“**Restorationism**, also known as **Restitutionism** or **Christian primitivism**, is a religious perspective according to which the early beliefs and practices of the followers of Jesus were either lost or adulterated after his death and required a "restoration". It is a view that often "seeks to correct faults or deficiencies, in other branches of Christianity, by appealing to the primitive church as normative model".<sup>7</sup>”

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<sup>6</sup> <https://www.gotquestions.org/continuationism.html>

<sup>7</sup> <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Restorationism>

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This is not something new. The Pentecostal churches believe in tongues and prophecy. However, the NAR emphasizes the role of the apostle in today's church and in the political arena as well.

**Church Growth.** “The Church Growth movement is a movement within evangelical Christianity which aims to grow churches based on research, sociology, analysis, etc. The Church Growth movement sees its origins in the Great Commission, and seeing people come to the knowledge of Christ. Donald McGavran, a seminal figure in the movement, asserted that "It is God's will that women and men become disciples of Jesus Christ and responsible members of Christ's church".<sup>8</sup>”

**Dominionism.** “Dominion theology, also known as dominionism, is a group of far-right Christian political ideologies that seek to institute a nation governed by Christians and based on their understandings of biblical law. Extents of rule and ways of acquiring governing authority are varied. For example, dominion theology can include theonomy but does not necessarily involve advocacy of adherence to the Mosaic Law as the basis of government. The label is primarily applied to groups of Christians in the United States.<sup>9</sup>”

**Theonomy.** “Theonomy (from Greek theos "God" and nomos "law") is a hypothetical Christian form of government in which divine law governs societies. Theonomists hold that societies should observe divine law, particularly the Old Testament's judicial laws. The movement's chief architects are Gary North, Greg Bahnsen, and R.J. Rushdoony.<sup>10</sup>”

Let me summarize some of the main theological issues:

1. **Restoration of “temporary” spiritual gifts.** NAR quotes Ephesians 4:11-13.

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8 [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Church\\_Growth](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Church_Growth)

9 [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dominion\\_theology](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dominion_theology)

10 <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Theonomy>

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**Ephesians 4:11 And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers,**

**Ephesians 4:12 for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ;**

**Ephesians 4:13 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 fullness of Christ.**

This passage is often quoted by NAR affiliates as authorization for present-day prophets and apostles.

Conservative Bible churches understand that prophets and apostles were temporary gifts used to set up the Church in the new dispensation of the Church. Once the Church had been founded and there was a completed canon of Scripture, they were no longer needed.

**1 Corinthians 13:8 Love never fails; but if there are gifts of prophecy, they will be done away; if there are tongues, they will cease; if there is knowledge, it will be done away.**

**1 Corinthians 13:9 For we know in part and we prophesy in part;**



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### **1 Corinthians 13:10 but when the perfect comes, the partial will be done away.**

We understand that the gifts of prophecy, apostleship, tongues and knowledge (as a spiritual gift) were no longer needed because there is now a completed (perfect) canon of Scripture.

And, NAR appears to be using apostles as managers of world events. In a future lesson on NAR, I will attempt to read their literature and use some of their texts in quotes.

An influential website for NAR apostleship is [icaleaders.com](http://icaleaders.com) (International Coalition of Apostolic Leaders). Under definitions, an apostle is:

*“An apostle is defined by ICAL as, “A Christian leader gifted, taught, commissioned, and sent by God with the authority to establish foundational government within an assigned sphere by hearing what the Holy Spirit is saying and one who sets things in order accordingly for the growth and maturity.”<sup>11</sup>”*

As we have seen in our previous studies, an apostle is dependent upon who does the sending. Paul and the eleven believing disciples were appointed directly by Jesus Christ. As Paul says, he is an apostle of Jesus Christ.

### **1 Corinthians 1:1 Paul, called as an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, ...**

To follow this paradigm, each and every NAR apostle would have been personally appointed as apostle by Jesus Christ as Paul was. Indeed, Peter understood that an apostle, in his case a replacement for Judas

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<sup>11</sup> <https://www.icaleaders.com/about-ical/definitions>

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Ischariot, had to have been a witness to Jesus' earthly ministry during His first advent.

**Acts 1:21 Therefore it is necessary that of the men who have accompanied us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us**

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**Acts 1:22 beginning with the baptism of John until the day that He was taken up from us— one of these must become a witness with us of His resurrection.”**

So from our perspective, there is no longer a need for an apostle to found the Church which already exists and to add to a completed canon of Scripture. None of the present-day proclaimed apostles were around to witness Jesus' earthly ministry. There is little if any documentation that these apostles were personally appointed by Jesus Christ. NAR thinks that the Church has gone so far off course that apostles are needed to bring it back to 1<sup>st</sup> century fervor.

An apostle is defined by ICAL as, *“A Christian leader gifted, taught, commissioned, and sent by God with the authority to establish foundational government within an assigned sphere by hearing what the Holy Spirit is saying and one who sets things in order accordingly for the growth and maturity.”*<sup>12</sup>

This differs in nuance from what we understand as an apostle. Note to begin with that an apostle must be appointed, commissioned by an individual. For instance,

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<sup>12</sup> <https://www.icaleaders.com/about-ical/definitions>

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**Acts 13:2 While they were ministering to the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, “Set apart for Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.”**

**Acts 13:3 Then, when they had fasted and prayed and laid their hands on them, they sent them away.**

**Acts 14:14 But when the apostles Barnabas and Paul heard of it, they tore their robes and rushed out into the crowd, crying out**

This mission was directed by the Holy Spirit and sent out from Antioch.

“ICAL recognizes that apostolic Leaders operate in several different ways. We recognize “**Vertical Apostolic Leaders**” which including those apostles leading churches aligned governmentally with functional authority. Paul is a Biblical example of a Vertical Apostle.”

“We also recognize that other apostles are “**Horizontal Apostolic Leaders.**” These are leaders who are more egalitarian in their approach and are especially gifted in gathering and mobilizing leaders around certain projects, theological positions and creating professional societies. James is a Biblical example of a Horizontal Apostle.”

“Within the scope of Vertical and Horizontal Apostolic Leaders, ICAL recognizes that some leaders are called by God to use their gifts in the marketplace. They may work in both the church and the marketplace or exclusively in one or the other. ICAL has created a cohort of marketplace leaders called “Lead Global 360.<sup>13</sup>”

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<sup>13</sup> <https://www.icaleaders.com/about-ical/definitions>

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**Dominionism.** There are several terms that are linked together. Dominion. Post-millennialism. Seven Mountain Mandate.

**Post-Millennialism.** NAR believes that Christians need to prepare the earth for the arrival of Jesus Christ in His second coming.

Pre-Millennialism understands there will first be a rapture at which time Jesus snatches believers off the earth, then the Tribulation as part of the seven years God owes the Jews and then the Millennium in which Jesus Christ reigns for 1,000 years in his Kingdom. Jesus institutes the Kingdom, not man. Very different views of history.

There is a denomination that attempted to add to Scripture through a “prophet.” We call them Mormons.

### **Seven Mountain Mandate.**

“The **Seven Mountain Mandate**, also **Seven Mountains Mandate**, **7M**, **7MM**, or **Seven Mountains Dominionism**, is a dominionist conservative Christian movement within evangelical Christianity, particularly independent Charismatic groups. It holds that there are seven aspects of society that believers seek to influence or dominate: family, religion, education, media, arts and entertainment, business, and government.<sup>14</sup>”

“By using strategic spiritual warfare, adherents attempt to gain control of the seven mountains by researching and mapping the geographical strongholds of territorial spirits, using prophecy from the movement's prophets to determine the demons' names and roles, and intercession in which they pray on-site to rid the location or "mountain" of demons.<sup>15</sup>”

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<sup>14</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seven\\_Mountain\\_Mandate](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seven_Mountain_Mandate)

<sup>15</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seven\\_Mountain\\_Mandate](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seven_Mountain_Mandate)

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“Followers believe that by fulfilling the Seven Mountain Mandate, they can establish the kingdom of God on earth and bring about the end times.<sup>16</sup>”

Churches that have websites usually have a section called “Statement of Faith” or “What We Believe.” I didn’t pay much attention to it. But now, I understand how to read them and understand what kind of church it is from what they believe.

Let us look at the website for the Gateway Church in Dallas as an exercise to apply what we have learned up to this point.

Website: <https://gatewaypeople.com/campuses/dallas>

In particular let us look at the “Statement of Faith.”  
<https://gatewaypeople.com/about/statement-of-faith>

I will only look at a couple of key items. There are issues with other parts of the Statement of Faith, but these are key to identifying it as a New Apostolic Reformation church.

### 1. Holy Spirit:

“The baptism of the Holy Spirit, subsequent to conversion, releases the fullness of the Spirit and is evidenced by tongues, joy, praise, and other inward and outward manifestations and gifts.”

First, the text says the baptism of the Holy Spirit happens “subsequent to conversion.” We understand that the baptism of the Holy Spirit happens at the point of salvation.

Second, we emphasize that the baptism of the Holy Spirit is the placing of the believer into union with Jesus Christ. Paul often identifies things in the Christian life with “in Christ.” There are

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<sup>16</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seven\\_Mountain\\_Mandate](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seven_Mountain_Mandate)

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seven ministries of the Holy Spirit at the point of salvation. Spiritual gifts is one of those.

Third, we do not recognize the spiritual gift of tongues as a current spiritual gift. It was one of the temporary spiritual gifts no longer needed for the Church.

### 2. The Scripture.

“It cannot be added to, subtracted from, or superseded in any regard.” This does not mesh with our understanding of apostle.

### 3. Salvation.

“Salvation is affected by personal repentance, belief on the Lord Jesus (justification), and personal acceptance of Him into one's life as Lord and Savior (regeneration).”

We understand that salvation is by “faith alone in Christ alone.” A requirement to put Him as Lord and Savior (regeneration) appears to be in addition to “faith alone.”

### 4. The Christian Life.

“For those abiding in Christ until their death or His return, the promises of eternal blessing in the presence of God are assured.”

This is similar wording to the non-Free Grace Christians. They believe that you cannot know you are saved unless you have a changed life and produce good works.

### 5. The Church.

“The Church is governed by the five-fold ministry as outlined in Ephesians 4:11-12, the office of Elder, as well as other offices mentioned in Scripture. “

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“Church policy is governed by Eldership authority, emphasizing the final authority of the Church Eldership.”

We do not accept the validity of so called present-day prophets and apostles. Some churches are governed by elders or deacons. In our church, the pastor is the final authority. The reference to Ephesians 4:11-12 without identifying the temporary “ceased” gifts identifies this church as NAR.

The point of this exercise is to arm a believer with tools to identify what kind of ministry exists at a church you may want to visit. Read the “Statement of Faith” and apply what you have learned.