

LETTERS  
TO A  
YOUNG PROPHET

## OTHER TITLES

The Last Church  
Elijah Must Come  
The Jerusalem Revival  
Dying For Revival

©

Peter Robertson  
2005

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*“For years Peter Robertson has been a consistent prophetic voice in Aotearoa. His voice once again sounds as a pukaea to an emerging generation. Peter’s writings are indeed God’s statement of intent for our nation.”*

*(A pukaea is a wooden trumpet usually made out of totara or matai. It was only used to sound an alarm in time of war.)*

**– Cindy Ruakere, Haruru Ministries**

*“God’s gracious and compassionate heart is always being poured out through the prophetic. Through Peter’s dreaming, preaching and prophesying, God’s abounding love is being poured forth to the Church in our land.*

*“Peter has laid down his life to prepare a generation for a coming Move of God that will flow from Heaven to the Church to the streets. I’m in. Are you?”*

**– Jefferson Lucas, Youth With A Mission**

## INTRODUCTION

Life without parents is impossible; certainly at the very beginning. It is exactly the same so far as the spiritual life is concerned. My gratitude for older men and women who have helped me along with my Christian life through the years knows no bounds. And there have been many; such is the grace and mercy of God. Some of their good counsel I was intelligent enough to heed. But sadly there have been times when I was too dumb to listen to what was good for me. As I write I'm thinking especially of Father Benedict, the novice master in the Trappist monastery at Kopua. I remember him saying to me one summer's evening in early 1973, "I can't explain to you why I am saying this, but you should not leave now." Early the next morning I packed and left. I do not regret what has happened to me since I departed, but I am still deeply sorry that I so flagrantly disregarded the counsel of one clearly appointed by God to be as a "father".

My hope and prayer is that there may be something in this rough scribbling that will help younger men and women (or for that matter people of any age). And most especially those who at this time are like a tender Jeremiah, wrestling with the shock, implications and consequences of hearing God say, "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I have appointed you a prophet to the nations."

There may be much here you might be wise to disregard. However if at some point you feel your spirit leap towards some word or thought, then do yourself a favour and take it to heart. I want you to experience the pure joy of being caught up in a breaking wave of national revival as I once was. But at the same time I don't want you necessarily to fall into every pit and bog where I've floundered. If at the very least I can help you avoid some of that stuff, then I'll be well pleased.

Whoever you may be and wherever you are, God bless you.

*Peter Robertson*  
(April 2005)

*“I told the messengers you sent to me that even if you gave me  
all the silver and gold in your palace, I could not disobey the  
command of the Lord by doing anything of myself. I will say  
only what the Lord tells me to say.”*

– Numbers 24.12-13

*“Teach your heart to follow what your tongue is saying to others.”*

– A Desert Father

## *“What Am I?”*

*Dear Friend.*

Thanks for making yourself known to me after that meeting on Sunday night. You probably noticed that I'm a little wary once a meeting is over. I'm afraid I've been jumped too many times over the years by the wild-eyed brigade – God's odd squad – determined to set me to rights about the identity of the Beast and the fact that 666 corresponds (somehow or other?) to the prime minister's name! But I had already noticed you in the meeting. People the Holy Spirit wants me to be in touch with stand out; it's as if I've met that person before (but haven't) or have known them for a long time. It's a phenomenon I call “knowing by the Spirit”. As people do approach me I watch them like a hawk. If they're all puffed-up and swaggering, then I'll be polite but brief, all the while scanning the walls for the nearest exit sign. It still stuns me that there are Christian people around who've never worked up a decent sweat serving whoever and however may be needed in a local church, and yet they consider themselves the self-appointed guardians of doctrine, revelation, church government and morals. Amazing! But in your case I was hoping you might want to talk, and you came across the room observably led by the hand by the Holy Spirit...hence your quiet joy, humility and absence of shadows. What I observed over your life couldn't really be prophesied in a public meeting, but you summed it up by asking, “Am I really called to be a prophet?” I hope you didn't feel short-changed by my answer, “Your asking the question in that way and with that demeanour indicates you most likely are!” But because I suspect you were hoping for a more fulsome reply, here it comes in written and hence (hopefully) more considered form.

Self-appointed prophets wouldn't ever think to ask the question. They'd trumpet their identity as a done-deal because their confidence is in their own religious nature and so based on pride. But a prophet truly created by God lives by faith. Look at our brother Jeremiah. God has just told him, "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I have appointed you a prophet to the nations." (1.5) But he doesn't then rush off to publicize and promote himself in his new ministry. The first thing he says in response to this oracle is, "Alas, Lord God." A more modern response might be, "Whoopee!" What does he mean, "Alas"? Well "alas" means "concern, grief and pity". Concern...that for a whole bunch of reasons (most especially his sense of being a novice) he may not be up to the task. Grief...that a life of priestly privilege and acceptance has been laid aside for prophetic cross carrying and rejection. Pity...that the statistics favour his message being hurled back in his face and then his having to witness his loved ones flailed by God's wrath. Not much swaggering there I would have thought.

I've met many folk who believe that God has spoken to them according to *Jeremiah* 1.5. But they've turned this extraordinarily precious verse into a credential or a badge. They falsely believe that it gives them a mandate to speak on the Lord's behalf, and often in the most ill considered, outrageous and sub (even anti) Biblical ways. I absolutely do not believe that such a verse should ever produce that kind of response. Rather, if the Lord has spoken along those lines to you (and by the way I'm sure that He has) then it'll trigger within you a powerful hunger to devote the rest of your life to aligning yourself with Him and His heart and His Word. I really wouldn't counsel you to start roaring around the countryside attending all kinds of prophetic schools and conferences. People whose understanding of their identity in God is based on their own selfish ambition and not the Will of God too often attend them.

With all my heart I would urge you to speak very little and to very few people about your prophetic calling. Let God lead you to a local

church where you can find a spiritual home, and there immerse yourself in the corporate life of those Believers and obtain a reputation as someone who is quick to serve along lines indicated by the Elders, and slow to pontificate. It is my own joyful testimony after 38 years of Christian living and 25 as a preacher, that God will infallibly make a way for Himself in and through you. Or as my dear friend and true prophet of God, Art Katz has said,

“Paul never lifted a finger on his own behalf or in the promotion of his own ministry the way we would. Yet God had him in the right place at the right time.”

“For not from the east, nor from the west, nor from the desert comes exaltation; but God is the judge; He puts down one, and exalts another.”  
(*Psalms 75.6-7*)

If you do have a burning sense of destiny and a huge dream to live a life for Him full of meaning and impact and fruit, don't panic. But always remember, “You don't have to know key men, when you know the Keeper of the Keys.” (*Anon*) It is right now a very good time for us all to be more on our faces than on our feet, and listening more than we are speaking. Please give little thought as to how you might get to fulfill the public aspect of the ministry you believe you've been called to. I really don't think that's very important at all. It's the private part of your ministry that is most important. “But when you pray, go into your most private room, and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you in the open.” (*Matthew 6.6*) Some time ago the Holy Spirit said to me, “As you make yourself known to me, I will make you known to those I want to speak to through you.” What a tremendous promise, and such a great antidote to the present contagion of self-promotion and fleshly net-working which has infected so many leaders and ministries in the Western Church today.

The more I get to know Jeremiah, the more I understand him to have been a lover of God first, second and third. His speaking was a consequence of that.

Right in the middle of the incredible dirge of *Lamentations* his lover's heart explodes in an anthem of worship, "The Lord's lovingkindnesses indeed never cease, for His compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is Thy faithfulness. The Lord is my portion, says my soul. Therefore I have hope in Him. The Lord is good to those who wait for Him, to the person who seeks Him. It is good that he waits silently for the salvation of the Lord." (3.22-26)

Prophets first of all are God-lovers and not word-spouters. Their speciality is jealousy...for the Lord. (Sadly, too often these days they're jealous of each other's "fame".) Their genuine knowledge and love for Him is what makes them jealous for Him and His heart and His Word. The Lord is jealous for us; which is to say, He wants us all to Himself totally. The prophet responds by being jealous for the Lord...that God as He truly is, truly feels and truly speaks be all that is known of Him by us.

Today I think the Church largely thinks of prophets as being those who utter as an oracle words from God. What a travesty! How utterly base! More than anything else the prophet is called to fulfill in his or her own body, soul and spirit the Great Commandment,

"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the first and foremost commandment...this is the greatest commandment. It comes first."  
(*Matthew 22.37-38*)

Some believe prophets get killed more frequently than priests (pastor-teachers) or kings (leaders) because they give more offence. I do not believe that to be the case. Prophets love life but usually end up dead or "dead" because sometimes at certain moments in history that's the only way they can communicate what's really in their hearts... "The Lord He is God. The Lord He is God. And nothing – not even life itself – is more important than that!"

Let us be in touch. God bless you in Jesus' Name.

*Peter.*

## *“Spill Your Guts!”*

*Dear Friend,*

I once travelled thousands of miles to listen to a prophet. I esteemed him then as being almost without peer. I esteem him today, even though he is momentarily a grounded eagle. I was not disappointed by my first encounter, even though I did not receive a (so-called) personal word of prophecy. I heard something infinitely more valuable; two outstanding, pithy gems which I’ve sucked the marrow from and been disciplined by for close on 15 years. One of them was, “Spill your guts!” (You might just hear in the background some audible, religious, lemon sucking!)

The other was, “Competition and rivalry is instant death to the prophetic!” I’d like to talk to you about that too, at a later date.

I mention this by way of replying to your most recent question, “Is there a formula for leading a prophetic-revival meeting?” My answer of course (as I suspect you’d expect) is, “No...none!” But such a terse response definitely requires some elaboration.

Firstly, there’s definitely a right way and a wrong way to interpret, “Spill your guts!” The wrong way is that somewhat crazed notion some characters get a hold of that being prophetic is all about getting your hot hands on a microphone in front of a congregation and then bellowing out (preferably in the language of the King James’ Version) the first critical put-down that enters your head!

Obviously for “Spilling your guts” to have any sane meaning, merit or value at all so far as God is concerned, is going to depend largely

on whether there's already anything of Him in your "guts" worth "spilling"? Now we're getting to the heart of the concern, which is essentially a concern of the heart. As I think I've already pointed out as strongly as possible, prophets are not just word-spouters... they're called to be God-lovers ahead of everything else. (Yes, even before "getting" that all-important word from the Lord for the next meeting!) And if He is indeed taking possession of the prophet's heart, then there is a very good chance that the God-content of his or her speaking will contain enough of Heaven to make it actually worth listening to! (Bearing in mind all the while that the Bible is the Word of God, whereas a prophetic word contains the Word of God...in varying degrees! Pseudo prophets hate that distinction being made, by the way! Very interesting?)

"For the mouth speaks out of that which fills the hearts...what fills the heart will rise to the lips. The good man out of his good treasure...the goodness stored in his heart...brings forth what is good; and the evil man out of his evil treasure brings forth what is evil."  
(*Matthew 12.34-35*)

That is why the prophet is traditionally associated with the wilderness or the desert. Not because he or she takes pleasure in being eccentric or strange in a manner calculated to be deliberately off-putting, offensive or intimidating. But because that is the place where you either learn to love God or "die"/die. All religious props and ecclesiastical scaffolding are removed.

"And the child (John the Baptist) continued to grow, and to become strong in spirit, and lived in the deserts until the day of his public appearance to Israel." (*Luke 1.80*)

"Jesus began to speak to the multitudes about John, 'What did you go out into the wilderness to look at?' " (*Matthew 11.7*)

Oh that more self-proclaimed prophets would stay out in the desert until they've actually received something worth listening to. The

Church would be a much healthier House today if those alleging themselves to be prophetic spent more time in the wilderness (both physical and spiritual) than they do hanging out in VIP lounges at national conferences and vying for the limelight at so-called prophetic convocations.

“Therefore, behold, I will allure her (Israel), bring her into the wilderness, and speak kindly to her. Then I will give her her vineyards from there.” (*Hosea 2.14-15*)

“Who is this coming up from the wilderness, leaning on her beloved?” (*Song of Songs 8.5*) It is the Bride of Christ who has obtained in the desert a love for the Bridegroom “strong as death...the flash of it is a flash of fire, a flame of Yahweh Himself. Love no flood can quench, no torrents drown.” (8.6-7)

In the wilderness I am finally left alone...with myself, satan and God Almighty. I will either learn to love God or perish. That’s it and that’s all. And it is that man or woman who has genuinely begun to learn to make that choice who will be deemed trustworthy enough by Heaven to carry and communicate God’s heart. That may be by way of an unusual dream or vision; perhaps an ecstatic cry out of His whirlwind Presence; or last but definitely not least, possibly through a clear, concise, extraordinarily well-prepared teaching.

Which leads me on to say that of all the ministries the prophetic is the one that requires the most painstaking preparation...both with prayer and study. If a prophet is called at this or that meeting to “wing it” by “jumping” out of the pulpit and “flying” on the invisible, swirling currents of the Holy Spirit’s activity, his launching-pad is his preparation. I sometimes suspect certain personalities are attracted to the prophetic because they perceive it as being “easy”, in the sense that no study is required. Now that is an ultimate kind of snare and delusion!

My personal conclusion after 25 years of ministry – pastoring,

teaching, itinerating – is that the prophet must excel as a student of the Bible. (It's worth noting that "prophesy" in the New Testament means "to set forth in detail, explain, interpret"!)

He is par excellence a man of the Scriptures...and his Concordance, Bible dictionaries and a healthy variety of commentaries are his constant companions. Reading and listening to stacks of prophetic books, tapes, videos etc has a little value, but just won't cut it. Such a diet may in fact lead to this danger:

"Behold, I am against the prophets, declares the Lord, who steal My words from each other." (*Jeremiah 23.30*)

It is said that readers of good literature will be writers of good literature. In just the same way those who feed heartily upon the perfect and pure Word of God, the Bible, may bring forth words which actually contain some Truth. I also think that our knowledge of the Bible alone prevents us from drifting into confusion, error and deception. I once stood in a congregation and groaned inwardly as I listened to someone prophesy, "Thus saith the Lord...I will not return in the way that I left." Now this statement manifestly denies the testimony of the whole of the New Testament...especially *Acts 1.11*. I sensed that God wanted to say something important at that moment concerning Jesus' return. But the prophesy-er got it wrong because he failed to submit and filter through the Bible what the Holy Spirit was causing to arise in his heart.

"Do not quench the Spirit; do not despise prophetic utterances. But examine everything carefully; hold fast to that which is good." (*1 Thessalonians 5.19-21*)

In many ways an ideal pathway to becoming a prophet is to serve a lengthy apprenticeship as a Bible teacher. Fierce jealousy for the Word of God leads inexorably to a fierce jealousy for the God of the Word. Such jealousy is really the true prophet's ignition spark. My dear friend...be much on your face in His Presence with your head resting upon the Bible.

“And he came to a certain place and spent the night there, because the sun had set; and he took one of the stones of the place and put it under his head, and lay down in that place. And he had a dream, and behold, a ladder was set on the earth with its top reaching to heaven; and behold, the angels of God were ascending and descending on it.”  
(*Genesis 28.11-12*)

“Truly, truly, I say to you, you shall see the heavens opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man.”  
(*John 1.51*)

Let us be in touch.

God bless you in Jesus' Name.

*Peter.*



## *“Death to the Prophetic?”*

*Dear Friend,*

Thanks for such a swift response and forceful enquiry. I agree with you. That second quotation (“Competition and rivalry is instant death to the prophetic!”) definitely deserves immediate comment and expansion. I’m glad you picked up on it. If you hadn’t, I think I’d be very concerned about you personally.

It’s one of those mysterious God-statements that is in fact quite obvious, and yet you know for sure that within those few, simple words lurk all kinds of hidden depths of meaning which don’t merely deserve to be obtained, but must be quarried at all costs. To leave this kind of truth buried leads to multiple disasters...personal and communal. You ask if I think this statement is “over the top”. No! I would say that it is not only acute, but also completely accurate.

The Bible scorns such “selfish ambition”:

“But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your heart, do not be arrogant and so lie against the truth. This wisdom is not that which comes down from above, but is earthly, natural, demonic. For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there is disorder and every evil thing.” (*James 3.14-16*)

Now I do understand that these verses apply across the board; to the whole Church and to all ministries. And I also do believe that in the Western Church “competition and rivalry” is now totally out of control, especially amongst leaders, ministries and movements/denominations. The proof of this is the evident “disorder and every

evil thing...anarchy and all kinds of base deeds.” Where do I see such “anarchy”? In the behaviour of Christians who are simply a law unto themselves. They will sit in a church so long as everything goes along according to their agendas and personal likes and dislikes. Then when things go awry, some of these “saints” have no qualms whatsoever in rising up to attack their Fellowship’s shepherds and overseers, even to the point of threatening legal action and hinting at physical violence.

Where do I see “all kinds of base deeds”? In the trail of smashed up, virtually-destroyed people who lie like so much discarded litter in the wake of leaders who will stop at nothing to achieve their own ministry goals, which they do not hesitate to identify as being the absolute Will of God. The end never, ever justifies the means. Why? Because the means will largely shape and determine the kind of end we eventually reach. God’s government of us through human vessels was designed to create an atmosphere which is outstandingly “pure, peaceable, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, unwavering, without hypocrisy.” (*James 3.17*) Where ministers and ministries are in fact motivated or driven by “competition and rivalry” there will be manipulation, contention, aggression, intolerance, legalism, bad fruit, inconsistency, and double standards (one for the leaders and another for the people).

But the quotation we are pondering targets prophets in particular. Is that fair? Too right! But if “competition and rivalry” is off-limits to all ministers of the Gospel, then why pick especially on prophetic people? Because the bottom-line for the prophet is the responsibility of communicating the Word of God on behalf of God. The prophet alone, from time to time, will dare to say, “Thus says the Lord!” Of all ministries his is the most oracular...requiring immediate and moment-by-moment divine inspiration. There’s not going to be a huge margin of error here. And while none dare claim perfection or infallibility, there is a real sense in which the prophet either gets it or misses it! And so if the Word you bring makes you unpopular, then that’s tough. If the Word that you bring makes you popular, then that’s

tough too. Therefore a prophet cannot “have” or possess a ministry in the same way as an evangelist or a pastor or a teacher might.

One of the founding fathers of the 16th century Protestant Reformation, John Calvin, wrote an essay entitled “Impiety of Attributing a Visible Form to God”. It contains this phenomenal quote, “God is opposed to idols, that all may know He is the only fit witness to Himself.” Wow! That should rock every Christian communicator way, way back onto their haunches. It’s a powerful reminder that we are just so utterly dependent upon the Spirit of God to enable us to provide a “fit witness to Himself”. And of all ministers and preachers, the prophet must understand Himself as being most piteously and gloriously dependent upon Him to do his job. And even more he must recognize how utterly vile and deadly a menace to his mission will be the slightest whiff or hint of competition and rivalry!

Today there’s such a massive emphasis put on ministerial success along the lines of numbers. How many people come to your church or your meetings? How many people got saved? How many people got healed? How many people did you prophesy over? Were there lots of signs and wonders? How many demons did you cast out? (*Matthew 7.22-23*)

So you can see that when the prophet starts to head off down that comparing-pathway, he’s just begun to take a long walk off a short wharf; he’s a goner; he’s a dead duck. Why? Because where’s the rationale for competition for the postman who collects a letter on time and delivers it to the right person at the right address? Who are you racing when you receive a dream or a vision from God, and simply recount it with scrupulous honesty to the God-identified recipients? What are you going to brag about when you simply pass on a gift from God to one of His Blood-purchased children?

The moment the prophet begins to compare himself, his activities, his “results”, his prophesying with those of others, then his eyes and his

ears and his heart are off God. He's longing for something other than God; success, fame, a following, big offerings! And all of a sudden and oh so curiously his preaching and teaching and visions and prophesying begin to resemble that of those whose lives and results he admires and covets. And that sir is bound to end disastrously for all concerned; both the prophet and his star-struck followers!

Along these lines I think there's all too much of two things happening. One...the elevation of some prophets to almost popish status (infallibility and adulation?). And two...the denigration and destruction of other prophets who aren't prepared to toe "the (party) line" and play "the game". I'm sure a lot of this foolishness and dangerous nonsense could be majorly dealt to if only we would take *Hebrews 1.1-2* really seriously,

"God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world."

Jesus is The Prophet...and any others to whom that title or description may be attached had better be totally convicted and convinced of the following:

† If he is a prophet, it's only because he's a servant of The Prophet. ("Moses said, 'The Lord God shall raise up for you a prophet like me from your brethren; to Him you shall give heed in everything He says to you. And it shall be that every soul that does not heed that prophet shall be utterly destroyed from among the people.' " *Acts 3.22-23*)

† Jesus The Prophet's Ministry is completely comprehensive; ours is partial and fragmentary. ("For we know in part, and we prophesy in part." *1 Corinthians 13.9*)

† All of your speaking must be an expression of what is on the heart of The Prophet and in the end had better make the Son of God

(rather than the speaker) look great and wonderful and glorious.  
("For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." *Revelation*  
*19.10*)

Not too much scope left for odious comparisons and bragging after that I would have thought?

(Just as an aside...how different the Church would be today if those proclaiming themselves to be modern-day apostles actually regarded Jesus as being The Apostle according to *Hebrews 3.1*. And what if local pastors truly regarded Him as being The Great Shepherd, according to *Hebrews 13.20*?)

If you don't feel much like being a prophet after this literary outburst, then, dear friend, God bless you! And let us be in touch. If however you remain convinced God has laid His hand upon you for such a task, then, God bless you too! I look forward to hearing from you.

I employ the words of the Apostle John to say goodbye. I am "your companion in the distress, the kingdom and the faithful endurance to which Jesus calls us." (*Revelation 1.9*)

*Peter.*



## “Gold and Glory”

*Dear Friend.*

Yes! You did hear me say that the three things that hunt down preachers to destroy them are “girls, gold and glory”! And I want you to know that I meant it too. *1 Peter 5.8* is not jesting when it says that we should be of sober spirit and on the alert because “your adversary the devil, prowls about like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour”. In the Western Church right now our cocksure-ness just plain freaks me out. We are too confident and too cool by half, especially when I look around and see what’s happening to our world. Here in New Zealand we have the acceptance and legalising of “gay marriage” and escalating trivialisation of fornication and adultery as serious sins by a majority of Parliament. And all the while a breast-beating and bleating Christian community finds nothing to accuse itself of! This is extraordinary bearing in mind that it is the spiritual condition of the Church that directly and proportionally influences the moral state of the society in which it lives. No one seems to be asking the most basic question, “If the meat’s rotting, what’s the matter with the salt?” (*Luke 14.34-35*) This is all pretty plain and straightforward in *Proverbs 14.34* where the Lord teaches that “righteousness exalts a nation (right standing with God elevates a nation)”. Legislation that reflects God’s Word by itself is not going to lift us up and out of the moral quagmire we’re now sinking into. New Zealanders turning to Jesus one-by-one is what will eventually cause us to turn the moral corner and head for the high ground as a society.

Now I don’t really think we need to dwell overly long on the threat of sexual misconduct. It’s not rocket science figuring out that if you’re

alone, naked and horizontal with someone other than your husband or wife, then you're in deep trouble! From time to time some great one (the man of faith and power who turns out to be paste and flour!) will try to pull the stunt that he's different and so not subject to the Word of God. Hard to stomach in the clear, pure light of the Bible which clearly teaches that sexual activity must only ever take place between a man and a woman in a covenanted marriage relationship. When these fellows are finally exposed for their multiple fornicating and adultery they'll first of all try to persuade those calling them to account that they're spiritually special...in a league of their own...different from the peasantry and so not subject to God's Law. A great way to stay clean in this area is to beseech God to keep you humble, by hook or by crook...by His rod or staff. It's when we get deceived into thinking that we're famous or successful or powerful that our minds will track down the road of thinking we're God's gift to mankind (and women in particular) and so we deserve to get to sleep with as many as possible. If you get onto a power trip in the pulpit or on the podium, then it's only a very short walk to power tripping in motel bedrooms and brothels!

But for your sake I really want to focus attention on the threats of "gold and glory"; they're the really slippery customers. They're bringing men and women of God down constantly. But the way they "kill" is so stealthy...so subtle that no one really notices. These ministries can go on from one "success" to another, but in fact they're all dead men and women walking and talking. They're actually sliding into hell while all the while exhorting us to storm Heaven. You say to me, "Is that really possible?" Oh yes! What in the world do you think the Lord Jesus is talking about when He says to those who've been prophesying, casting out demons and performing many miracles in His name, "I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness (busy doing wrong)"? (*Matthew 7.21-23*)

There is really only a fine line between believing that God wants to take the very best care of us possible and really bless us in every

way, and our becoming addicted to wanting and needing more and more money and acquiring more and more of this world's wealth and property and subsequent prestige. Similarly, there are only a few short steps from hugely enjoying and appreciating the fruitfulness God gives when He is ministering through us to others, and becoming completely hooked on the notion that we're important, influential, successful and famous. And if we are not able to observe where these two lines in the sand are, then (as a Texan cop once said to me) "Boy, you're in a heap of trouble!" In fact it's much worse than that,

"There is a way which seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death." (*Proverbs 14.12*)

And how's this for a quote (out of the music industry!) addressing this very issue, "Once you become famous, you can think you're indestructible when you're only as good as your last song (sermon?). That's the truth and it's a good thing to stick to, otherwise you can end up deluded."

I do seriously believe that I've met preachers who really have become deluded along these very lines. They talk constantly about money, brag about big offerings they've taken and received, boast about their possessions and yet are still anxious for more. But confront them, and they'll stare at you in wide-eyed disbelief or attack you for being envious and wanting what's theirs. Likewise, some today that are claiming apostleship are merely and tragically deceived by their own delusions of grandeur. Usually they've embraced a spurious prophecy that encourages them to see themselves as "the chosen one" who alone will bring revival to their nation or lead their society out of the "wilderness" and into the "promised land".

What a very long way we've declined from the purity of the Apostle Paul, "For, I think, God has exhibited us apostles last of all, as men condemned to death...we are fools for Christ's sake...we are weak... we are without honour...to this present hour we are both hungry and thirsty, and are poorly clothed, and are roughly treated, and are

homeless...we have become as the scum of the world, the dregs of all things.” (*1 Corinthians 4.9-13*) And don’t think for even one moment that Paul was on some kind of a poverty trip! Listen to the balance and sanity contained in his letter to the Church at Philippi. “I know how to get along with humble means, and I know how to live amid abundance. Into all and every human experience I have been initiated – into plenty and hunger; into prosperity and want.” (*Philippians 4.12*)

A while ago I was reading an American history book. The author observed that “gold and God drew Europeans to the ‘New World’ ”. During the 1600’s the Puritan party of the Church of England believed Europe had failed to truly embrace and really pursue the Protestant Reformation of their church that God had initiated in the 1500’s. They undertook the extremely perilous journey across the Atlantic to glorify God by building the new society upon Biblically reformed foundations, believing that “God will bring some heavy affliction upon this land (England), and that speedily. But He will provide a shelter and hiding place for us and ours. We must consider that we shall be as a city upon a hill, the eyes of all peoples are upon us”.

However within the space of a very few, short years an alarm was being sounded. In the early 1700’s a Puritan preacher in Boston, Cotton Mather, was warning, “Religion brought forth prosperity, and the daughter destroyed the mother. There is a danger lest the enchantments of this world make them forget their errand into the wilderness.”

What happened? I believe that the pursuit of God and the pursuit of gold got too close, became tangled, and then the spiritual was polluted by the natural! And I am sure that this problem did not end back then; it has continued and deepened and escalated, and has now bled into the Western Church generally. Now don’t get me wrong! I love the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ in the United States of

America. I have served it in days gone by, and I'm intent upon serving it in the future. But some parts of the Body in that great country do have a lot to answer for because they haven't distinguished carefully and forcefully enough between the pursuit of God and a human lust for gold and personal glory! Too many ministries come across as being money-spinning ventures rather than soul-saving missions; personality platforms instead of glorifying God!

So, I can hear you asking, how do we avoid these terrible twins hunting us down to "kill" us stealthily. Well, the Bible says that we should "resist" our "adversary, the devil". (*1 Peter 5.8-9*) What does it mean to "resist"? It means to do the opposite of what he may be trying to do. When it comes to money, he'll try to get us to make it an idol so we become addicted to acquiring (by fair means or foul) more and more. God's remedy is to give it away...more and more. The mighty evangelist and leader of the First Great Awakening in Britain and the American colonies, George Whitefield, gathered and then gave away vast sums of money during that generation of revival. By today's standards millions of dollars passed through his hands, but it left neither stain nor mark, because it was sent on its way at high speed.

The same goes for seduction by success. The devil will try to get us around to thinking we're important, indispensable, the "man of power for the hour"...and all kinds of other sickening, self-promoting cliches. God's antidote to this fatal virus is humility. And not that nauseating, hand wringing, phony, cringing, passive subservience. Godly humility is a healthy and hearty passion that "He must increase (grow greater and more prominent), but I must decrease". (*John 3.30*)

It's a powerful and terrible spiritual irony and truth that if we get to believing we're something, then in Heaven's view you can pretty well guarantee that you're really amounting to nothing much. But if you truly understand that we need to become invisible so that the glory

and beauty of Jesus can blind others to all but Him, then you'll win Heaven's blessing and esteem.

"But many who are first will be last; and the last first."  
(*Matthew 19.30; 20.16; Mark 10.31; Luke 13.30*)

I can't put it any better than the preacher William Durham who calls to us out of the firestorm of the 1906 Azusa Street Revival. He recounts, "Shortly after God filled me, His Spirit rested mightily upon me one morning, and He said to me, 'If you were only small enough, I could do anything with you.' A great desire to be little, yea, to be nothing, came into my heart. But it has been oh so hard to keep low enough for Him to really work through me. And He only really uses me when I am little in my own eyes and really humble at His feet. When I feel that I must do something, He always lets me fail. But when I stay at His feet and feel that I am nothing, and that He is all, and so just trust Him, He does His work in such a beautiful way that it is wonderful to me.

"Let God's people everywhere begin to seek in deep, true humility. Then He will reveal Himself and His plan to them. One man with the real power of God upon him can do more than a thousand who go on their own account."

Let us be in touch.

God bless you in Jesus' Name.

*Peter.*

## “A Very Dirty Dog!”

*Dear Friend,*

What did I think of the very noisy and very different convictions and spirits poured out during the passing of the Civil Union Bill into Law by a cigarette paper-thin majority of our Parliament, and the undignified jostling and trumpet blowing accompanying the proliferation of “Christian” political parties? I thought you’d never ask. And my reply may strike you as a little obscure; a quote from the Swiss theologian, Karl Barth, “When politics enters the Church, it’s like a dirty dog coming into the formal lounge of a beautiful home.” And before you jump me with the standard Christian retort, “Well, who’s Karl Barth anyway, and why should I esteem his opinion above my own?” let me explain.

Although Swiss, he was teaching evangelical theology in Germany at the time of the rise of the Nazis and joined a small minority of Christians and church leaders who resisted Hitler’s grab for (secular and sacred) power. For his trouble Karl was dismissed from his university post and “exiled” back to his home country. The crux of the matter was not just Hitler’s quest for absolute power, but a willingness on the part of many Christians and their leaders to trade off the Lordship of Jesus. The superficial reason for this was that a majority of Germans were extremely fearful of a communist takeover of their country and had become utterly sick and tired of a morally and culturally decadent post-WW1 society. When Hitler appeared on the scene many saw in him and his movement a solution for their problems and were thus prepared to reduce Jesus’ absolute Headship over His Body, and relinquish varying portions of their Christian faith, loyalty

and devotion to the Fuhrer. The great cry of the Confessing Church (which resisted the National Socialists) was that Christians must obey Christ apart from all political influence. As Hitler tightened his grip on Germany and the national Lutheran Church one consequence was an environment in which preachers and pastors were only permitted to minister if they were deemed “politically reliable”. A truly vile proposition and political correctness gone completely berserk!

What on earth has this got to do with New Zealand at the moment? Well, it seems to me that some Christians here are more fearful than faithful right now. They fear the present Government which definitely appears almost fanatically determined to plunge us on through a series of social-engineering experiments aimed at turning us into a society where there is ever-diminishing evidence of and influence from our Christian history and heritage. Consequently our faith in the Lordship of Jesus is being put to the test, and some are beginning to be tempted to look about for a saviour alongside Jesus. And for all those who pursue this pathway, the end will be bitter disillusionment, followed by disaster and tragedy...as was the case for the Church in Germany in the mid-20th century. You think I’m being overly melodramatic? Well, hear me out for just a few more sentences. The real “seeds” (as opposed to the superficial) of the German Church’s near destruction are beginning to sprout anew and now, right here in His New Zealand Body...out of our own “soil”.

By and large 19th century Protestantism was in the grip of a kind of triumphalism brought on by a curious (some might say unholy) blend of industrial, colonial and missionary success. The upshot was the popularity of “Postmillennialist” teaching which anticipated a time when “Christianity generally prevails throughout the earth” and “Christ will return to a truly Christianized world”. Interestingly enough this dogma’s credibility and “popularity” took a mammoth hiding during the ferocious expose of the human race’s terrible fallen-ness and spiritual impotence during World Wars 1 and 2. J. Rodman Williams (“*Renewal Theology*”) caustically observes that it

then became an “endangered species”...when historical optimism went belly-up.

Nevertheless, I believe that Postmillennialism had sufficiently softened up and prepared the German Church to embrace Hitler. The Gospel from their own lips was not conquering their nation, so they were willing to give free reign to a man they believed might bring Heaven down through the passing of laws they hoped would relieve all their fears and anxieties by stamping out sinfulness and ushering in righteousness. In fact they got the opposite. Hell came up from beneath them and its fires burned night and day in the death camps, consuming more than all others God’s own Jewish People. Hitler was not governed by God in any way, shape or form, but possessed by satan himself!

It is not alarmist to say that the Western Church is now poised yet again for just such a suicidal tumble into this demonic abyss. This heresy is no longer presented under its old name, but is known variously as the “Reconstructionist” movement and “Dominion” theology. It’s the same old “dirty dog”...but with a different collar and tag! And it threatens to seduce the Church both here and overseas away from its true Last Days’ mandate to usher in and steward national and global Holy Ghost revival from coast to coast and sea to sea.

And what is this “dirty dog” barking from so many pulpits and lecterns today? Well, here are a few choice cuts from this rotting carcass:

† “Through generations of obedience, the godly will increasingly become competent and powerful, while the ungodly will grow weak and impotent.”

† “The Christian goal for the world is the universal development of Biblical theocratic republics, in which every area of life is redeemed and placed under the lordship of Christ and the rule of God’s law.”

† “The world eventually is to be Christianised, and the return of

Christ is to occur at the close of the long period of righteousness and peace called the 'Millennium'."

No Christian in their right mind would want these sentiments not to be true. But as noble and apparently inspired as they may all sound, the great question must be, "Is this philosophy in line with the revealed Will of God?" The plain answer is, "No!" No more than a kingdom can ever fully and completely be a kingdom without the king himself physically enthroned at its centre! And no more than an imperfect human being can ever build or maintain something perfect and therefore freed from the seeds of its own destruction. It is truly a demonic creed, as ancient as the devil's rebellion itself; a further and final attempt by him to build a kingdom with himself on the throne and God (if possible) at the other end of the universe. Nations are finally and only ever subdued – not by a church militant and political – but by the Lord Jesus Christ Himself...in person.

"He said to Me, 'You are My Son, today I have begotten You. Ask of Me, and I will surely give the nations as Your inheritance, and the very ends of the earth as Your possession. You shall break them with a rod of iron, You shall shatter them like earthenware.' " (*Psalms 2.7-9*)

"But when the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the angels with Him, then He will sit on His glorious throne. And all the nations will be gathered before Him; and He will separate them from one another, as the shepherd separates the sheep from the goats; and He will put the sheep on His right, and the goats on the left. Then the King will say to those on His right, 'Come, you who are blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.' " (*Matthew 25.31-34*)

"The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord, and of His Christ; and He will reign forever and ever." (*Revelation 11.15*)

"And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgement was given

to them. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of the testimony of Jesus and because of the word of God, and those who had not worshipped the beast or his image, and had not received the mark upon their forehead and upon their hand; and they came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.” (*Revelation 20.4*)

“The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and His servants will worship Him. They will see His face, and His name will be written on their foreheads. There will be no more night, and they will not need lamps or sunlight, because the Lord God will be their light, and they will rule as kings for ever and ever.” (*Revelation 22.3-5*)

Undoubtedly this matter will still be argued over even as the Lord appears in the air over us! But right now there is a very serious warning that arises out of this debate. Not only is the sub-Biblical notion that nations can be “Christianised” through “Christian” governments being aggressively pursued, but even more dangerously there are now church leaders who sincerely believe they have a mandate from Heaven to fulfill this themselves. These people sometimes claim apostleship, and they are anticipating and preparing to “govern” nations either alone or as a part of religious alliances now being constructed. They are working towards establishing theocracies with themselves as the heads. One of two things will overtake such people:

1. God will have mercy on them and they’ll “crash and burn”, as have others before them. Most instructive of these was John Alexander Dowie. Mistaking God’s success in healing the sick for his own, he set about building a theocratic city (Zion) close by Chicago in the early 1900’s. John Alexander planned to govern it alone and on God’s behalf, and attempted to create “conditions to approximate as nearly as possible those of the Millennium”. It all “turned to custard” overnight when he went public with the news that he was “Elijah the Restorer”. He was deceived concerning God’s broad purposes and consequently became mortally deceived

concerning the specifics of his own identity before the Lord.

2. They will find themselves in positions of power and authority and influence. But in the very instant of obtaining what they have so longed for they'll come to their senses and realize (too late) that they're no longer being moved by the Holy Spirit of God, but by demon powers, most especially the spirit of antichrist! (Opposed to Jesus being this world's sole ruler appointed and anointed by Heaven. "And the Lord will be king over all the earth; in that day the Lord will be the only one, and His name the only one. And it will be that whichever of the families of the earth does not go up to Jerusalem to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, there will be no rain on them." *Zechariah 14.9 & 17*)

My dear friend, I want you to navigate your way safely through these wonderful and brutal Last Days. If you believe that God is calling you to be a parliamentarian, then go for it with my blessing. Prove your call by getting elected and making a mighty impression for Jesus in those corridors of power. But be ready to hoe some hard rows, and do not forget one Christian politician's testimony, "When I came to parliament, all my dreams turned to ashes."

However, if you believe God has called you to be a preacher then get on your face and cry out night and day for Heaven-sent, Holy Spirit-driven, soul-saving, nation-reforming revival. New Zealand really and truly can become a Christian nation...when all of its citizens get born again!

"O Lord, tear the sky apart and come down; touch the mountains, and they will pour out smoke. Send flashes of lightning and scatter your enemies; shoot your arrows and send them running. Reach down from above, pull me out of the deep water, and rescue me." (*Psalms 144.5-7*)

"O, that You would rend the heavens and come down, that the mountains might quake at Your presence – as fire kindles the

brushwood, as fire causes water to boil – to make Your name known to Your adversaries, that the nations may tremble at Your presence.”  
(*Isaiah 64.1-2*)

Let us be in touch.

The Lord bless you and keep you.

*Peter.*



## “A Grubby Secret!”

*Dear Friend,*

Warmest regards. Thanks for your honest assessment of my “performance” at the recent meeting you attended. It was good to see you again and to have a bit of a catch-up afterwards. Nevertheless, I want you to know that I totally disagree with your criticism that I “lost it” and went “overboard in reaction and anger” as I preached and prophesied about the Church and money here in New Zealand. To be honest, I feel my response to you is like King David’s after his wife Michal whacked him for dancing and (in her opinion) making a fool of himself in front of the servants as he was rejoicing over the entrance of the Ark into Jerusalem.

“I will make myself yet more contemptible...more vile...than this, and I will be abased...put down...in your eyes.” (2 Samuel 6.22) My paraphrase would be, “Baby...you ain’t seen nothing yet!”

I no longer give a fig what people think of me or how I “come across” when it comes to this subject. I’m just utterly and absolutely sick and tired of how our attitudes to money are not merely a bit problematic; our corporate dishonesty and hypocrisy on this issue is systematically crippling us and God’s potential blessing upon us. Why on earth would we think He will pour out national revival when we’re so screwed up about dollars and cents; note how we’re categorically warned along these very lines in *Luke 16.11*,

“If therefore you have not been faithful in the use of unrighteous mammon, who will entrust the true riches to you?” I guess I would want to paraphrase that to read, “If you can’t be trusted with this

world's wealth, why would someone give you Heaven's riches?"

I still quite literally quake in my boots when I recall revival meetings around New Zealand during the 1990's. Time and time again I watched Christians drinking the revival cup dry and all the while they adamantly refused to regularly give a tenth of their incomes to their home church and ignored opportunities to give offerings and make love gifts. In local church after local church I also witnessed pastors and leaders standing night and day under an open heaven, knowingly allowing their flocks to get away with theft and also miss out on the benefits of God's law of sowing and reaping. (*Galatians 6.6-10*) Some of these leaders reminded me of those Jesus fiercely scorched during the days of His earthly ministry,

"But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, for you shut off the kingdom of heaven from men; for you do not enter in yourselves, nor do you allow those who are entering to go in." (*Matthew 23.13*)

"Woe to you lawyers! For you have taken away the key of knowledge; you did not enter in yourselves, and those who were entering in you hindered." (*Luke 11.52*)

In the light of this very general phenomenon I now ask the question, "Did the 90's Revival simply die of neglect, or did God also withdraw His Presence and blessing from people who had perverted a covenant of grace into an unending succession of freebies?" Very early on in my 12-year itinerant ministry I learnt two very important things; that I was never going to "make a living" out of preaching and prophesying and that the Lord was always more than happy to generously over-supply in His making up for us financial short-falls. A number of the churches I ministered in were extravagantly generous in their care of Penny and me; but significantly more were careless or even miserly. Now the sharp-end of these comments of mine has nothing to do with grievance, complaint or disappointment. I just really and truly want to see the Body of Christ here get its act together concerning finance and begin to move in the abundance of provision God has to

offer, and which Jesus died on the Cross to obtain for us. About a year ago He spoke to me along these lines, that hitherto we had prayed for finance to fulfill our vision, but He had made provision for us where we would have to cry out to Him for more vision to utilize all the money He wants to pour into our laps. I preached this up and down the country. But I could see the visible struggle going on in the hearts of so many (especially leaders)...they just couldn't let go of their wallets long enough for God to get a hold of them.

If this letter is a gun, then I guess I want to point it at three particular groups of Christians!

1. Those pastors and leaders who over-preach the money issue, presenting the tithe or tenth of our income being brought into their church as a religious law and so a condition of being within the New Covenant. That's heresy plain and simple! What I note with great interest about these fellows is that they seem more concerned for their own salaries and possessions than they do about their church's income and the deployment of that money to release more and more people into fruitful ministry here and overseas.
2. Those ministries that teach that the practice of tithing to your home church is an Old Testament law which has now been rendered redundant and obsolete. Their message crudely put usually is, "Tithing is religious legalism. Under the New Covenant you're freed from that and now you're only required to give as God leads and directs." The fruit of this teaching is spiritual superiority and poverty...finance becomes a private matter or "no-go" area, and local churches struggle to make ends meet financially because giving is more often than not less than a tenth per person and extremely irregular or spasmodic.
3. Christians who belong to local churches where tithing is taught as a good idea rather than practiced, who do not tithe but allow others to think they do. These people often make a great show and

flourish as they very publicly drop their carefully sealed envelopes into the tithe basket. In fact these envelopes contain only what's left over after they've paid all their bills and secured their houses, cars and a mid-winter tropical holiday.

All of the above (plus some other ingredients I won't go into right now) go together to make up the New Zealand (and I suspect the Western) Church's grubby little secret!

So, dear friend, here goes...bombs away!

Tithing or giving a tenth of our income to our home church is a part of the Covenant of Grace. In *Genesis 14.17-24* Abraham (the "father" of those who walk with God by faith...*Galatians 3.7*) gave "a tenth of all" to Melchizedek king of Salem ("made like unto the Son of God"...*Hebrews 7.3*). The Holy Spirit makes it perfectly clear in *Hebrews 7* that tithing under the Old Covenant has not been superseded or negated by not tithing...but has been supplanted by tithing by faith and grace. "And, so to speak, through Abraham even Levi, who received tithes, paid tithes, for he was still in the loins of his father when Melchizedek met him." (*Verses 9-10*)

So tithing cannot be pressed as a law, nor can it be rejected because it is a law. Under the New Covenant tithing is just the beginning of our obedience so far as finance is concerned. Yes, to be sure we are now free to listen to the Lord and give away our money as He directs. But what He says will never under any circumstances be any less than the Law stipulates; it will in fact always be more!

"For the law, since it has only a shadow of the good things to come... possessed only a dim outline of the benefits Christ would bring...gave only a dim foretaste of the good things Christ would do for us." (*Hebrews 10.1*)

"Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish, but to fulfill...to bring them to perfection...to make their teachings come true. For truly I say to you, until heaven

and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass away from the Law, until all is accomplished...until it is all in force.”  
(*Matthew 5.17-18*)

“You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall not commit adultery’; but I say to you, that everyone who looks on a woman to lust for her has committed adultery with her already in his heart.”  
(*Matthew 5.27-28*)

It is flea-bitten nonsense to ever believe or teach that the Covenant of Grace will require or evoke less obedience and fruit than the Covenant of Law and Works! And yet that is what so many expect and appear to desire today. The way we handle our money definitely is God’s business, and the glaringly obvious fact that by-and-large our church coffers are not overflowing 24/7 is testimony to our trying to cheat “the system”. I’ve been quietly ploughing around the Body of Christ all over this country for the past 12 years (and then some) and I’ve always taken a keen (but covert) interest in individual churches’ finances. Here are some figures for you to suck on:

According to reasonably recent government statistics, the average weekly wage is \$800 and the minimum weekly wage permitted is \$340. Let’s take the mean of that, which is \$570; so there’s an extremely average Kiwi tithe of \$57. Thus...

A local church with 50 earners ought to have weekly tithes and offerings totaling at least \$2,850 and an annual income of \$148,200.

A local church with 100 earners ought to have weekly tithes and offerings of at least \$5,700 and an annual income of \$296,400.

A local church with 150 earners ought to have weekly tithes and offerings of at least \$8,550 and an annual income of \$444,600.

And so on, and so on! Actually the numbers become more and more impressive.

I reckon these figures are absolutely rock bottom...the bare minimum...

the starting point! So why mention them at all? Because I'm prepared to swing way out on the twiggy end of the willow branch and say that a majority of churches in New Zealand would think they'd died and gone to Heaven if their weekly incomes matched these figures. They don't, because we're cheating and lying and many who are in leadership know that this is going on and they're conniving in this monumental scandal and fraud which eclipses by several light years any other hidden sins and grubby secrets we may be trying to hide under the proverbial ecclesiastical double bed.

Here's the bottom line. If every Christian in New Zealand set their heart to bring a tenth of whatever income they might get (even if it's a welfare benefit or pocket money) into their local church home, and then add on top of that whatever more the Holy Spirit would ask of them, national revival would hit us just as swiftly and as powerfully as a bolt of lightning. How come? Because when God sees we're prepared to do things His way with this world's temporary and comparatively worthless riches, then I'm positive He will pour out upon us the true and eternal riches of His Presence which can overwhelm whole nations and put them on their faces before the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

"How long will you hesitate between two opinions? If the Lord is God, follow Him; but if Baal, follow him." (*1Kings 18.21*)

"No servant can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one, and love the other, or else he will hold to one, and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon (riches)." (*Luke 16.13*)

So you see, dear friend, I cannot apologise for my most recent outburst on this subject...there are probably more to follow, especially if things don't change dramatically soon! But so far as my own heart motivation is concerned I do believe that I can sincerely say with the Apostle Paul,

"Even when I was in Thessalonica, you sent money more than once

for my needs. It is not the money I am anxious for; what I am anxious for is the interest that accumulates in this way to your divine credit.”  
(*Philippians 4.16-17*)

The Lord bless you and keep you.

*Peter.*



## *“Mysterious Israel”*

*Dear Friend.*

I guess you never imagined a coffee in a café could be so spectacular. That was a fair-dinkum demonic manifestation we both witnessed, and yet the sad thing is that not everyone at our table saw it for what it was. Who would have thought such a fleeting reference to Israel could start WW3; yet I must say I find that's not really so very unusual, especially amongst neo-Pentecostal leaders!

In his letter to the Church in Rome, Apostle Paul describes the whole subject of Israel's ongoing existence and destiny as a “mystery”. Now today too many Christians by far balk at any suggestion of “mystery”, but in truth it's the very essence and heart of what we are, because Christianity is first and last a revealed religion. When Paul uses the word “mystery” he's not talking about a paperback thriller or whodunit. He means divine and sacred Truth that cannot possibly be naturally obtained through human reason; it's only known by the revelation of God. That's why certain kinds of Christian personalities simply will not tolerate any mention of mystery...their human insecurities and intellectual pride get discombobulated and overturned. They don't need to be confused over the difference between having faith and being a know-it-all!

So, the Holy Spirit through Paul declares for all time that “I do not want you, brethren, to be uninformed (ignorant) of this mystery, lest you be wise in your own estimation (self-opinionated and conceited), that a partial hardening has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in; and thus all Israel will be saved; just as it is

written.” (*Romans 11.25-26*) The guts of what is being stated infallibly here is that Israel’s mysterious survival through the ages will always baffle (even frustrate and outrage) human understanding, but all will be made clear at the end of the Church Age when “all Israel” accepts our Lord Jesus Christ as their Messiah! In the meantime we had better be extremely careful concerning this subject and constantly open and teachable; the alternative is that we end up little more than loud-mouthed dummies (on this as well as other crucial issues) who are so far-up ourselves that we’re coming back down the other way!

First of all then the demonic eruption of the other morning. I think I’ve talked to you quite a bit about some of the extremely hostile and irrational opposition I ran into when I returned from a 7-day stint praying for revival at the Western Wall in Jerusalem, and then burst into print about it. Initially I thought this was simply a very understandable human reaction on the part of harassed local church pastors who have probably been repeatedly verbally bashed by “do-your-own-thing” Christians masquerading as lovers of Israel. But the phenomenon of Christian leaders (especially Pentecostals) flipping-out and becoming frothy-mouthed with hostility has I believe a much more serious root. It is anti-Semitism...and that I assure you is a whole lot more than prejudice against Jews. Anti-Semitism is a spiritual pollutant dumped into human nature by satan himself which has as its objective the complete removal...the obliteration...of all Jews from off the face of the earth. The devil knows (better than a lot of Christians) that it has been ordained that Jesus will return to be this world’s King of kings when His own Jewish kin (served and sustained by a humbled Gentile Church) call out to Him to come and be their Messiah.

“For I say to you, from now on you shall not see Me until you say, ‘Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord...the Messiah.’ ” (*Matthew 23.39*)

Satan insanely believes he can actually expunge them; he will believe

that right up to the last microsecond before his own incarceration. (*Revelation 20.1-3*) This demonic kind of madness has already been witnessed in recent history in Germany at the end of WW2. The Nazi death-machine continued to murder Jewish people after it knew for sure that it had been defeated by the Allies and was doomed! What is truly horrifying for us today is the ongoing willingness of Christians to participate in this programme of destruction...by theological annihilation. Teaching which proposes that the Church has replaced Israel, as the inheritor of God's prophetically promised blessings is a blatant sidelining of His Old Covenant People, with a view to their becoming non-existent spiritually and then physically.

I was astonished recently to find this destructive vein of teaching buried in the collected works of a man whose life, ministry and doctrine are even today absolutely fundamental to the modern Pentecostal and Charismatic movements. He is John Alexander Dowie who was based in Chicago at the dawn of the 20th Century. He was a most remarkable and wonderful Christian leader who by his passion for healing and vision for the restoration of apostolic leadership to the Church, pioneered much that is Godly and marvellous and which we take for granted today. But tragically for him and also for us this is what he had to say concerning the mystery of Israel,

"I gladly record my profound conviction that every prophecy God said would be fulfilled in the national Israel is being fulfilled in the Anglo-Saxon race today."

Whew! That is a deceptive time bomb...and it's still ticking in the minds of many today and they're probably not even aware of it. The only antidote is the Truth.

So, what then is this "mystery" which will find its ultimate expression in the "fullness of the Gentiles" coming into the Kingdom of God and "all Israel" being saved? Surely a matter of such seriousness and import that it deserves our ultimate attention, rather than the yawning disinterest or snarling hostility all too often expressed at the upper end

of some ecclesiastical circles!

Well, in a nutshell the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob has kept His Jewish People in existence through close to 2000 years of apostasy (“We have no king but Caesar.”) so that He can be glorified at the end of this Age by their universal acceptance of Jesus as Lord and Saviour and Messiah. Now that’s the plain-sailing part of the mystery; the really tough bit is how this is going to be accomplished! I need to say that right now a considerable portion of the Church is split into two parties so far as Israel is concerned:

1. The Replacement “theologians” who have long dismissed Israel’s existence and destiny as being scarcely worth considering. For them the Church has replaced Israel and that’s that. If the State of Israel survives...so what? If Jewish people become Christians...that’s okay, especially if they’re attracted to “our” particular denominational brand. As the end of this Age approaches these folks are going to find it increasingly difficult (and finally impossible) to resist the temptation to join the world’s bleating and blaming (which will be backed up by military force) of Israel for all of the Middle East’s problems, including terrorism! (One of the major skids that enabled Hitler to slither into power was his unrelenting carping against the Jews for creating and causing all of “poor” Germany’s problems.)
2. The Israel “glee club” made up of romantically-minded Christians who appear to have staked their faith on things getting bigger and brighter and better for the State of Israel. Israel is going to smash all its enemies as it reclaims its “Davidic” borders (they claim) and the Temple will be rebuilt and the sacrifices reconstituted...and then finally Jesus will return beaming His approval at a messianic kingdom brimming with fleshly hubris created without any assistance from Him. As reality begins to bite, it’s quite possible such people will shipwreck their faith on the unyielding rocks of world history.

What we ought to be doing (by way of keeping ourselves on the End Times' straight-and-narrow) is to go on enthusiastically being positively mystified by mysterious Israel. That way, I reckon, there's a good chance God Himself will continue to unveil the invisible, communicate the conundrum and explain the incomprehensible. Which is, in essence, that life for God's Jewish People all around the world (and most especially in The Land) is going to deteriorate from bad to worse to near disastrous. But amazingly and gloriously in the midst of this slide into chaos, our great God is going to move with ever-increasing grace and glory to turn His Old Covenant People to Jesus in ever-increasing numbers.

“Behold, I am going to make Jerusalem a cup that causes reeling to all the peoples around; and when the siege is against Jerusalem, it will also be against Judah...And I will pour out on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and of supplication, so they will look on Me whom they have pierced; and they will mourn for Him, as one mourns for an only son, and they will weep bitterly over Him, like the bitter weeping over a first-born...In that day a fountain will be opened for the house of David and for the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for impurity...For I will gather all the nations against Jerusalem to battle, and the city will be captured, the houses plundered, the women ravished, and half of the city exiled, but the rest of the people will not be cut off from the city. Then the Lord will go forth and fight against those nations as when He fights on a day of battle. And in that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives...And the Lord will be king over all the earth; in that day the Lord will be the only one, and His name the only one.” (*Zechariah 12.2&10; 13.1; 14.2-4&9*)

During this extraordinary scenario Paul's prophecy will be completely fulfilled and “all Israel will be saved; just as it is written, ‘The Deliverer will come from Zion, He will remove ungodliness from Jacob.’ ‘And this is My Covenant with them, when I take away their sins.’...For God's gifts and call are irrevocable...He does not change His mind

about those to whom He gives His grace and to whom He sends His call.” (*Romans 11.26-27&29*)

And that massive returning is then going to hugely impact the Gentile world ushering in unprecedented global revival as predicted by *Romans 11.15*, “For if their (the Jews) rejection be the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead?” What can that mean except the final outpouring of the Holy Spirit, followed immediately by the glorious return of Jesus which will trigger the first resurrection of the dead? “For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all shall be made alive. But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, after that those who are Christ’s at His coming.” (*1 Corinthians 15.22-23*)

I would go so far as to say dear friend, that Believers who are unwilling or incapable of embracing the mystery of mysterious Israel are setting themselves up for rocky roads and rough rides through the years just ahead. Those who are determined to ignore Israel’s (state and people) existence and significance will discover their whole vision so twisted out of whack, there’s the gravest danger that black will appear as white and north seem to be south! US prophet Art Katz brilliantly portrays this stunning dynamic when he says, “Nothing more reveals God as God as seen in His dealings with Israel. To separate ourselves therefore from Israel and the Prophets of Israel, is to totally put us away from the hearing of God’s prophets.”

And for those ones who have set their hearts on witnessing an Israel continually ascendant and triumphant (bristling defiantly at even the slightest whiff of a suggestion of any further chastening) there awaits at best disappointment and at worst profound and bitterest disillusionment...leading perhaps even to a complete loss of faith in God Himself!

Our fleshly minds and hearts quail and whimper in the face of such apparent contradiction; that God would continue to love those who have so prolongedly rejected His Love, and that His ultimate blessing

of the Jewish Race will be poured out during the time of their final and greatest trial. But that is precisely the mystery...and the Church had better stop choking on it right now if we are ever going to obtain the kind of spiritual stature these last Last Days (minus the Rapture escape-hatch) will absolutely require of us all.

Good swallowing and God bless you.

*Peter.*



## “Nuts and Fruit Loops”

*Dear Friend,*

Warmest regards. Thanks for your rapid and fulsome reply to my last letter concerning “mysterious Israel”. I want you to know that I accept unreservedly your concerned comments about this issue seeming to attract much, much more than its fair share of God’s “odd-squad”... like moths to a flame. As I’ve already said, many local church pastors are uptight and defensive about the whole subject because they’ve been cornered and “bashed” once too often. A while ago a woman collared me during a conference and gave me a pretty fierce jawing along the lines of, “You pastors should be preaching thus and so about Israel, and doing this and that for Israel...yap-yap-yap!” I attempted to staunch this aggressive monologue with the simple question, “Where are you from...where’s your home church?” Well, that was petrol on the fire for sure! An abbreviated and very rough paraphrase of her response (complete with rolling eyeballs and flying spit) would be, “Mind your own bleeping business...who are you to question me...I move around the Body of Christ as I’m led...I’ve yet to find a church or pastor I approve of or that’s good enough for me!” That kind of Israel enthusiast brings reproach upon a holy subject; shame on them!

Quite recently I visited a couple of friends who run a store. They had just been more than a little shaken by the visit of a couple proclaiming themselves to be prophets of God. Their behaviour in the shop (toward both the proprietors and customers) started out being inappropriate, became intrusive and then overbearing. However, when these “prophets” were asked to be polite or quietly move on, all hell really

did break loose with everyone present copping some kind of cheap shot, put-down or abuse. All of this took place under the guise of the prophetic. Such outrageously unbiblical and Holy Spirit-insulting carry-on is a disgrace to any human being, let alone Christians. It causes the genuinely prophetic which has come down from Heaven to be treated with suspicion and even contempt.

So, what's the deal with people and behaviour that the sinful world would never accept as being decent and honourable and sane, being excused, tolerated and even accepted in the House of God? No doubt there are many reasons and contributing factors. But I really want to concentrate on one in particular...competitiveness over ministry which has infected and contaminated pretty well the whole of the Body of Christ. In some Church denominations and movements it can be quite discreet and almost "civilised"; in others it's back to the law of the jungle...claws unsheathed and teeth bared for the brawling, mad-scramble for more and more f-words...fame, followers and finance! This fleshy lusting has opened the door to demons which have managed to create a weirdness amongst us which attaches a sort of glamour and status to some ministries and not to others, which obviously and utterly contradicts,

"Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are varieties of ministries, but the same Lord. And there are varieties of effects, but the same God who works all things in all persons. But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good." (*1 Corinthians 12.4-7*)

"Aha", I can hear the spiritual athletes braying, "We've got him cornered now. What about, 'But earnestly desire the greater gifts... Desire earnestly spiritual gifts, but especially that you may prophesy... Desire earnestly to prophesy'?" (*1 Corinthians 12.31,14.1&39*) Well, God has said what He has said and that's that. But is He really egging His People on into a hair-pulling, mud-slinging struggle to be some kind of ecclesiastical top dogs? Never forgetting that the dark-side of

competitiveness is jealousy. This has to be one of the most corrosive and destructive of all human emotions...leading as it so often does in affairs of the heart to homicide! Its spiritual outworking is even more ruinous, if that's possible. Satan's fall from Heaven began with jealousy; he was jealous of God's place, despised his own position, lunged for the unattainable and now thousands of years later is still in the process of losing everything. This same twisted, demonic drive lay at the root of the leaders of Israel rejecting their very own Messiah, "For he knew that because of envy they had delivered Him up." (*Matthew 27.18*)

I'm quite sure that in exhorting us to always strive for the best, God wants us to respect and honour what He respects and honours and in fact holds extremely precious – His callings, gifts and ministries. Did He foresee that giving the gifts of His Spirit to the Church was going to be like throwing "pearls before swine"? I do think that's the case because we have trampled them beneath our feet by idolising the Gifts of the Spirit more than we love the Spirit of the Gifts; then we turn and start to tear each other to pieces in a bid for spiritual supremacy, all in fulfillment of *Matthew 7.6*.

For some particularly bizarre reason (which I have yet to figure out) in the minds of some people being a prophet "takes the cake". In fact I knew a pastor who was slammed up against the wall (figuratively) by a newly arrived "prophet" and informed he was taking over because the Bible says in *1 Corinthians 12.28* that God has appointed in the Church, "first apostles, second prophets, third teachers..." This fellow did in indeed try to run the fellowship by prophesying from the back row in contradiction of decisions made by the pastor and his eldership! This "prophet" would have done well to get acquainted with the Word of God before he presumed to speak a word from God...for example,

"For, I think, God has exhibited us apostles last of all."  
(*1 Corinthians 4.9*)

“You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great men exercise authority over them. It is not so among you, but whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be your slave; just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.” (*Matthew 20.25-28*)

“Then it seemed good to the apostles and the elders with the whole church, to choose men from among them to send to Antioch...and they sent this letter by them, ‘The apostles and the brethren who are elders to the brethren in Antioch...it seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us...’ ” (*Acts 15.22,23,28*)

“Remember those who led you, who spoke the word of God to you; and considering the result of their conduct, imitate their faith... Obey your leaders, and submit to them; for they keep watch over your souls, as those who will give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with grief, for this would be unprofitable for you.” (*Hebrews 13.7&17*)

Now this whole mad carry-on is mighty peculiar, especially when you consider and recall that in the New Testament prophets get very few headlines, and in the Old Testament more often than not the seers ended up dead before their time.

“Therefore, behold, I am sending you prophets and wise men and scribes; some of them you will kill and crucify, and some of them you will scourge in your synagogues, and persecute from city to city, that upon you may fall the guilt of all the righteous blood shed on earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah, the son of Berechiah, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar...O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her!” (*Matthew 23.34-35&37*)

“And the Lord, the God of their fathers, sent words to them again and again by His messengers, because He had compassion on His

people and on His dwelling place; but they continually mocked the messengers of God, despised His words and scoffed at His prophets, until the wrath of the Lord arose against His people, until there was no remedy.” (2 Chronicles 36.15-16)

“(John answered and said) He must increase, but I must decrease.” (John 3.30)

The tragedy in all of this is twofold: True prophets’ voices are lost in the hubbub and static of too many other voices, and other equally valuable ministries are stillborn because their vessels are in love with an idea about themselves that is just plain and simple not of God. It really is possible for a Christian to spend their whole life making out that they’re prophetic or a prophet, when all the while the Holy Spirit has ordained that they be a teacher or a minister of compassion and mercy. I cannot begin to describe to you the ache that attaches itself to my heart when I contemplate this scenario...which actually occurs much more prolifically than the Church is prepared to consider or acknowledge. It is a full-blown tragedy and a monumental disaster, not only because ministries and manifestations of the Spirit never see the light of day, but also because those who are not genuinely prophetic do cause huge problems and immense damage to others by insisting that their own imaginings and thoughts (all too often very negative and hyper judgmental) are the very words of the Lord.

At the very best such folk can become pseudo-prophets...imitating others and even “stealing” the messages and visions and dreams of true prophets. At worst they may become false prophets (not only because they will inevitably make mistakes) but because as they are moved more and more by influences other than the Holy Spirit, they may become the spiritual playthings of demons who will then work to seduce those foolish enough to listen to follow satan himself, disguised as an “angel of light”. (2 Corinthians 11.14)

I have met pseudo prophets, and I’m always severely shaken and upset by their driven insistence that they be acknowledged as prophets and

called prophets and bowed down to as prophets... even before they've uttered anything that can be tested against the Bible or submitted their manner of life for scrutiny by the leaders of those local churches they claim to have been sent to.

I cannot help but contrast all this froth and hoop-la with the life of Muri Thompson. For many, many years up until the early 1990's Muri faithfully served God here in New Zealand and in other nations as a true and genuine prophet of God. In fact I would go so far as to say that in his time (and probably right on up until this present day) he was the prophet to New Zealand...he had no peer. As Elijah was to Israel, so he was to Aotearoa-New Zealand. I believe that I grew to know him quite well, and spent a good deal of time in his company through the latter years of his life. But I never, ever heard him go on and on about being a prophet of God. In fact the only conversation which came anywhere near the subject went something like this. He said to me, "Oh, the other day so-and-so said that I was a prophet. I'm not too sure what to think about that. Does it really matter all that much...titles and names and such-like?"

Praise the Lord and Hallelujah! Go you true prophet of God! Muri was very powerful and fruitful evangelistically throughout his life, and I think that for the most part he was quite comfortable to think of himself and be thought of by others as an evangelist. But so far as I was concerned he was the prophet...and I esteemed him, and walked with him, and listened to him and honoured him as such.

"It is not good to eat much honey, nor is it glory to search out one's own glory." (*Proverbs 25.27*)

"Let another praise you, and not your own mouth; a stranger, and not your own lips." (*Proverbs 27.2*)

"For not he who commends himself is approved, but whom the Lord commends." (*2 Corinthians 10.18*)

What am I trying to say here? Above all things Muri made manifest

the divine diffidence...the humility of the Holy Spirit. That's the benchmark of the authentic...the genuine. I loved him for that. Church leaders often walked all over him and badmouthed him behind his back. I'm sure he hated being treated that way, but I seldom ever heard a squeak of complaint from him. But man oh man, when God turned him loose in the pulpit the fire fell and the sparks flew and you just knew a window into Heaven was open right over his head and God's voice was booming out, flattening all gain-saying, contradiction and compromise.

There's a mysterious passage in *Zechariah*, which I think may have some relevance to this "conversation". It's in *chapter 13, verses 1-6*,

"Also it will come about in that day that the prophets will each be ashamed of his vision when he prophesies, and they will not put on a hairy robe in order to deceive; but he will say, 'I am not a prophet; I am a tiller of the ground, for a man sold me as a slave in my youth.' And one will say to him, 'What are these wounds between your arms?' Then he will say, 'Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends.' " (*Verses 4-6*)

Now the context is the wild and tumultuous days immediately before the Lord Jesus returns to be "king over all the earth...the only one". (14.9) Israel is under political and military attack from all sides, and seems to be close to some form of terrible defeat and catastrophe. And yet in the midst of all of this the Holy Spirit is moving phenomenally powerfully through The Land and Jewish communities all over the world, awakening them to Jesus of Nazareth being their longed-for Messiah. Now I know that the clear and obvious interpretation of *verses 4-6* is that false prophets among God's Old Testament People are going to disappear as more and more Israelis and Jews are born again.

But I also foresee and predict that in the Last Days the Word of the Lord is going to be exceedingly precious, and for it God is going to be exceedingly jealous. How will this take place? God is going to see to

it that being a prophet or having a prophetic ministry is going to cease being trendy, “in” or even desirable. Those who are pseudo prophets won’t want anything to do with the subject; the true prophets of God will have no choice. They just are who God has made them to be, and they’ll go on being who they are, come rain or shine, night or day, an open Heaven or a martyr’s shallow grave!

“The Lord called Me from the womb; from the body of My mother He named Me. And He made My mouth like a sharp sword.”  
(*Isaiah 49.1-2*)

Here Isaiah is clearly prophesying concerning the Lord Jesus. But it is also his own testimony concerning his prophetic calling.

“Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I have appointed you a prophet to the nations.” (*Jeremiah 1.5*)

The great 16th Century reformer of the Church, Martin Luther did not wake up one morning and decide to join the Reformation because that was a good way to jump on the ecclesiastical celebrity bandwagon. He was just a man who was so in the grip of a holy God that even under the threat of being outlawed, hunted down and murdered he could only say, “Here I stand. God help me, I can do no other. My conscience is held captive by the Word of God.” Genuine Last Days’ prophets will be thus mantled and motivated.

God bless you.

*Peter.*

## “Noonday Devil”

*Dear Friend.*

For as long as I live I shall never cease to be grateful to God for laying the bulk of my spiritual foundations in a Trappist monastery. This for any number of good reasons, but chiefly for learning that prayer is real work, as valid as preaching or counselling. But also because that was where I met the Desert Fathers. “The what?” I hear you exclaim, in true Pentecostal style...as if God never did anything, anywhere until the Pentecostal movement came into being! (Just joking, pastor!) Well, the Desert Fathers (and Mothers too!) were really a grassroots, mass movement of a spiritual kind which was triggered around the mid-4th century when Christianity suddenly became “legal” and thus respectable throughout the Roman Empire. Stirred and led by the Holy Spirit these dear and slightly crazy folk (singly and in groups) fled the cities and moved into wild, deserted places, built fragile willow huts and set to work praying for the salvation of all the world and the rescuing of the Church from the hands of Born again bureaucrats and ecclesiastical wheelers and dealers. Their understanding and living of the Gospel was entirely literal and so astonishingly radical. For example, one of these Fathers returned to his little shelter to find robbers dragging out his few possessions and loading them onto their mules. He just joined in and helped them. Suddenly the thieves noticed and asked who he was and what he thought he was doing. He explained he was the monk who lived there and that he was helping them (according to *Matthew 5.40*, “And if anyone wants to sue you, and take your shirt, let him have your coat also.”) to steal his belongings. They all instantly came under

the conviction of the Holy Spirit, returned his gear, gave their hearts to God, built their own rustic homes nearby and joined him in his prayer mission. Very cool, I'd say! (And quite a contrast to 21st century capitalistic Christianity!)

I mention all of this because the Desert Fathers (who were truly a manifestation of the prophetic Spirit) recognised as their mortal enemy the "noonday devil". Today we would call this influence depression; they saw a demon that lurked around prophetic people seeking to overwhelm them with feelings of disappointment, disillusionment, depression and despair, and causing them to give up...chuck in the towel. I choose to see both, and all together they still remain the seer's deadly foe.

Now, let me hasten to point out that depression is not merely a prophetic problem to be fixed up; it's an occupational hazard which must at all costs be handled God's way. If not, then the consequences are potentially tragic; the wrong "cure" can be worse than the illness!

The genuine prophet is created by God thin-skinned; in fact they will tell you from time to time (most especially immediately after a public meeting) that they feel like they've got no skin at all; every nerve ending is exposed and jangling. Why? Surely such a condition must be a design fault?

Well, right from the very start of his prophetic pilgrimage the great Jeremiah displayed this hypersensitivity and vulnerability. When God first called him to his mission, he didn't respond with swaggering self-confidence or bloated self-importance, but rather, "Alas, Lord God! Behold I do not know how to speak, because I am a youth." (1.6) What a remarkable and refreshing contrast to much of today's Bible college-boosted braggadocio and "apostolically" approved grandstanding. And as the prophet really began to engage his task and hit up against the sinful adamancy of God's very own people he let slip, "My soul, my soul! I am in anguish! Oh, my heart! My heart is pounding in

me; I cannot be silent, because I have heard, O my soul, the sound of the trumpet, the alarm of war.” (4.19) “Oh, that my head were waters, and my eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people. O that I had in the desert a wayfarers’ lodging place; that I might leave my people, and go from them! For all of them are adulterers, an assembly of treacherous men.” (9.1-2) Slowly but surely disappointment slid into disillusionment and depression, “Woe to me, my mother, that you have borne me as a man of strife and a man of contention to all the land! I have neither lent, nor have men lent money to me, yet everyone curses me. I did not sit in the circle of merry-makers, nor did I exult. Because of Your hand upon me I sat alone, for You did fill me with indignation.” (15.10&17) And finally the utter despair of seeing a shattered Jerusalem, the evidence of his “failed” ministry, “Even when I cry out and call for help, He shuts out my prayer. He has blocked my ways with hewn stone; He has made my paths crooked. And He has broken my teeth with gravel; He has made me cower in the dust. And my soul has been rejected from peace; I have forgotten happiness. So I say, ‘My strength has perished, and so has my hope from the Lord.’ ” (*Lamentations 3.8-9&16-18*)

In fact Jeremiah was not a failure. Even as he trudged from disappointment to disillusionment and then on into depression and despair, he was succeeding marvellously because He remained upright, kept on loving God, and relentlessly preached God’s unwelcome Words. “Your words were found and I ate them, and Your words became for me a joy and the delight of my heart.” (*Jeremiah 15.16*)

Now don’t get me wrong. From a human point of view and in the normal course of events, depression must be recognised and treated promptly. Nevertheless, what I’m setting before you in the strongest possible terms is the reality that prophets also need to recognise and treat depression, but in somewhat different ways.

One of the very best definitions of a prophet I’ve read in recent days, I

stumbled on in a tribute to a great New Zealand poet and writer. He was described as being,

“A shining man with too few skins.”

Prophetic people of necessity are more prone to depression precisely because they lack the thickness of “skin” necessary to cope with having to look at the very corruption their vocation requires. They are God’s whistle blowers; writing the headlines no one wants to read; digging up the dead bodies in the Church’s backyard that no one wants to acknowledge. If they try to cope by numbing their senses with “drugs” or by growing extra skin they render themselves insensitive to the very matters God wants to scorch their souls (and the Church’s) with. Ironically the Christians who are often most in need of this prophetic insight are likely to have armoured themselves against such views and feelings, and will turn on the despairing prophet and his “depressing” vision with all guns blazing, and then some! By and large at the moment the Western Church’s culture is dominated and determined by “tiger” Christians...men of the flesh (I call them) as opposed to men of the Spirit. They are ultra gung-ho, not really very interested in other people and their trials, and would sell their grannies to white slavers if it meant clawing their way a little higher up the big ecclesiastical Christmas tree. They love having other leaders come visit their churches, especially if they have a strong gift of prophecy and can line the whole congregation up and send them home smiling with a nifty little personal word. These, they acclaim prophets. They are no such thing. How dare I say that? How do I know that? Because they’re thick skinned, hard nosed boover boys, just like their pals who invited them in the first place.

The prophet’s vocation is dirty work indeed. Through the seer’s mortal, quaking flesh God identifies the disease and releases the remedy. I think it’s not unfair today to say that modern Western evangelical, charismatic, and pentecostal Christianity wants the remedy without having to face up to the illness. As the old song says, “Everyone wants

to go to Heaven, but nobody wants to die.” Right from the word go, this reality was nailed (so to speak) to Jeremiah’s forehead,

“See, I have appointed you this day over the nations and over the kingdoms, to pluck up and to break down, to destroy and to overthrow, to build and to plant.” (1.10)

I dismiss out of hand those claiming prophetic insight and authority who do nothing but “break down...destroy...overthrow”. Equally I’m never going to be in league with the “peace, peace” brigade. No sir, if you’re really a prophet then you’re going to have to take the rough with the smooth; and sometimes the rough will be very rough indeed...there’ll always be more dirt tracks than freeways. And if that’s not to your taste, then jump off this particular ministry wagon now before it’s too late.

(And just as an aside, sometimes genuine prophets do get genuinely angry. God’s self-appointed spiritual advisors relish this opportunity as an excuse to get out from under an exacting word from the Lord. But from time to time it’s okay to cut loose and smack the pulpit over or smash the offering plates. The venting of such feelings has been exquisitely described as “the rage of outraged tenderness”).

So, the assaults of the noonday devil are not from God, but they are one consequence of how He “wires” the prophetic personality. “Fix up” that hypersensitivity and vulnerability and be “delivered” from glowering at ecclesiastical corruption and you will simply cease being what the Lord has created you to be.

So, in the first instance you can learn to live with this calling’s consequences by embracing Christ’s Cross and carrying your own,

“The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him in order that we may be glorified with Him.” (*Romans 8.16-17*)

“Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I do my share on behalf of His body (which is the Church) in filling up that which is lacking in Christ’s afflictions.” (*Colossians 1.24*)

“If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever wishes to save his life shall lose it; but whoever loses his life for My sake shall find it.” (*Matthew 16.24-25*)

A major lesson from the 16th century Protestant Reformation is that the opposite of what we think is wrong is not automatically right. For example, Catholics took Communion every day, so the good Scots Presbyterians took it only every 3 months. Catholics gave their pope autonomous authority, so the good Baptists handed their congregations so much democratic power that they could (at times whimsically) hire and fire their own leaders. And most pertinent to this essay, some Catholics had made a cult of suffering...hairshirts, flagellation, and pilgrimage on bloodied knees. So, how did the noble Protestants handle that? Easy...all suffering (they determined) is a consequence of personal sin and demonic attack. Both “theologies” are Bible warping and howlingly wrong for the Scriptures plainly teach,

“But He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; the chastening for our well-being fell upon Him, and by His scourging we are healed.” (*Isaiah 53.5*)

“For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us.” (*Romans 8.18*)

“Just as it is written, ‘For Your sake we are being put to death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered.’” (*Roman 8.36*)

So dear friend, suffering is an inevitable part of the prophetic calling. But you won’t make it through to the “finish line” just by gritting your teeth and enduring. You will have to grit your teeth and endure

for sure. But you win your “race” in the midst of all the blood, spit and manure that is this strange ministry, by staring fixedly at the Son until He has blinded you with His glory to all but Himself. “Let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith.” (*Hebrews 12.1-2*) The uncollected garbage, the overflowing sewage and the decomposing corpses will melt into the oblivion of the unreality of the sin to which they belong for that prophet who through abandoned worship obliges God to consume Him with the flame of His divine love.

This surely is the ultimate challenge for the prophet...to allow ourselves to be quite literally clubbed to the ground and rendered almost senseless by all that is most vile and corrupt and wrong with all of us, His beloved People. And then to be raised back to life again as we see no one but Him, listen to none but Him, obey none but Him, and worship and adore none but Him.

“That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death; in order that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.” (*Philippians 3.10-11*)

Hence my long held conviction that the true prophet of God is first and foremost not the wild eyed, dagger tongued executioner of sinners. Neither is he a fortune telling whiz kid. He is before all else (by a couple of hundred country miles) a worshipper of God. He is the one who weeps quickly every time He hears the Son of God cry,

“An hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and truth; for such people the Father seeks to be His worshipers. God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.” (*John 4.23-24*)

He (or of course she) is the one who desires right now to join the four living creatures in Heaven who night and day do not cease to say, “Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God, the Almighty, who was and

who is and who is to come.” (*Revelation 4.8*) His ambition is to sneak in amongst the 24 elders who “fall down before Him who sits on the throne and worship Him who lives forever and ever”. He’ll try to borrow a crown so he can join them as they “cast their crowns before the throne, saying, ‘Worthy are You, our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honour and power’.” (*10-11*)

I anticipate in these Last Days that the prophetic stakes are going to be tremendously (even frighteningly) high; it is going to be so utterly critical that God’s voice is heard loudly above all other voices. Therefore it is truly possible that the Lord may render certain seers literally deaf and blind. They will physically be incapable of hearing and seeing anything material. The only communications they receive will be from the Holy Spirit. Do you think this a little extreme? Maybe. But then does not the Lord Himself speak in the most extreme manner about historical events immediately before He returns,

“For then there will be a great tribulation such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever shall. And unless those days had been cut short, no life would have been saved; but for the sake of the elect those days shall be cut short. For false christs and false prophets will arise and will show great signs and wonders, so as to mislead, if possible, even the elect.” (*Matthew 24.22&24*)

As the time grows short, I pray that you and I will somehow be mysteriously linked to Peter and James and John after the Lord’s transfiguration, “And lifting up their eyes, they saw no one, except Jesus Himself alone.” (*Matthew 17.8*)

The Lord bless you and keep you.

*Peter.*

## *“The Word or A Word”*

*Dear Friend.*

Here is a great irony for you to ponder. The big debate between orthodox and liberal Christians has always been, “Is the Bible the word of God, or does it contain the word of God?” I think there is little need for you and me to debate this. I’m sure we’re both settled in the belief that when Timothy in his second letter said that “all Scripture is inspired by God” (3.16), he meant that every word from *Genesis 1.1* to *Revelation 22.21* came out of the Lord’s mouth and is consequently charged with the fullness of His light, truth and power. What is ironic for today’s prophetic movement – if such a thing actually exists! – is that it is (unwittingly?) hosting a very similar debate which, if not satisfactorily resolved, will lead well-intentioned Christians seriously astray.

The current question runs along these lines, “Is modern prophecy the word of God, or does it contain the word of God?”

My concern is not academic; I’m not merely casting about for obscure matters to correspond with you about. I’m exercised in this regard because basically good folks are painting themselves into tight corners, motivated by the conviction that they are “carrying the word of the Lord”. I always feel uncomfortable when approached after meetings by Christians wanting me to read (“right now”) screeds of prophecy they’ve been recording and storing up for years. I do not doubt their sincerity. But they seem quite sure that I’ll immediately want to set to one side my own preaching and teaching material, and begin to proclaim their messages from pulpits up and down the land. When

I point out that they might want to trust God to open doors of utterance for them personally, their smiles freeze and fragments of anger begin to bubble to the surface. If I suggest they might want to go “home” and share their prophetic insights with the leaders of their local church, I can quite quickly find myself on the receiving end of a litany of complaint against pastors,

“My pastor doesn’t recognise the prophetic.” (In other words, “My pastor doesn’t recognise me as a prophet.”)

“My pastor doesn’t listen to the Holy Spirit.” (“My pastor doesn’t listen to me.”)

“My pastor quenches the Holy Spirit.” (“My pastor won’t let me do whatever I want, without any reference to him or the eldership.”)

At this point in the exchange I’m often struck out for suggesting, “Well, if your pastor’s that useless, you’d better go and find a church with a halfway decent leader.” That idea’s not well received either!

I hesitate to mention this, but will. Many people pursuing this way of thinking are often affected by the spirit of witchcraft. “Impossible,” I hear you squawk. The root of witchcraft is the desire to control others using spiritual influence. Many Christians are drawn to the prophetic precisely because it is a powerful spiritual gift and by its holy exercise great power and influence may be released for good. It is dangerous territory indeed if you come to believe that you have the word of the Lord for another person and set about strenuously enforcing that. I’ve been too often shaken to the core by this kind of language, “This is what God is saying to you and you’d better listen and you’d better do as you’re told or God’s going to punish you.” That’s witchcraft plain and simple; a desire to control expressed through manipulation and intimidation. In terms of healing the kind of personality that thinks it’s okay to behave in this way...well, nothing’s impossible for God. However, this kind of sick and sinful nonsense can be resoundingly stopped in its tracks by a heartfelt acknowledgement (on the part of

the speaker and the listener) that while the Bible is truly the word of God from cover to cover, the very best we can hope for is that our prophesying may contain some words from God.

“Do not quench the Spirit; do not despise prophetic utterances. But examine everything carefully; hold fast to that which is good.”  
(*1 Thessalonians 5.19-21*)

How much plainer do we need this to be? The local church must be that place where the Holy Spirit feels welcome, more than anywhere else, and the place where those who love Him feel safe and at liberty to prophesy. But that very freedom and security will be dependent upon it also being an environment where every word of prophecy is “examined...carefully” so that the chaff is separated from the good wheat which the congregation can then confidently “hold fast”. This text is clearly teaching that our prophesying may contain words from God; it is not as a whole the word of the Lord!

This fundamental truth is adamantly asserted also in *1 Corinthians 13.8-13*. Anticipating the glory of the Lord’s Second Coming, Paul contrasts our present and future relationship with Him, “For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then I shall know fully just as I also have been fully known.” (*v12*) All of our knowledge in this Church Age is partial; neither complete nor absolute. And so he teaches, “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. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part; but when the perfect comes (when Jesus returns!), the partial will be done away.” (*v8-10*)

The unconditional and uncomplicated acceptance of this truth requires of all Christians the greatest humility. For those desiring or claiming any kind of prophetic authority, it demands something more...abnegation!

Wow! You think that maybe I’m losing it, my dear friend? Possibly.

But that's a risk I'm prepared to take on this subject. I've seen too many good people derailed or injured by a sub-Biblical view of prophecy. I want that damage and harm to come to an end. If this letter to you helps slow this runaway train of heresy, then I just praise the Lord. If the infallible-prophet brigade comes after me with daggers drawn... then so be it. This is one smelly corpse in the Church's backyard that needs to be dug up and finally disposed of properly.

So what's all this "abnegation" carry on anyway? Surely a generous shovel of humility's sufficient? "Abnegation" is advanced self-denial, and that's what it's going to take for any who plan to be even part way useful to God as prophets in these Last Days. In practical terms this means an ultimate kind of embracing of His Cross and our crosses. So, if you prophesy, dream or see a vision then your responsibility is to faithfully and carefully record and report it. That's your job done and dusted. Now here's the hard part, which so many (desiring honour and applause) stumble over. Your word, dream or vision ceases to be "yours" the moment you hang it out in public. This is the part where so many falter and faint. Every kind of prophetic communication from God is going to contain His thoughts...and our thoughts; His Words...and our words. So our hanging it out there, so to speak, is an absolutely necessary part of a divine process. Why? It gives God the necessary opportunity to send along instruments of His choosing (most especially local church leaders!) to peck away the flesh and leave the bones.

"But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh. For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit."  
*(Galatians 5.16)*

"For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh; for the wishing is present in me, but the doing of the good is not."  
*(Romans 7.18)*

"Because for me the word of the Lord has resulted in reproach and derision all day long. But I will say, 'I will not remember Him or

“speak any more of His name,’ then in my heart it becomes like a burning fire shut up in my bones; and I am weary of holding it in, and I cannot endure it.” (*Jeremiah 20.8-9*)

“For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow.” (*Hebrews 4.12*)

For those unwilling to walk this particularly low road, the consequences are going to be monumentally smelly. The more they try to cling to the fleshly aspects of their revelations, the more the temporary tissue will rot and stink and adversely affect others. The tragedy is that if there truly are any genuinely prophetic bones, they’ll be lost beneath the putrefying flesh the prophetic wannabe is so keen to cling to. And what does that flesh represent but our human desire to be influential...to be seen, heard, taken seriously, and applauded. All such lust obscures the bare bones of His words; an immense error on the part of anyone claiming to love His utterances above all others!

I believe that there is actually something immensely tough and robust about God’s words. He only asks us to communicate and obey them. They do not need our protection or adornment.

“I have sworn by Myself, the word has gone forth from My mouth in righteousness and will not turn back, that to me every knee will bow, every tongue will swear allegiance.” (*Isaiah 45.23*)

“My purpose will be established, and I will accomplish all My good pleasure.” (*Isaiah 46.10*)

“For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return there without watering the earth, and making it bear and sprout, and furnishing seed to the sower and bread to the eater; so shall My word be which goes forth from My mouth; it shall not return to Me empty, without accomplishing what I desire, and without succeeding in the matter for which I sent it.” (*Isaiah 55.11*)

“For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass away from the Law, until all is accomplished.” (*Matthew 5.18*)

“Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words shall not pass away.” (*Matthew 24.35*)

“What then? If some did not believe, their unbelief will not nullify the faithfulness of God, will it? May it never be! Rather, let God be found true, though every man be found a liar, as it is written, ‘That You might be justified in Your words, and might prevail when You enter into judgement.’ ” (*Romans 3.3-4*)

“It is a trustworthy statement... If we are faithless, He remains faithful; for He cannot deny Himself.” (*2 Timothy 2.11&13*)

God bless you.

*Peter.*

## “*Apostolic Shambles*”

*Dear Friend.*

Yes, you are quite right. I have been prophesying and looking for the wholesale restoration of apostles and apostolic ministries to the Church for quite a few years now. To date, I’m just downright disappointed by the monumental shambles that is parading itself as apostolic or neo-apostolic at the moment. (I choose the word “shambles” because it means “a state of complete disorder”; it’s what a butcher’s slaughterhouse used to be called!) Now of course that’s not going to go down too well in some quarters. But I don’t care. The gulf between what God has gifted to His Body and what we’ve made of it is a great travesty!

So, what have I been looking for? What has the Lord been restoring to us? Essentially, His government of His People immediately before He returns to rule all the nations. But what He is seeking to implement now, bears no relation to what is second nature to the flesh, world and devil.

“You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great men exercise authority over them.” (*Matthew 20.25*)

The unholy three’s only way of conceiving “government” in both church and state is either the tyranny of the one over the many (dictatorship), or the tyranny of the majority over the minority (democracy). Prior to the Reformation, tyrannical government was the order of the day via kings and popes. Since then Protestantism has been seduced by various manifestations of secular and religious democracy. It continues to strike me as queer indeed that Protestants who are so clear-eyed concerning the fallibility of an infallible pope,

are so utterly blind to their own equally stupid notion that a majority of God's People are sure to be right. Great balls of fire! What lunacy. A while ago an earnest pastor cornered me and instructed me along the lines, "Brother, the great majority of my people are assured that we are headed in the direction of God's will." I think I upset him a bit by replying, "Well, of this you may be sure. All that your great majority signifies is that most of your people have the same opinion. As to whether or not that is within a bull's roar of the will of God is anybody's guess!" Smiles faded... again.

The "apostolic revolution" which so many have been trumpeting in recent years ought to be addressing the substantial gaps in the Church's foundations caused by all manner of humanistic rather than divine government. It's entirely about the Church being built on God's foundations, which are,

"And I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock (Christ, the Son of the living God) I will build My church; and the gates of Hades shall not overpower it." (*Matthew 16.18*)

"You are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God's household, having been built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner stone." (*Ephesians 2.19-20*)

Don't freak out here...this really is going to be a letter, not a book! The true apostolic revolution (as opposed to devil-ution!) is all about God's prerogative and right to build His House on His foundation, which consists of apostles and prophets sovereignly created and welded together by Jesus. This is the only "construction" that has the strength to bear the weight of those other leadership (usually pastoral, teaching, evangelistic) ministries necessary for the life and health of local church life. Does this mean that every local church has to be led by an apostle and prophet? Certainly not! But it will always mean that the various combinations of pastor-teacher-evangelist who usually do lead locally, must be joined in profound, heart-to-heart, practical

relationship with teams of apostles and prophets as the Lord leads. (Some of these might be resident; others not.)

This is made as clear as can be in the precedent-setting event recorded in *Acts 15*. The infant Christian local church movement is under threat from the heretical “Jesus plus religious deeds that gratify the flesh” brigade. The Church had to make a decision. Did human beings get put right with God by trusting Jesus alone to put them right, or was it really “necessary to circumcise them, and to direct them to observe the Law of Moses”? (v5) It is not too far wide of the mark to say that if the Church had dipped out on this issue, Christianity may never have broken free to become the fulfillment of Judaism. It might have remained a momentary blip-like splinter group overshadowed by the Temple.

So, how did it pan out? Of course because we’ve read right to the end of the Book we know that they did get it right. “For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us to lay upon you no greater burden than these essentials: that you abstain from things sacrificed to idols and from blood and from things strangled and from fornication; if you keep yourselves free from such things, you will do well.” (vs 28-29) But who exactly are the “us” who made this correct decision under the Holy Spirit?

Well, as best I can make out from the text, the “us” were apostles (including Peter and James), prophets (including Judas and Silas) and other leadership ministries at the meeting included under the heading “the brethren who are elders”.

Our accurate understanding and activation of exactly what God is trying to achieve through His creation of apostolic leadership teams hinges on this text in *Mark 9.33-35*, “He began to question them, ‘What were you discussing on the way?’ But they kept silent, for on the way they had discussed with one another which of them was the greatest. And sitting down, He called the twelve and said to them, ‘If anyone wants to be first, he shall be last of all, and servant of all.’ ”

Who were meant to get this message? The twelve apostles! And obviously (at least to me) the Lord wants to drive home beyond any shadow of a doubt the number one core apostolic value. If you want to be first, you are definitely going to be last. If you want to be at the top, then you must be on the bottom. Now, is He spinning here a little folksy wisdom, along the quaint old-fashioned lines of, “One day son this’ll all be yours...but you’re going to have to start at the bottom and work your way to the top”? That may be how the business world used to be run, and how to a greater or lesser extent through the centuries the Church has operated. (Youth pastor, pastor, senior pastor and so on up the “stairway to heaven”.) But the Lord Jesus is not saying that. He’s talking about the construction of His Body, His House, and His Kingdom. He said that if you are an apostle, then you must be at the bottom of the heap. Paul certainly got that when he said in *1 Corinthians 4.9&13*, “I think, God has exhibited us apostles last – lowest – of all...we have become as the scum of the world, the dregs of all things.” That’s where the foundations always are; not up in the clouds, but down in the dirt. A house built with the top at the bottom and the bottom at the top is going to be a wreckage...a shambles. And that’s precisely what the neo-apostles are doing to God’s Church. They say that they’ve come to bring order; but they’re bringing confusion. They say they’ve come to build, but they’re really wreckers.

God help us! He’s trying to reform us in readiness for His return. They’re greedily grasping His gift of leadership, perverting it to their own selfish pursuit of power, wealth and honour, and then trying to make out that the existence of their movements is a sign that His Kingdom is going to be established on earth without the King whose return they’ve agreed to postpone for 100 years or so. And as if this isn’t enough. Various neo (pseudo) apostolic movements are now fighting amongst themselves to see who amongst them is *el supremo*...the boss of bosses.

The Lord Jesus Christ Himself, and none other, is “the Apostle...of our confession”. (*Hebrews 3.1*)

Now look here, how does some of the nonsense going on at this moment stack up against that. The Apostle said, “The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head.” (*Matthew 8.20*) Meantime the neo-apostles boast that their personal ownership of multiple homes and properties is actually proof that God has sent them. The Apostle began recruiting disciples “walking by the Sea of Galilee”. (*Matthew 4.18*) Today’s would-be apostles brag amongst themselves and to their followers about the huge amounts of money they’ve paid to be seen driving around in some of the most expensive cars on our roads. The Apostle said (as hired assassins hunted Him down), “Put your sword back in its place; for all those who take up the sword shall perish by the sword. Or do you think that I cannot appeal to My Father, and He will at once put at My disposal more than twelve legions of angels.” (*Matthew 26. 52-53*) Modern apostolic personalities seem unable to conceive of an existence apart from being attended upon by a staff of PA’s and minders and even bodyguards.

Now I’m quite sure that among those claiming apostleship today are some “God has sent”. (*John 3.34*) Clearly there are those who have just morphed themselves as if by magic from pastors or evangelists or prophets into apostles for no better reason than keeping up with the play or hacking out for themselves a small grubstake in the great ecclesiastical jungle. I’d just say to them, “Stop trying to hog the spotlight and get back to your place before the Fire falls and you’re left looking like turkeys just hit by lightning in an electrical storm.” And to those who are the genuine article I’d say, “Get off your high horses; get off your thrones and get down low. If you do do that then there is a chance that you won’t lose your head when the Sword of the Spirit scythes over His House from one end to the other, and God may then be able to employ you as a foundation stone to rest and establish the lives and the ministries of many others upon you.”

“It is not so among you, but whoever wishes to be great among you shall be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you shall

be your slave; just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.” (*Matthew 20.26-28*)

“And do not be called leaders; for One is your Leader, that is, Christ. But the greatest among you shall be your servant. And whoever exalts himself shall be humbled; and whoever humbles himself shall be exalted.” (*Matthew 23.10-12*)

“The foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner stone, in whom the whole building, being fitted together is growing into a holy temple in the Lord; in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.” (*Ephesians 2.20-22*)

On one of the many occasions when the great Ezekiel went toe-to-toe with the religious establishment of his day, he lacerated the prophetic in-crowd by observing, “The prophets mislead My People by saying that all is well. All is certainly not well. My People have put up a wall of loose stones, and then the prophets have come and covered it with whitewash. Tell the prophets that their wall is going to fall down. I will send a pouring rain. Hailstones will fall on it, and a strong wind will blow against it. The wall will collapse, and everyone will ask you what good the whitewash did.” (*13.10-12*)

The reason the stone wall falls is because its foundations are not right. Everything built on top therefore is rickety. It doesn't matter how flash you try to make it look. You can race from apostolic conference to apostolic conference in your own private jet, but the foundation's crook, the stones are teetering, and it will fall down. This is a done deal especially when God says, “I intend to break down the wall they whitewashed, to shatter it, and to leave the foundation stones bare (exposed). It will collapse and kill you all. Then everyone will know that I am the Lord.” (*13-14*)

Because these are in fact the Last Days, I greatly fear that the anger of God is going to burst out against all that claims to be apostolic-

prophetic and is not. And it will be the fury of love; His love for His flock. Why should His children have to pass through the bitter disillusionment and pain of being in a building they believe to be His House when it's really not and is about to implode and collapse. Better by far for the handful of pseudo apostles and prophets to have their lives cut short, than for His Body to be maimed and crippled because of the ego-driven selfishness and self-aggrandisement of a bunch of modern day pentecostal popes and charismatic cardinals.

All is not well. All is most definitely not well. My friend, if you believe that you know someone who thinks that they're an apostle, then get down on to your face and start crying out for them to get an apostolic revelation and call exactly like Paul's. He's a prototype for End Time' apostles. Notice how he called himself "one untimely born". (*1 Corinthians 15.8*) Most interpret this as meaning he was slow off the mark accepting Jesus. (Which indeed he was.) But "untimely born" in this text means "early". What? I believe that Jesus is the Apostle for all time, but Paul is slipstreaming him in these Last Days. How come? Well, Paul like us today could not lay claim to the original qualification for apostleship. You had to have been with the Twelve "all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us – beginning with the baptism of John, until the day that He was taken up from us – one of these should become a witness with us of His resurrection". (*Acts 1.21-22*) So what were his qualifications, and what should today's criteria be? Interestingly these are most clearly expounded by him to that church where an influential group questioned and even denied his apostleship – the Corinthians. I believe these are,

- † Revelation – "For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received...that He appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve... and last of all, as it were to one untimely born, He appeared to me also." (*1 Corinthians 15.3-8*)
- † Humility – "For I am the least of the apostles, who am not fit to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God."

(1 Corinthians 15.9) “And because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, for this reason, to keep me from exalting myself, there was given me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of satan to buffet me – to keep me from exalting myself.” (2 Corinthians 12.7)

† Fatherhood – “For if you have countless tutors in Christ, yet you would not have many fathers; for in Christ Jesus I became your father through the Gospel.” (1 Corinthians 4.15)

† Power – “The signs of a true apostle were performed among you with all perseverance by signs and wonders and miracles.” (2 Corinthians 12.12)

God bless you.

*Peter.*

## “Scatological Eschatology”

*Dear Friend.*

First of all, let me apologise unreservedly for giving you both barrels at close quarters. Of course I accept that you were not trying to wind me up deliberately, but you sure as heck hit a raw nerve. However that doesn't excuse the verbal hurricane you got caught up in. Sorry. Secondly, let me say again that I totally reject and utterly refute your statement that because men of God you know and respect have very different (even opposing) convictions concerning the return of the Lord, you're therefore justified in putting the whole subject in the “Too Hard” basket. I said then, and I say again now, “That position is just sheer gutlessness!” Under the Old Covenant men with damaged testicles were disqualified from the priesthood. How come today under the New, preachers with none at all are occupying pulpits?

The plain fact of the matter is that concerning the Second Coming the Holy Spirit declares, “Now as to the times and the epochs, brethren, you have no need of anything to be written to you. For you yourselves know full well that the day of the Lord will come just like a thief in the night...But you, brethren, are not in darkness, that the day should overtake you like a thief; for you are all sons of light and sons of day. We are not of night nor of darkness; so then let us not sleep as others do, but let us be alert and sober.” (*1 Thessalonians 5.1-6*)

And then, along similar lines He says, “Does a lion roar in the forest when he has no prey? Does a young lion growl from his den unless he has captured something...If a trumpet is blown in a city will not the people tremble? Surely the Lord God does nothing unless He

reveals His secret counsel to His servants the prophets. A lion has roared! Who will not fear? The Lord God has spoken! Who can but prophesy?" (*Amos 3.4-8*)

Does this mean it's possible to know all there is to know about the Last Days, as some seem to portray by their attitude in the pulpit and the content of their preaching? Don't be completely daft. It means that what God chooses to reveal concerning the lead up to His King's ultimate manifestation and coronation can be known. Just because it's tough and demanding to study this subject with integrity, and just because so many Christian luminaries disagree, doesn't mean we can all chuck in the towel and retreat to "safer" ground. If we do determine to sidestep the issue, we're actually ignoring and avoiding a pillar of the Truth. As Paul pointed out in *Titus 2.13* we all ought to be constantly on the look for our "blessed - greatest, ultimate - hope", which is "the appearing of the glory of our great God and saviour, Christ Jesus".

I haven't got the slightest intention of bulldozing you with my eschatology (the study of history's final events) here and now. You can read most of that in my other writings. For example, in "Elijah Must Come" and "The Jerusalem Revival". But in this letter I really want to try and help you identify and target those issues that are making theological and moral cowards out of some at this time.

The number one enemy is our need as preachers to be proven right! Now that is really just another eruption of the ever-festering spiritual cancer of self-righteousness, described by the prophet Isaiah as being like "filthy rags". (64.6) The days immediately after America's tragedy of 9/11 illustrated this graphically. Preachers (and even some so-called prophets) who had hitherto avoided Last Day's topics like the plague, were hanging out of their pulpits and swinging off their lecterns hooting and hollering about the nearness of Jesus' return. Why? Because it suddenly seemed possible...even probable? It's a full-blown tragedy that so many of those loud voices have since fallen

silent; gradually struck dumb. By what? By the growing muteness all around them, for they were not at any point really listening to God. They're too busy listening to one another. " 'Therefore behold, I am against the prophets,' says the Lord, 'who steal My words from each other.' " (*Jeremiah 23.30*)

They've now cooled off yet again and returned to feeding their flocks (who are in fact God's Flock) an unsubstantial diet of mush and slop...all about how to be happy and fulfilled and have more money than you can shake a stick at! The so-called "seeker friendly" church movements are really striving to be user friendly. In other words, the "customer" is always right. Give the kids whatever they want to eat, even if it's junk food. Eventually it will cause their teeth to rot, arteries to clog and hearts to stop beating. Just keep them happy until they drop dead, and then give them a friendly funeral. What about God?

But there's actually something more important than the preacher or the leader being right! And it is listening to God and then being humble enough to stand in front of His People and say, "I don't know everything about everything, and I certainly don't have all the answers to all of your questions. But this is what the Holy Spirit is saying to me now, and seeing as you've asked me to speak to you today, I'm going to tell you what's in my heart and on my mind." And there's also something a whole lot worse than being wrong, and that's being silent because of intimidation. "His watchmen...are dumb dogs unable to bark...they are shepherds who have no understanding; they have all turned to their own way. Each one to his unjust gain, to the last one." (*Isaiah 56.10-11*) Under these circumstances it is possible for Christian communicators to end up like the idols excoriated by Jeremiah, "Like a scarecrow in a cucumber field are they, and they cannot speak...Do not fear them, for they can do no harm, nor can they do any good." (*10.5*)

Secondly, our own personal likes and dislikes, desires and fears can

corrupt our study of the Bible, especially when it comes to the end of this Church Age. There are leaders who dismiss out of hand any consideration of the subject simply because they say they're unable to conceive of (comprehend, understand) life with Jesus physically present, enthroned in Jerusalem and governing all the nations. So having made their own intellects the measure of all things, they've actually blacked out sizable tracts of the Scriptures. I have admitted many times that I personally find it easier to embrace the concept of Jesus returning as King of kings than I do understanding God as an embryo in the womb of an adolescent peasant girl. But the Word of God says it and so I believe it! His conception, birth, death, resurrection, ascension and return...they are all together part-and-parcel of the whole Gospel. Choke over one portion and you're liable to vomit out the whole lot...if you're not very careful.

I really do not believe that our differences are doctrinal; they have more to do with the fripperies of personal preference. One resolutely clings to the belief that the Church is going to be raptured off the earth and into Heaven before history plunges into the great tribulation ahead of the Lord's reappearance. Does such a view really deserve to stand, propped up by the slimmest of vague references in the Bible? Or does fierce adherence to this belief have more to do with an elitist and childish Western view that Christianity and suffering are mutually exclusive? Another adamantly teaches that His return will be delayed indefinitely until His People can establish theocratic governments in nations all over the world. Again, can this belief be sustained by careful study of the Word, or is it really just a notion that appeals to those whose pride cannot stomach belonging to anything less than a Church that is both militant and triumphant?

The Lord Jesus said, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me." (Matthew 16.24) First and foremost, if we are really ever going to be capable of studying the Bible with any degree of purity and integrity, then we need to put ourselves to "death". Anything within us that rises up to resist what is

plainly written there has to die, as does all and every impulse within us that wants to have a go at getting God's will to fit around us, rather than us submitting to His eternal purpose.

It is plainly taught that “as they were gazing intently into the sky while He was departing, behold two men in white clothing stood beside them; and they also said, ‘Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into the sky? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in just the same way as you have watched Him go into heaven.’ ” (*Acts 1.10-11*) I don't think anyone can expect any revelation from God concerning this subject, until and unless they first of all settle in their hearts and minds once and for all that His return will be sovereign; as seems best to God so far as the what, where, when, who, how and why are concerned. Our florid fascination and obsession with rapture, tribulation, beasts and 666 is really a gigantic smokescreen behind which we endlessly try to find ways of either permanently delaying Him, and rewriting the script to get the kind of scenario we feel we deserve because we're “King's kids”. I say shame on all this wheeling and dealing, wheedling and doodling! The signs of the times have long been indicating we need to be before Him in an attitude of the utmost humility. Rather than promoting our various and conflicting scatological eschatologies and smilingly (like crocodiles) sniping at those who disagree with us, we ought to be asking for His daily bread of revelation...and not lusting after the “holy grail” of a book or a tape or a timeline that will render us all-knowing and bullet-proof so far as our knowledge of His return is concerned.

I urge you to cry out for the intestinal fortitude to wait on Him with an open Bible. So many Christian bookstores and publishers are drowning under wave after wave of Last Days' literature. Are the saints any clearer? Any better prepared? I don't hear or think so. If you're going to be a prophet of God (and I think that you are) then you basically need to switch off to what others are saying, and start to learn how to get switched on to what the Holy Spirit is teaching. You

may well feel you've got more questions than answers when you come to stand before His People. But He will give you day-by-day some choice morsel to feed His hungry children, so that line by line you can help them get ready to live productively and victoriously through these days called Last. On top of this you can also depart from the ranks of ecclesiastical clever dicks; full of second-hand opinions but low on convictions; echoes and not voices. As an old pastor once said, "He who preaches sitting on a barbed wire fence, will pretty soon be soprano!"

"Children, it is the last hour; and just as you heard that antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have arisen; from this we know that it is the last hour...But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and you all know... And as for you, the anointing which you received from Him abides in you, and you have no need for anyone to teach you; but as His anointing teaches you about all things, and is true and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you abide in Him." (1 John 2.18,20,27)

God bless your jumping off the fence.

*Peter.*







