

WHAT IS THE NAR?

From wandaalger.me

I've received numerous emails asking if I am a "part of the NAR" (New Apostolic Reformation). In response, I did a [short video](#) with a brief description of the NAR, some scriptural considerations, and my personal belief as to what's driving this issue. If you know of others who are wondering about this concern, I encourage you to watch the video and pass on the notes below (PDF copy here).

Though Wikipedia is certainly not the standard for truth, it is interesting what [various contributors say about the NAR](#). I actually agree with most of what they state concerning this belief system. The bottom line is that "the NAR" is not an organization, nor does it have a leader, a website, or any formal structure. It is simply a descriptive title given to those in the Church who believe that the fivefold gifts in Ephesians 4:11-12 are still active in the church today, along with signs, wonders, miraculous healings, and tongues.

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 ("cessationists"). Many opponents also believe miraculous signs and wonders have ceased, as have numerous other supernatural manifestations of the 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. Thus, as "revivals" break out and supernatural manifestations occur, those who oppose these things will often point to NAR associations and beliefs.

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

- Knowledge, wisdom, and faith still remain.

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.*

However, if two of the three have ceased to function, then the third must also cease to function. If prophecy and tongues have passed away, then so must knowledge. This approach is also used in 1 Corinthians 12:4-11, when opponents cite that several of these gifts have 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.

The problem is, you can't just pick and choose which gifts "work" and which ones don't. Wisdom, knowledge, and faith are still valid and greatly needed. There is no basis for pulling some of these gifts off the shelf simply because they may be more controversial, unfamiliar, and even uncomfortable.

- 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. There is also no disqualification for a prophet to prophesy.

- The “perfect” is Jesus, the Living Word of God.

For we know in part and we prophesy in part, but when the perfect comes, the partial will pass away. (1 Corinthians 13:10). This scripture is used to suggest that when the biblical canon was confirmed around 397 AD, the gifts ceased because the “perfect” Word was 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 and He’s still speaking and revealing Himself to mankind. The “perfect” in this passage is referring to the second coming of Christ when He returns for His spotless Bride and there is final victory over Satan and his hordes.

- 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). We have a ways to go before we are fully united in the faith!

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.

- The fullness of Holy Spirit’s presence and power was given for all men, for all time.

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)

Peter 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. ALL that Holy Spirit pours out and reveals about the Father and the Son is still active. This includes a heavenly language for prayer and evangelism, deliverance from demonic oppression, and supernatural healings.

Also, consider this: If Jesus knew that the Bible would eventually be written for generations to follow, wouldn’t He have been more clear with His apostles – and the apostle Paul - when they recorded His instructions? Shouldn’t He have indicated those miraculous powers would not be available to all who followed Him? Wouldn’t He have been more clear in placing proper restrictions on the miraculous? 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.

- The function of apostolic and prophetic leadership is still desperately needed.

Though the written Word of God lays the standard for truth, the foundations of our faith must constantly be interpreted and applied for every generation in every culture. Our current crises on the global front are due to these spiritual foundations being eroded from lack of proper apostolic and prophetic oversight.

The primary concern from opponents to apostolic leadership is *perceived control and authoritarianism*. However, this often stems from negative experiences rather than sound biblical doctrine. Though there will always be plenty of examples of unhealthy church leaders, 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 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! For those who are truly hungry to know – the evidence is there – and it's overwhelming.

WHAT IS FUELING THESE ARGUMENTS AGAINST FIVEFOLD MINISTRY AND THE SUPERNATURAL?

I believe it is the 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 supernatural 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.

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)

I believe there is a spirit of jealousy among many religious teachers today who are threatened by the supernatural. Placing priority on intellect and knowledge, these blind guides cannot tolerate anything that does not depend on their ability to understand and explain what is happening. The same demonic spirit of unbelief that operated during Jesus' ministry is still operating today through many religious leaders unable to surrender their human intellect and pride to that which they can't explain or control.

HOW TO RESPOND

I actually agree with some of the arguments presented by those who oppose the "NAR." There are misrepresentations of truth and unhealthy practices that need to be addressed. But that doesn't negate God's intentions for apostolic and prophetic leaders and the supernatural signs that follow those who believe. Our negative experiences should never determine what's true and should never be the basis for establishing doctrine. The blueprint for Kingdom authority has been given through the early church leaders and the spiritual principles for operating in the Spirit still apply. But it requires a servant's heart, mutual accountability, and humility on everyone's part. I suggest we get past our personal offenses and negative reactions and prepare to champion this unseen Kingdom that is now being revealed. Instead of trying to rewrite the model, let's just practice what Jesus did and do what He commanded. The fruit and long-lasting impact will speak for itself.