

Apostolic Silliness

John Moore

Apostolic and Prophetic Silliness

By John Moore

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1- Ethnic exclusivity.

At the least, the Body of Christ is global. Many still act as if Jesus was born in Springfield, Missouri; ministered in Kansas City; was crucified in Wheaton, Illinois; and resurrected in Colorado Springs. America does not have all the answers when it comes to ministry and we must avoid the paradigms of linear, Greek-based thought adorned with media manipulation and self-promotion. At the same time, we must be wary of political correctness invading the Body. Some Black Americans have trumpeted themselves as "The Joseph Generation" and have proclaimed they will be the rescuers of America. More recently, Christian Native Americans have heralded "cultural contextualization" to the extreme of racial privilege concerning spiritual warfare. Others are championing African models or South American models. The only model is the man Jesus, for as all died in Adam so are all made alive in Christ. The extreme to ethnic exclusivity could be a form of ethnic cleansing. A close friend of mine recently said: "There is no culture in the Kingdom of God." I don't know that I agree. On the surface that sounds over-homogenized and over-pasteurized. I would suggest there is "only sanctified culture within the Kingdom of God." I am not opposed to "cultural contextualization" when it means the culture of a people finds expression as long as that expression has been thoroughly cleansed by His Blood.

2 - Mystic monopolies

A well-known prophet has said several times lately on national television that dreams and visions that are in color are from God but if they are black-and-white they are from the Devil. Silliness. Yes, most spiritual dreams and visions are very vivid and in dramatic color but let's not forget that Satan is capable of transforming himself and his ambassadors into angels of light. Also, some black-and-white dreams and visions can be from God because they represent "black-and-white situations" in regard to good and evil, and – as some of my visionary friends have experienced -- historical scenes will often be acted out in black-and-white. More commonly, our wonderful human computer -- our mind -- sometimes simply re-processes our experiences in a black-and-white venue. My concern here isn't simply this one person's declaration concerning dreams and visions, but our human tendency to put subjective spiritual experiences into objective boxes and terms. Objectivity -- until science catches up with the Word -- must be based on Scripture, not on personal experience or opinion.

3 - Sibling rivalries

There are young apostles who are currently blasting the prophetic community for being selfish, controlling and totalitarian. In effect, they are saying we have left the prophetic dispensation and have entered the apostolic dispensation. Silliness. Another version of cessationist-dispensationalism. First, most young (in spiritual age) apostles were once maturing prophets or maturing pastors. And, they are still being matured, not just as apostles, but also in their earlier giftings and callings. We are no where close to seeing mature prophetic demonstration within the Body and we won't see it as long as we see the Spirit moving on linear trails. By thinking too linearly, some are also saying that the era of spiritual warfare is over and we are now in an era of "rest." Just because some battles have been won doesn't mean the war is over. Just because the Spirit might be highlighting a certain movement doesn't

mean the past movements are finished. This is Greek thinking. Again, too much Greek thinking.

4 - Position without function

How many churches have tried to add the apostolic and prophetic to their old wineskin as if they were simply remodeling a building and adding an office or two? It can't be done. The new wine does not go into old wineskins, however, new wine is made from the "lees" or "dregs" of old wine. In other words, the hearts of people can change, but the systems of man are the systems of man and they cannot contain the power and purity of His Spirit. No more titles. Please! No more titles. Let the truth of your position be proved by your fruit and function. And don't tell me, "but if you receive a prophet in the name of a prophet you receive a prophet's reward." This is true, but remember, "name" in Scripture means more than title. It also connotes character, nature, and calling.

5 - Reformational leap-frog

I know churches and pastors who are trying to shepherd their people into the prophetic and apostolic without passing first through Pentecost and charismatic training. It can't be done. If the people are not ready for a prayer language and training in the gifts, they are not ready for five-fold demonstration. Likewise, some Pentecostal and Charismatic churches are trying to promote people with giftings into areas of five-fold office. This is a dangerous mis-representation. Those rushing to "catch the wave" or "hop on the bandwagon" are already on the wrong trail.

6 - Re-emerging ugly head of control

Okay, let me up-front about this. I started reading Gene Edwards many years ago, long before his best-known book, "A Tale of Three Kings." I appreciate the man, but Gene Edwards is a Baptist reformer and visionary and his work -- while it should be read and valued -- should not be considered apostolic canon. Yes, it is true that David never attacked Saul. But, as my wife is so good at pointing out, David did not stay in Saul's camp, either. In the past six months I have seen a new "Hydra", a multi-headed beast of control fighting for position within the church. Men I respect for apostolic and prophetic awareness are suddenly pontificating about "apostolic authority", "pastoral authority" and even "the male-ness of the Bible." Gimme a break! Recent conferences on the apostolic teach on "new technology", "truth and clarity", "proper terminology", yet they host "Pastors' luncheons" and end their conferences by asking "all senior pastors to please rise." Yes, pastors and shepherds should be honored. But they should also be differentiated. Not all shepherds are pastors and, perhaps unfortunately, not all pastors are shepherds.

7 - Generational exclusivity

A few years back our home church hosted an apostolic and prophetic team from the southeast. These were three young people ages 29-31. They were quite gifted but I was alarmed by the female leader so often saying: "Every time I see a young person with dyed, spiked hair, piercings and tattoos I see a possible warrior for Christ!" Fine. But this same "apostle" also judged me as being narrow-minded simply because I was a white, middle-aged cowboy who had served in the military. While I have great hope for our young people we must not saddle them with unrealistic expectations. Recently Cathy Jones sent me a news report about a young man who was in a car accident and was thrown from his vehicle but miraculously survived by being suspended in power lines. She asked me if I saw any significance in this. I believe the current crop of young Christians are about to enter an important time of testing. They have attended "The Calls", sang the songs, and declared their fierce idealism, but they are still young, still human, and God is still not a respecter of persons. I hope and pray that they are the "eleventh-hour workers" called to fields white for harvest. But their destiny is not pre-destined. They have to work it out like everyone else.

8 - Marketing, marketing, marketing

I once asked the moderator of a popular prophetic list why he did not post any words by my good friend Marsha Burns. He told me that he found her "too negative." Marsha, negative? Give me a break! Is she sometimes tough? Yes. Can she be severe? Yes. Is that the power of conviction? I think so. The moderator responded that "you can catch more flies with honey." I told him I wasn't interested in catching flies. I was interested in truth. Even the master of marketing, Stephen Strang, has editorialized in his magazines that prophets are being too weak: they are giving soothing, flattering words rather than challenging sin. Well, that's not surprising. Who wants to "buy" a convicting word. And not only that, but prophets are now self-appointed movie reviewers. Of course, most of them are too busy endorsing one another's books and attending one another's conferences to actually see the movies they are blasting. A by-product of marketing is flattery. Ching Co Ten is much-loved within the Body and she looks to Debra and I for oversight in regard to her prophetic words. She has not posted as often or in as many venues lately – most of this is her decision; some of it has been mine -- because she understands the value of obscurity and hiddenness and I recognize the danger of flattery. When we flatter someone we open the doors for jealousy, envy and idolatry. I have been guilty of it and I'm sure many of you have been as well. Let's repent and quit doing it.

9 - Obsession with numbers

Do you feel less than significant because you do not pastor a church of 3,000? Consider this: if you live in a small town of 12,000 souls and have 12 people coming to your house for fellowship you are reaching the same percentage of people as the "big-name pastor" who lives in a metropolitan area of 3,000,000 and has 3,000 attending his church.

10 - Buzz-word bizarreness

Yes, there is historic precedence for showing the various dispensations of the Lord's outpouring. We all know the various titles that have been hung on the 50s, 60s, 70s, 80s, 90s and the predictions for this decade and the next. But, if we repeatedly fail first grade it doesn't mean we can promote ourselves to the sixth grade just because we are 12 years old. The terms "Third Day," "Apostolic," "Kingdom," "His Rest," etc... are all valid Scriptural terms. But they must become engrafted within us through personal change and not simply be another banner on a conference brochure. Your community and neighbors do not care how "Third Day" or "Kingdom" you are if you are not emptying your garbage or paying your bills. And "Kingdom of God " is a good example of a term that should not be considered merely topical. Yes, it is a current emphasis of the Spirit, but so it was during The Latter Rain Movement of the 1940s, the Manifested Sons movement of the 1970s, and by many others all dating back to the source: Jesus Christ manifested on earth some 2000 years ago.

11 - Plumb-lines not pendulums

The spiritual temple is measured by a plumb-line, not by the swinging of pendulums. Even in a marriage we are called to complement one another, not balance one another. Extremes in one movement do not justify extremes in another movement.

12 -- Brevity, levity, and gravity

We become silly (foolish) when we take ourselves too seriously and do not allow our selves to be simple. We can be simple without being simplistic, child-like without being childish, and soul-full with out being soulish. We take ourselves mostly seriously when we seek the approval of man. David fleeing to the Cave of Abdullum was a necessary spiritual course. He probably did not emerge from the cave looking like the cover of Gentleman's Quarterly. When Dave Johnson and Jeff VanVonderen wrote "The Subtle Power of Spiritual Abuse" nearly a decade ago they unearthed the ugly truth of spiritual rape. (Many within the Body have been spiritually gang-raped.) Because rape is a violent act of defilement, it can be easy to look at a victim and make the false presumption that she

is a prostitute. Society has done this forever. Those who have been spiritually-raped will heal when they choose to be victors not victims. Victims choose self-pity over God's grace. Even in this context, we can get terribly hung-up over what "the five-fold church is supposed to look like" or "the role of the local prophet within the local church," as if somehow the total responsibility fell on our shoulders. The government of God rests on His shoulders and Christ is still the head of the church. Christ is building his church. We are the stones. He is the potter. We are the clay. He is God. We are not.

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