

## More Prophetic Input Needed

In Ephesians 2:19-22 Paul talks about how the church is built on the foundation of the apostles and the prophets. As I look around at young apostles seeking to establish new beachheads of the Kingdom, it seems as if in many cases, they are not working in close collaboration with prophets. This may be because of differences in perspective, priorities, and styles between apostles and prophets.

I have recently been convinced that apostles need to be more intentional and communicative in relating to prophets. We need to invite input from the prophets and be explicit in the type of input that we would find helpful. (Incidentally, I think many prophets in our midst have not been recognized. They are often found among those emphasizing prayer and worship as well as among those focusing on areas of community development, crisis response, etc.)

I would like to begin to compile a list of examples of types of input that seem helpful to me from an apostolic perspective. **This list is representative and suggestive, not comprehensive.** I am sharing this list in the hope that we can begin to partner more effectively in laying the foundations of the church as we continue to build the church among new people groups and in new places.

### Areas for Prophetic Input in Pioneering and Early Establishment Phases of Movements

- Guidance in finding a person of peace in a new place or segment of society
- Direction on where to go or where not to go
- Information on specific spiritual powers at work and how or where to combat them
- Calling out (even supernaturally) the sins of those in the missionary band and calling the band back to a holy connection to the Lord
- Warnings of people to be on guard against
- Identifying and articulating a future or next goal in ministry.
- Clarifying what needs to be the best response to a hard situation. (Jeremiah 42:3 "pray that the Lord may tell us the way in which we should walk and the thing that we should do.")
- Help the workers rejoice at progress. (example is Exodus 15:20-21 where Miriam the prophetess took the lead in praise)

### Areas for Ongoing Prophetic Input

- Pointing out gaps in the ministry or issues that are not being addressed
- Equipping the apostles (and others) in how to be more sensitive to the Lord's leadership and attuned to His voice
- Identifying failures in justice and righteousness in the church (for repentance) or the world (with ideas on how to confront them)
- Serving as an advocate for keeping worship prominent in all we do
- Leading as a model and equipper in regard to all aspects of prayer
- Maintaining a culture that every word from the Lord is to be responded to with body, soul, and spirit
- Reminding everyone to maintain an eternal perspective
- Warnings of things to be on guard against
- Help develop a culture of gratitude and praise among the workers.
- Reminding people of covenant love and obligations
- Constantly reminding the community to listen to the Lord
- Help maintain urgency, passion, and focus
- Giving words of knowledge and words of wisdom
- Warnings of signs of apathy, mission drift, pride, or worldliness

### **Additional Input**

Several people who were asked about this topic provided additional input beyond items to include on the lists above. I am adding their thoughts below. In some cases I am merely putting a summary of their input.

### **Steve Parlato**

I have no doubt this is an important topic. However you also know that conflict is typical between the apostolic and prophetic gifting. Just this point and why it is worth pushing through conflict must be explained. Example: Exodus 12:1 "Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moses..."

Ephesians 2:20 can easily be interpreted as the Prophets of the Bible and the Apostles of the Bible and then that's it. I would like to see some erudite expansion of these verses to bring it back to : Today the church is being pioneered upon the gifting of the apostle and prophet who are working together in specific pioneering settings. How do we exegete this passage so we do not lose certain readers who couch Ephesians as something only of history past?

It seems to me that the prophet will necessarily need to be embedded and close to the apostolic band and the person(s) who are apostolically gifted. I guess Neil Cole's prophet friend and the ongoing close relationship would be a good example of what I am thinking about. Like Miriam (a prophetess Ex 15:20) traveling with Moses and Aaron during the exodus years there is a very close LONG term tie. This point needs to couch the list you are coming up with too.

### **Robert M. Reach**

Thanks for your note and open inquiry. Having a charismatic background, this conversation started for me during the Jesus Movement of the 1960's and 70's. I recall the very pronounced power and presence of the Holy Spirit at Pepperdine College when I was a student there in 1968. This was at a time when the traditional Baptist and other denominations were oblivious to His powerful gifts and presence. The offices and roles of Ephesians 4 are intricately tied into these waves of the Spirit's presence, it seems to me and cannot be understood apart from His active work in the world through the church.

Currently, we are seeing this wave of His presence in the developing nations, but not in the west, so it's interesting that western leaders want to discuss these topics, as most have limited personal experience with the Spirit. I'm not sure that it is very applicable. I guess that western seminary educated people find the nexus of Spirit movement and Biblical concepts irresistible to consider and perhaps have some handles.

For me, who only has a formal Biblical education from cessationist Church of Christ colleges, it holds no interest, not because I believe that the Spirit retired when the Bible was written. Quite the opposite. Since the Jesus Movement of the 60's-80's and other Spirit blessed work, like the wave of His presence in Russia where I made 25 trips and saw amazing things, and the Africa work when I personally experienced the raising of the dead in an African airport, as one of many Spirit encounters, the idea of APEST is normal and should be taught, along with the spiritual gifts and other Spirit related teachings of the Word of God. Now, seeing His love manifested to hundreds of thousands, I think that teaching about the Spirit and His role in our lives is vital. We have done this already and continue to do so in our movement work.

This is the hard work, laying the foundation that APEST is the apex of... the gifts and callings of the Spirit for the whole church. I think that this is the question. Are movements teaching and nurturing the Gifts and Callings of the Holy Spirit in their grass roots, oral learning people? Are our people absorbing the Word of God and allowing the living Word to transform them into the

likeness of Christ? Are our House Churches reflections of His life within the people through the Word and the Spirit? How do you know? What is the fruit? Is it just multiplication?

I think trying to sort out the Prophetic role can only be clarified by the work real and mature Apostles. I have observed the western church trying to define and understand the role of the Prophet for these 50+ years now, without success in the west, and I'm not sure that it will or can be sorted out in a mass movement in the developing nations.

### **Frank Schattner**

I really appreciate your emphasis on prophets and their relationship with apostles. I think apostles are essential. I generally really like the list you've compiled already. I don't know what to add but I'll share a couple of scriptures that God has been impressing on me for many years now that I think speaks to your point.

1. Amos 3:7 - "Surely the sovereign does nothing without first revealing his plans to His servants the prophets."
2. Isaiah 49:6 - "See the former things have taken place, and new things I declare. BEFORE they spring into being I ANNOUNCE them to you."
3. Isaiah 30:21 - "Whether you turn to the right or to the left, your ears will hear a voice behind you saying, 'this is the way. walk in it'"

### **Liz Adleta**

As I understand the Word of God, Jesus told us His sheep hear His voice. Although I used to think one must be taught to hear God speaking, I now believe what Jesus said is true--if we belong to Him, we do hear Him. The problem often is that we do not expect Him to speak and we do not listen. So foundationally, learning to engage in prayer where we expect to hear from God, we intentionally listen, and record what we are hearing, obey it, put it into practice and share it is foundational for every disciple. Perhaps since this is a strength for prophets, they can help point people to begin to exercise and practice listening. Exercising this helps us grow stronger in it. For disciple making movements, it is foundational for every disciple to engage with God in His Word, listening for what He would have us put into practice and listening with whom we are to share.

Prayer in the broadest sense is part of our daily practicing God's presence and lordship over our lives. John 15 clearly tells us we can do nothing unless we abide in Him. So, again, whatever we try to do for the Lord, if it is not birthed and sustained in God's presence, by His Spirit, we attempt in the flesh and it will not be fruitful for the Kingdom of God.

The apostolic, evangelistic, shepherd, and teacher all need these basic elements in order to function well in their own callings and assignments.

Those in the Body with prophetic gifting have a heightened ability to clearly hear God and speak forth direction, instruction, etc. What we've called prayer strategies are simply ways of applying prayer in many different applications, at different points along the journey of seeing God's Kingdom coming and His will being done. Foundationally, all those prayer strategies involve listening to God and obeying His voice in particular situations, asking good questions and waiting on God to show us.

### **Jenny Oliphant**

In terms of 24:14 and where we are at the moment. I have a very strong conviction that God is calling us to go higher into His perspective on the world and we need the prophetic voice giving very clear direction in order to a) fill the gaps we already know about and b) fill the gaps which are still to be identified. Plus...a time will come when we will need to be reliant on the

Holy Spirit for our discernment in all relationships and communications. [Due to persecution and restrictions...]

A number of [apostolic] movement leaders in [our global 24:14] meeting came to the prayer room all asking for more support and help to break through strongholds, obstacles to the Gospel, curses that were broken but appeared to return, deliverances, and other forms of spiritual warfare. It is probably obvious that to finish the remaining task we will need a very strong and targeted approach in the spiritual realms to free the captives. The leaders were requesting training teams to come and visit, and a team of "crisis response" style Apostles and Prophets to be "on call" and available to travel to assist the teams to make headway against whatever the problems might be, spiritually.

### **R. Bruce**

- Direction on where to go or where not to go - the five things to pray for when prayer walking and/or interceding on behalf of the people we seek to reach helps us understand. OPEN Heavens, OPEN Hearts, OPEN Homes, OPEN Highways, and OPEN Hands then there are five places to where we should go to pray is also a help to discerning what is happening in the spiritual realm. PLACES of government, PLACES of education, PLACES of business, PLACES of religion, and PLACES of community
- Praying using the above as guides to discern what is happening in the area we are working or people group we are working among helps the prophetic voice to be heard and spread throughout the work. As more folks intercede, they point out where they see God at work and where there are gaps. OPEN highways is asking God to help us see how the gospel can spread throughout the people group or area. Apostolics are often driven to keep pushing out to the edges without being aware of what is happening around them
- The five places we should go to for prayer provide the prophetic persons the opportunity to identify justice issues that may be present and that are not being met. Once identified, the prayer of OPEN Hands alerts people to not just identify the issues, and asking the Holy Spirit to show how we should respond.