

DANGERS IN THE APOSTOLIC RESTORATION

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For over 36 years we have been proponents of the restoration of apostle and prophets to their place of leadership in the Body of Believers. However, as we travel the world and are in dialogue with those who believe with us in this restoration and seek to practice it, we have found that we in Tikkun International and our related ministries, have some significant differences with some who are proponents of this restoration. Some of these differences for us reveal profound dangers. I list them and explain.

1. The royal apostle model is a dangerous model. In many parts of the world, tribal people and people in undemocratic societies have modeled the authority of the apostle on the pattern of the absolute ruler chief. One famous missiologist even endorsed this as perfectly in order. In this dangerous model no one can remove or bring discipline to the head leader if he falls into sin or disqualifies himself. However, this model is not just found in undemocratic societies. Some years ago I spoke to an apostle of an American network of congregations and asked him about his authority in regard to local congregations. I asked, if the local pastor and elders of a congregation disagrees with your council, who makes the final decision. He answered, the apostle does. In our view the apostle has important input, is like an *ex-officio* elder of the congregations he oversees, but the final decision is the local leaders. We have taught and written about the royal pastor model for local congregation and have also been very clear in our rejection of this model. In our understanding of leadership, there is always an accountable team that shapes and leads. Just as a local elder and the lead elder have to come to consensus, so also the apostle and his team. In the network, we also believe there is accountability to the leaders of the whole network. When we study Scripture, we see in the passages on eldership in the book of Acts, the functioning of the Acts 15 Council, and in the evidence of early Church history, the idea of leadership with plurality is the prevailing idea. Only Yeshua is the head, and therefore leaders are mutually submitted and accountable. This is in keeping with the call to humility and the safety of mutual submission.

2. Prophetic appointment of apostles in nations. We do not agree with people being appointed to apostolic authority in nations from prophets and apostles from another nation-foreign appointment. This is against what we believe is the indigenous principle of a national movements. When a person proves himself to have apostolic ministry, he will have a following of congregations and ministries that he oversees. An apostle is simply one that is able to foster and lead a movement and not just one congregation. As such, he is an apostle to the leaders/people in a nation that look to him or his team (which can include more than one apostle) as their apostolic leader(s). He is only an apostle to those who follow him. It is fine for prophets from other lands to recognize the sphere of his authority and to prophecy its expansion, but it is a terrible error to place such a person in authority over a nation or over other ministers and ministries as if all are to submit to him. If there

is ever an apostle that is credited with such authority as an apostle of all the apostles of the nation, only the apostles together could give such recognition. Prophecy that exalts a person to a national apostolic leadership over their whole nation has been very damaging, and has caused much division. An apostle certainly cannot claim that others who do not follow him should be under his authority and following him. We have even seen cases where such prophetic appointment has caused great division. We have seen such apostles later fall (probably connected to pride) which has caused great pain and the discrediting of apostolic restoration. It has been a terrible set back to apostolic restoration.

There is a protocol in Tikkun where all appointments should not only come by prophecy, but need to be presented to the relevant elders, prayed over and confirmed. Appointments to any five-fold roles need to be done carefully, prayerfully and not rashly in the moment.

3. We are also concerned about the present state of apostolic restoration where apostles build their own Kingdoms expressed as network of congregations and ministries without equal passion for the unity of the Body. We believe in networks of congregations. However, one of the most important calls of an apostle is the unity of the Body and especially in every city and region. (John 17:21, Ephesians 4:11). Ephesians 4 emphasizes that the function of the Five Fold leadership is to lead to the unity that Yeshua prayed for. This means that apostles who truly see their calling cannot see themselves as replacing the denominations and associations that exist, but their heart would be to bring renewal to them. In addition, we are troubled by the idea of congregations and ministers in the same locale submitting to different apostolic streams in such a way that there is stream competition, and competition with the other denominations and associations in the locale. At this stage, apostles have to both build their stream or network and seek out those who are willing to walk in unity and cooperative ministry in the local context. Last days apostles will be champions for the unity of the Church, the Body, and they will give themselves to fostering that unity however they can without compromising their convictions on the power of God or restoration principles. We believe in the last days that mighty apostles and prophets will call the Church in each locality to cooperative unity and that the Messianic Jewish part of the Body is to be a significant part of this. In the New Covenant Scriptures, there was one congregation of the whole city in each city, sometimes with multiple thousands that met in many different meetings, but with one joint eldership in the city.

4. We are also concerned about the extreme Kingdom Now teachings in the apostolic movement or the return to Post Millennialism. In this doctrine, the Church under its apostolic restoration is going to take over the whole world and rule it for a long time before Yeshua returns. His return is not necessary for us to establish the millennial age. Those who have embraced this have given up the Biblical emphasis and passion for the soon return of Yeshua. His return should always be seen as soon for every generation of believers. Though we believe in influencing society through the Gospel, we do not believe we will conquer the whole world apart from the

return of Yeshua. His return is in a time of the most intense battle between good and evil and his return will be our ultimate victory.