

SPEAKING PROPHETICALLY, ACTING APOSTOLICALLY

By Wolfgang Simson

Nobody recognizes the apostles when they really walk into the room. They just don't. Sorry, you're not impressive. Sorry, you're not charismatic enough. Sorry, you're not mega this or mega that enough. Really, many are just this — unassuming people!

There's a team, which God puts together, which is the five-fold ministry team. I believe the five-fold ministry of pastors, apostles, prophets, teachers and evangelists is one of God's ways of empowering the mass planting of churches. I mean mass - thousands. They're not supposed to be hijacked into one single structure, because they are called not to serve one church but to serve the country or to serve an area.

And what do I mean by apostles and prophets? Maybe with a few sentences I can explain what I do not mean. I do not mean powerful superstars; top-down guys who have it all and who answer the question, "Are you an apostle?" With the answer, "I have 150 churches working under me. I am supervising thousands. I am controlling and topdowning, drowning so many other churches." I'm not convinced that this is the way apostolic ministry works. I really am not.

I see Paul as a weeping father, crying his heart out for Timothy to overtake him, for Christ to take shape in the nations. I see him

brokenhearted - willing to let everybody walk over him. That's why in Ephesians 2:20, the Bible speaks about these ministries - the apostolic and prophetic- as foundations. Do like this with your feet, just for the fun of it. (Stomp, stomp.) Just hit the foundation of this house. Everybody needs it, but everybody tramples on it. It gives you a good idea about where apostolic and prophetic ministries belong. This is not a joke. Because in many ways this is exactly how they were treated and how they will be treated in the future.

That's how you will find true apostolic people - usually you can diagnose them - they have a broken heart. They cry more than anybody else. In their wildest dreams, they don't think of building a big religious empire with themselves at the top and the others being grass roots. Would you like to be grass roots? Who wants to be grass roots? Don't raise your hand because grass roots sounds like doormat. It is a term invented by people who will explain laity in a new way too. I believe the apostolic ministries are mainly the weeping fathers. The meekness of their heart allows them to inherit the earth. Meekness you can't learn in seminary. Meekness you can only learn at the feet of Christ. Really, you can only learn it there.

I believe that these people are very ordinary. They are approachable, no faces, no big names. Very un-intimidating. Let's say un-impressing. The thing that impresses me so much about Paul is that he is so unimpressive. He says that about himself. Weak, stumbling, stuttering - writes long letters. A man you can easily reject. And I think, "Yeah - that is so different from the people who have it all together. Who are on the top because they deserve it so much. You know what I'm talking about. But I'm talking about

people who have somehow caught something of the heart of God that He's given them.

Some specific area they are to work in. I think that's normal. That's what He is doing around the world. To actually share His apostolic heart with apostolic people like John Knox. Good man, Presbyterian man. He was a Christian in Scotland. He prayed this prayer, "God, give me Scotland or I die." And God gave him Scotland. And then he died.

But I believe the principle here is that the spirit of John Knox is very much an apostolic spirit. It's still around, and God gives this passion to people so that they somehow know what geographical area they would be willing to die for. Paul defines his own ministry in terms of what I call apostolic territoriality. 2 Corinthians 10:13 -15 is where Paul describes his ministry as reaching according to the measure of God up to Corinth. Not further. So he defines geographically. And Peter worked in Israel, Mark worked in Egypt. Peter worked on the right hand side of the Mediterranean area - it's the area that God gave them to lay a foundation and to say, "I will not work anywhere else where anybody else has laid the foundation."

In Egypt, one of my close friends is a guy called Adol Fonsie. He is a born-again Catholic firebrand who plants churches like nobody else I know. He talked about all of these things and he said, "You know, Wolf what God is doing is like moving into a new apartment. The first thing you do is lay the carpet." "Right," I said. And he said, "You know these apostolic and prophetic ministries are like that? They lay the carpet, and later on you put in the chairs and all the

rest of the furniture. That's the way it is supposed to be. These apostolic and prophetic people are like ground cover, and everything else kind of sprouts out of it." Do you understand what this guy is trying to say?

In my mind there is actually a world map with green and red spots for areas of countries. Red means there is nobody whom I, small guy, am aware of, who has an apostolic vision and has said so. There are many people who make bold statements, but they may not be the apostolic people in the area at all. They may be paid by an organization to cover the ground and yet actually are neo imperialists trying to find a country where the organization is not yet working. They send some worker there and think, that is missions. It is not - it is just plain imperialism!

I believe that there are areas of the world which are green. I believe that what God is doing is preparing some people, men and women, who have a broken heart - they may be totally unknown, everybody trampling on them - who actually cry out day and night. We need to find these people and pour oil on their fire. Then God will give birth to what He has put into them, and all you have to do is hold their hands. These are people who cover the ground with their vision. God has given it to them. I could give you the names of people in these areas.

Then there are areas in the world where, at least to my knowledge, there is nobody. There may be strong people, well-known people, but not with that kind of spirit. There is a guy in London who says about himself, that he is the guy to whom God is giving London.

And he wrote a book about how to reach London and how everybody should join him in reaching London and build a big church with him at the top. He said this is the way London is going to be reached. Sounds good! But totally wrong! The church is falling apart as I speak.

In a way, this is a corrupted version of apostolic ministry. If I were the devil, what I would do first if genuine apostolic and prophetic ministries were about to appear, is to throw up a smoke screen. I would throw up false types, or corrupted types of these ministries and call it the real thing, so that everybody would be confused when the real thing came. Nobody would recognize it because converts would be already fooled, the books would be already written.

Nobody recognizes the apostles when they really walk into the room. They just don't. Sorry, you're not impressive. Sorry, you're not charismatic enough. Sorry, you're not mega this or mega that enough. Really, many are just this — unassuming people! If I told you about most of these apostolic people, you would not be impressed; you would probably not recognize them if they were in your church. Because all they would probably do is cry when you mention their country. And you think, "Poor you! What's wrong with you? Maybe one of our workers can come and straighten you out."

Can I say this? I think that part of the redemptive purposes of America is to give all that you have to people you don't control and who have a vision that has nothing to do with you. And to serve

them in a spirit of crucified colonialism. Sell your houses, and give your money to poor people who have a vision. Give with no strings attached, which is only possible if God does a miracle, and the cross works in your life and mine, and Jesus gets all the glory. You will not believe it - but God will set you free.

And by the prophet, I also don't mean the person who turns his eyes backwards and floats above the ground and speaks in a strange voice about the million dollars we're going to inherit pretty soon. They are also, very often, broken people, who spend most of their time just chasing God. And then they speak for us not just personal prophetic words. Dare I say that? That has been the hang-up of a lot of the Pentecostal and charismatic scenes. They just want to hear God speak to ME, ME, ME, and the goat wants to be tickled. Yes! God speaks to people! But prophets also, often, have a word for the nation or the city, or whatever. Why? So that we can become one. God's purpose is for the area.

The significance of prophecy cannot be overestimated, because it was God's centralized system to speak from His headquarters in heaven a personalized word to every house church on earth. Can you imagine? It's great to have the pastor's teaching notes to mull them over on Wednesday night, but it's better if Jesus Himself speaks a personalized direct word into that house church.

Can you imagine the Church in Denver coming together every Sunday or every Saturday and being one church, and there is not one "big guy"? Rather than "Pastor So-and-So has graciously consented to come here," we would say, "We welcome you, Jesus."

There is no platform because we don't need one. We are one family under God, and God is going to use His apostolic and prophetic people to speak, and to lead us in all this and clearly move the whole church in one direction and express our oneness in Christ. Can you imagine that? Maybe some can and some can't. But the early Church was exactly like this, and it shook the earth. It really shook the earth!

I remember the other day there was such a meeting of the city church coming together in Buenos Aires. It was in September of last year, and when they came together, 400,000 people met together down on the Plaza de República in Buenos Aires. The earth shook, literally, with an earthquake at 3:59 p.m. They measured it because, they thought, "What's happening here?" And for anybody who knows the New Testament, that's not too surprising, because in Acts chapter 4 when the church prayed like this, the earth shook, so don't be too surprised.

Just imagine that God were to bring us back, NOT to the New Testament model of church but to the New Testament DYNAMICS of church, and principles, which need to be incorporated - the word I really love is, "incarnated." You know I have an Indian wife, but this has nothing to do with reincarnation; it has to do with the Word becoming flesh, the Spirit marrying the soil. That's what I speak about. I believe what's happening is that there is this travail going on, that people are pregnant with these things; trying to give birth in their village, area, town, city, state and nation. What I see happening is the Church in its authentic expression as house churches AND as a city church, together. For me, all this "together" I

understand by the term, “house church.” That’s how I feel, because I think that’s the way it was before. I don’t mean these little rebel groups of disgruntled believers, unhappy with institutional churches, sitting in the middle of the ghetto firing fiery darts at anything that moves and saying, “We’re right and everybody else is wrong. Independence Day is our big day . . . “ No, no, no! That is not apostolic, not prophetic, not profound, not God. It’s a trauma. And we need to see it, and we need to cater for it. We need to have hospitals for it. We need to help these friends. But they are NOT the foundation for what God is going to do here in America. There’s a fresh start, a fresh breaking of ground, a fresh laying of apostolic and prophetic foundations. I’m not saying that this meeting is part of it - maybe yes, maybe not. But God is doing this everywhere. I see that. I believe that. I want to stay to see this happening. It is happening. I see it wherever I go.

I think that part of the redemptive purposes of America is to give all that you have to people you don’t control and who have a vision that has nothing to do with you.