

THE NAR (New Apostolic Reformation) WHAT IT IS – AND ISN'T

(Excerpts from Wikipedia):

The **New Apostolic Reformation (NAR)** The movement largely consists of churches nominally or formerly associated with [Pentecostal](#) denominations and [Charismatic](#) movements but have diverged from traditional or classical Pentecostal and Charismatic theology in that it advocates for the restoration of the lost offices of church governance, namely the offices of [prophet](#) and [apostle](#).^[1]

The New Apostolic Reformation is a title originally used by [C. Peter Wagner](#) ... descriptive of a theological movement and is not an organization and therefore does not have formal membership... Although the movement regards the church as the true body of saved believers, as does most of evangelical Protestantism, it differs from the broader Protestant tradition in its view on the nature of church leadership, specifically the doctrine of "five-fold ministry", which is based upon a non-traditional interpretation of [Ephesians](#) 4:11, the so called-"[apostles and prophets](#),"^[3] evangelists, pastors (also referred to as the shepherds), and teachers.

Wagner listed the differences between the NAR and other Protestant denominations as follows:

- Apostolic governance – Using the [Apostle Paul](#) as an example to say that [Jesus](#) appoints [apostles](#) within his church up to this day.
- The office of the [prophet](#) – Saying there is within the church a role and function for present-day "prophets".
- Dominion theology (also known as dominionism) is based on the idea that the world has been under the influence of [Satan](#) since the [fall of man](#) and that it is Christians who have the authority as well as the duty to reclaim it for God, as an interpretation of the [Lord's Prayer](#), "Your kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven".^[1]
- Theocracy – the goal to have "kingdom-minded people" in all areas of society. There are seven areas identified specifically: religion, family, education, government, media, arts & entertainment, and business.^[1]
- Relational structures – church governance has no formal structure but rather is by relational and voluntary alignment to apostles.^[4]

C. Peter Wagner wrote that most of the churches in this movement have active ministries of spiritual warfare.^[5] In an article responding to criticism of the NAR, Wagner noted that those who affiliate themselves with the movement believe the [Apostles' Creed](#) and all the [orthodoxy](#) of Christian doctrine. Similarities with traditional Pentecostalism:

- Supernatural signs and wonders – Signs and wonders such as healing, demonic deliverance, and confirmed prophecies accompany the move of God.
- Supernatural Revelations – There is available to all believers the ability to hear from God. "The one major rule governing any new revelation from God is that it cannot contradict what has already been written in the Bible. It may supplement it, however."^[6]

BOTTOM LINE:

Those who oppose the various beliefs of the “NAR” do not accept apostles and prophets as valid leaders for today. They believe these gifts have ceased. Many opponents also believe signs and wonders have ceased, as have prophecies, miraculous healings, tongues, and numerous other supernatural manifestations of Holy Spirit. They are usually deeply concerned about unhealthy authority figures and anyone who “claims” to be an apostle or prophet. Any spiritual gift that is unusual or seemingly inappropriate is also deemed of the flesh or of the devil.

WHY (I believe) THIS OPPOSITION IS BIBLICALLY UNSOUND AND SPIRITUALLY BLIND:

- KNOWLEDGE IS STILL HERE. A primary scripture people use to argue that spiritual gifts has ceased is found in 1 Corinthians 13:8-10.

Love never ends. As for prophecies, they will pass away; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will pass away. For we know in part and we prophesy in part, but when the perfect comes, the partial will pass away.

However, if two of the three have ceased to function, then the third must also cease to function. If prophecy and tongues has passed away, then what about knowledge? This approach is also used in 1 Corinthians 12:4-11, when opponents cite that several of these gifts have ceased. The problem is, you can't just pick and choose which gifts “work” and which ones don't. Are they saying that wisdom, knowledge, and faith have also ceased?

Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; ... For to one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the ability to distinguish between spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. All these are empowered by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as He wills.

- Paul exhorts all believers to CONTINUE in the spiritual gifts: *Pursue love, and earnestly desire the spiritual gifts, especially that you may prophesy. (1 Corinthians 14:1 ESV)* There is no indication that he was only speaking to that church at that particular time. It is presumptuous to assume so.
- THE “PERFECT” IS JESUS – NOT THE BIBLE. Using the same passage of 1 Corinthians 13:10, the argument is that when the biblical canon was confirmed around 397 AD, the gifts ceased because the “perfect” Word is now established and final. There is no longer any “need” for these supernatural manifestations. However, it is only Jesus who is Perfect. He's not a book, but the Living Word of God. The “perfect” in this passage is referring to the second coming of Christ, not the publication of the Bible.

- Ephesians 4:11-14 includes ALL FIVE LEADERSHIP ROLES. There is no biblical evidence supporting the continuance of ONLY Teachers, Pastors, and Evangelists. The PURPOSE of these gifts is to equip and empower the saints UNTIL we reach full maturity (and ready for Christ's return for His spotless Bride).

And He gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes.

If Jesus knew that the Bible would eventually be written for generations to follow, wouldn't He have been more clear with His apostles when they recorded how He taught them to minister? Shouldn't He have indicated those miraculous powers would not be available to all who followed them? No. There is no biblical basis for this kind of approach. No teaching or examples that indicates healing the sick, raising the dead, and casting out demons should stop once the Bible was written.

And Peter said to them, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to Himself." (Acts 2:38-39)

This is referencing "the gift" of the Holy Spirit. The "gifts" listed in 1 Corinthians are actually "expressions" of that same Spirit. They are not separate from the Person of Holy Spirit.

- LEADERSHIP IS STILL NEEDED. The functions of apostles and prophets are still needed to establish healthy foundations for our faith. Their leadership, vision, and unique grace upon their gifts enable them to equip the saints for the work of ministry. The primary concern from opponents to apostolic leadership is *perceived control and authoritarianism*. However, this often stems from negatives experiences rather than sound biblical doctrine. Though there will always be "bad" examples of unhealthy church leadership, this should never discredit or disqualify God's intentions and provisions for good leadership. We simply need more good demonstrations of how God always intended for these gifts of Jesus to operate and work together.
- FRUIT! Based on the arguments of the opponents, any miracles, prophecies, or miraculous healings that have occurred in the hundreds of years since the resurrection must either be fake, contrived, or of the devil. None of them are of God. But, tell that to the ones who have experienced them personally and testified to His miraculous powers to heal and deliver!
- It is a RELIGIOUS SPIRIT that is seeking to shut down the Person and work of Holy Spirit. It is because of the SUPERNATURAL ASPECT of these ministries (apostles, prophets, and various gifts), the Pharisees of today and Religious Teachers of the Law will not accept anything they can't prove through their own intellect and training. Jesus not only cited "false" teachers, but

blind ones. Unfortunately, there are good people with good hearts who are simply spiritually blind.

You blind guides, straining out a gnat and swallowing a camel! Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you clean the outside of the cup and the plate, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence. You blind Pharisee! First clean the inside of the cup and the plate, that the outside also may be clean. (Matthew 23:24-26)

- Healthy spiritual authority is possible! Our negative experiences should never determine what's true. The blueprint has been given through the early church leaders and the spiritual principles still apply. True godly leaders will carry authority and exercise that authority for the good of the whole. But it requires mutual accountability, a servant's heart, and humility on everyone's part. There's no question - we need more true SERVANT LEADERS to turn the tide and model healthy godly authority.
- Our focus should be on what God intends – not on what man has manipulated or messed up. Let's get past our personal offenses and negative reactions and look at what's true and accurate. Let's be open to the possibilities and determine to set a different example than the mistakes of the past.