

Response to Joseph Mattera and Michael Brown, Statement on “NAR and Christian Nationalism”

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Background

On October 19, 2022, Joseph Mattera and Michael Brown published a position statement on “NAR and Christian Nationalism.”¹ Prior to publishing their statement, Julia Duin, contributing editor for religion for *Newsweek*, acquired a copy from its authors and interviewed several individuals for an article she was writing about the Mattera/Brown document.² She approached us with an invitation to offer our response to the document. We agreed to this and she sent us the draft she had received from Mattera and Brown. That is how we learned of the statement by Mattera and Brown.

After receiving the statement from Duin, we prepared a set of comments in response (about seven pages) and sent them to her. Our purpose was to provide her with a general evaluation and supporting material. We informed her that we wouldn’t publish our response until she had published her article. Some days later, we learned from her that Joseph Mattera and Michael Brown had revised their statement. We received a copy of that revision shortly before it was published online by the authors.

Some of the changes that had been made to the original Mattera/Brown statement were of special interest to us, for we had commented on specific items that were subsequently revised. We asked Duin if Mattera and Brown knew she had asked us for a response. She acknowledged that she had shared some of our review with Mattera to get his reaction.

One further note: We drafted our initial comments with the understanding that the statement was drafted by Mattera and Brown. The website where the statement was initially made public does not indicate this (at least it did not at the time of its original publication). The official website for the statement simply publishes the final draft of the statement, lists 64 initial signers in alphabetical order, and provides a button that links to a page where visitors can affix their own signature if they concur with what is expressed in the statement. Mattera and Brown have confirmed that they were the joint drafters of the statement.³

Julia Duin’s *Newsweek* Article

The draft that we are here publishing in review of the Mattera/Brown statement contains much of what we initially offered to Julia Duin. But we have added material. There are two main reasons for this:

- Mattera and Brown revised their statement following our initial discussion of it. Some of what is new in their edited statement calls for further comment.

- Our initial response to the Mattera/Brown statement anticipated that they intended to recruit signatories, but we had not been told that this was the case, and we did not know who would be recruited for this purpose if that was their intention. As it happens, when their revised statement was published online, it was accompanied by a list of 64 signatories (“initial signers”). This list provides an additional lens for interpreting the statement and further evaluating its significance. Some of our original comments are further supported by what can be learned from this list. In addition, some new observations may now be made.

Shortly after Duin’s article was published with *Newsweek*, we received messages from Joseph Mattera and Michael Brown. They were especially interested in hearing confirmation from us that we had been quoted accurately by Duin in her article. We confirmed to them that we had been quoted accurately, but we noted that the basis for the comments published in *Newsweek*, and the specific import of them, does depend on the larger context of what we wrote in our lengthy response.

Our Response

Many people—both Christians and outside observers—have rightly been concerned about the rise of a movement among churches known as the “New Apostolic Reformation” (also sometimes referred to as the “apostolic-prophetic movement” or as “Independent Network Charismatic” Christianity⁴). We have written four books (two published in 2014, one published November 2022, and one that is forthcoming) about this fast-growing New Apostolic Reformation (NAR) movement led by church leaders who claim to be authoritative “apostles” and “prophets” and to be giving new revelation that will enable their followers to develop miraculous powers, take dominion of society, and bring God’s kingdom to earth.⁵ We receive reports regularly from people the world over who have experienced harm as a result of these teachings: spiritual abuse, split families and churches, and disillusionment from failed prophecies (such as the prophecies made by the many NAR prophets who predicted a Donald Trump victory in the 2020 U.S. presidential election⁶) and from false promises of miraculous healing or resurrection from the dead (one notable example being the tragic story about two-year-old Olive Heiligenthal, who was not raised from the dead as the leaders of Bethel Church in Redding, California, led their followers to expect⁷).

As more people have become aware of this controversial movement and the leaders’ extreme, bizarre, and unbiblical teachings, a marked number of those leaders (and sympathizers who have worked closely with them over the years) have engaged in damage-control efforts. They’ve removed language from their websites where they once candidly described themselves as part of the New Apostolic Reformation and adopted C. Peter Wagner’s controversial teachings and descriptions of the NAR movement.⁸ And they’ve produced videos (such as Bethel Church’s six-part Rediscover Bethel series) and issued statements (such as the statement by the International House of Prayer in Kansas City, Missouri) downplaying their extreme teachings and claiming they are not part of the New Apostolic Reformation.⁹ They’ve also accused critics of NAR of being conspiracy theorists¹⁰ who have either made up or exaggerated the size and

dangers of this movement, despite well-documented evidence showing NAR's large influence and harmful teachings.¹¹

The latest statement (more damage control?) was released by Bishop Joseph Mattera (the leader of the United States Coalition of Apostolic Leaders, a.k.a. USCAL) and radio host Michael Brown (a USCAL National Council member, a leading participant in controversial revivals, and a vocal defender of controversial apostles and prophets that we and others have identified as part of NAR, including Bill Johnson, Kris Vallotton, Mike Bickle, Ché Ahn, Mark Chironna, and Brian Simmons).¹² Mattera and Brown dubbed their statement "NAR and Christian Nationalism." The declared purpose of their statement is to provide "clarification." They state: "In light of the controversy surrounding the terms 'New Apostolic Reformation' (NAR) and 'Christian Nationalism,' we are issuing this statement of clarification." In the statement, they "deny any affiliation with what is presently characterized as 'NAR' in many circles of both Christian and secular press" and with "a dangerous and unhealthy form of 'Christian nationalism.'" And they are currently urging church leaders to join them in signing this document. Several notable apostles, prophets, and others who are frequently associated with the New Apostolic Reformation are among the initial signers, including Randy Clark, Heidi Baker, Mark Chironna, John Kelly, and Jeremiah Johnson.

We pause here to mention that we have had a few friendly interactions with Mattera and Brown, and we genuinely appreciate their interest in dialogue with us and the time they have taken for this. We value that and hope to continue. Certainly, our comments in this response are not intended as a personal attack. We also appreciate Mattera's recommendation of our book *A New Apostolic Reformation?* as a "valuable resource" containing "honest and scholarly insights into the high-profile NAR leaders."¹³ But consistent with our long-standing message about NAR and its various manifestations, we feel the need to express the very real concerns we have about teachings we know to have been harmful to others. And we feel a need to respond to the recent statement by Mattera and Brown because it may be welcomed by and sound convincing to people who have not researched the New Apostolic Reformation and are not familiar with NAR leaders' frequent denials to be part of this movement. We note that these denials have come even from leaders who have openly promoted the New Apostolic Reformation by that name and in its more extreme expressions, including Mattera and other signers of the document. Also, many are not familiar with the tactics frequently employed by NAR's defenders to downplay its extreme teachings. We outline these tactics in our new book *Counterfeit Kingdom: The Dangers of New Revelation, New Prophets, and New Age Practices in the Church*.

Here are some things you should know about the new statement by Joseph Mattera and Michael Brown.

What the Statement Leaves Out

The Mattera/Brown document includes a list of things they "reject" about contemporary apostles and prophets. But notice what they do not reject: *the controversial belief that apostles and prophets must govern the church*. That omission is important because the belief that present-day apostles and prophets are part of the church government is the core belief of NAR. It has been

taught by Mattera, along with many of the document's initial signers.¹⁴ Brown also makes allowances for apostles and prophets to govern.¹⁵ So while they say they “reject the belief that every church must be submitted to apostles and prophets to be in right order before the Lord,” that is not the same thing as rejecting that there are present-day apostles and prophets who govern. Furthermore, some of the document's prominent initial signers—and Mattera himself—have appeared to teach the necessity of every church being submitted to apostles and prophets (as we show below). In other words, they deny in their statement what they affirm elsewhere.

The Definitions of “Apostolic and Prophetic Ministries” are Misleading

If you read only the definition of apostle and prophet supplied in the document, you might get the impression that Mattera/Brown and the other initial signers view apostles merely as church planters and other types of effective Christian leaders focused on spreading the gospel. But when you read what many of these same leaders have written elsewhere, a much different picture emerges. Apostles possess a special divine “anointing” and “authority,” and they receive “divine revelation” for the church. There are different types of apostles, including “Prophetic Apostles,” “Cultural Apostles,” and “Military Apostles.” Below, we share some of Mattera's teachings about apostles, along with the teachings of some of the document's other initial signers—additional controversial notions that the statement has left out.¹⁶

The statement's definition of prophets is not very illuminating either. They are “Church leaders who understand and declare the mind of God for specific times and seasons, helping the Lord's people respond biblically.” But what exactly do they mean by “declare the mind of God for specific times and seasons”? Quite a lot is permitted by this vaguely worded statement. For greater precision (clarity) on this point, you may consult the various writings and messages by the document's signers. For example, consider one of the startling functions of contemporary prophets described by Joseph Mattera, in his 2015 book *An Anthology of Essays on Apostolic Leadership*—the function of bringing judgment on people and nations:

Prophets are called to represent God to a people or nation and bring a covenant lawsuit to them (Micah 3:8). The word witness was originally a legal term regarding a person that was an aide to a person bringing a lawsuit, even to the point of being part of the legal process that involved execution! Thus, prophets who stand in the heavenly council as witnesses of the Lord not only hear God's will regarding a people or nation but can actually be part of the process that brings judgment to that person or people group.¹⁷

Mattera has written an entire chapter likening the functions of today's prophets to Old Testament prophets, including Isaiah, Ezekiel, and Jeremiah.¹⁸ In light of this teaching, it doesn't mean much when the statement rejects the claim that “contemporary prophets have the exact same function or carry the exact same authority as did Old Testament prophets.” By saying they don't have the “exact” same function or the “exact” same authority, they are tacitly acknowledging what can be confirmed in NAR leaders' writings elsewhere—that contemporary prophets do claim to have functions and authority that are remarkably similar to that of the most illustrious Old Testament prophets. The word “exact” provides a giant loophole through which quite extreme teachings about prophetic authority may be allowed in. Their statement suggests that the

level of authority can be very close indeed, as close as you like without being quite “exactly” the same. This suggests that Mattera and Brown might realize that the parallels between the two classes of prophet are thought by some signers to be very nearly the same. That would be a telling admission.

Likewise, the statement’s rejection of “the belief that contemporary apostles carry the same authority as did the original Twelve Apostles” may sound reassuring to the document’s readers. But those who have studied NAR closely know that many present-day apostles do claim to exercise very similar authority and functions as the Twelve (with the exception of writing Scripture)—including the authority we have already noted, to govern churches. We provide examples of these claims below. So, presumably, you could hold views like that and still sign the statement. *A reader might legitimately wonder, for each person who signs the statement, what exactly he or she truly believes about the authority of apostles today.* Contrary to its stated purpose, the statement is not clarifying.

They Understate the Severity of NAR Error

They say that critics’ portrayal of NAR as a “dangerous” movement is “highly exaggerated and misleading.” In this they fail to acknowledge hugely popular NAR errors. The list of false teachings is long and alarming. Just to illustrate, it includes the bizarre and groundless practices of commissioning angels, apostolic governance of societal institutions, making “prayer declarations,” issuing “apostolic decrees,” and giving new revelation for the church at large. One or more of these things are promoted by leading apostles and prophets. For noteworthy examples, see books and messages by Ché Ahn, Bill Johnson, Kris Vallotton, Danny Silk, Mike Bickle, and Joseph Mattera—all very influential leaders with large followings.

When we met recently with Michael Brown to film for the forthcoming documentary *American Gospel: Spirit & Fire*, we quoted several startling NAR claims for him. He acknowledged disagreement with those statements. But this response is inadequate to the magnitude of the threat. He regularly chastises NAR critics for “exaggerating” the influence and dangers of NAR. This only serves to disguise the gravity of the problem. He denies believing certain things without denouncing them for the seriously misleading errors that they are. Why is he so soft on NAR leaders who promote egregious error, yet hard on those who draw attention to the error? You would expect church leaders to be more concerned about protecting the sheep than defending those who promote false teaching.

They Say One Thing, But Teach Another

Joseph Mattera

There are things that Brown and Mattera say they reject in their statement that seem actually to be affirmed in Mattera’s own writings. For example, they write, “We reject the belief that every church must be submitted to apostles and prophets to be in right order before the Lord.” Also, “we reject the belief that ‘new revelation’ is essential for the life and growth of the Church or that contemporary apostles or prophets are the only ones privy to such ‘new revelation.’” (Note that their wording does allow that apostles and prophets do give revelation.) And “we further

oppose the possible abuse of ecclesial titles that manifests itself in self-proclaimed apostles and prophets claiming territorial authority over pastors in a community, city, or nation.”

Yet, in his *Anthology*, it sounds very much like Mattera believes that every church must be led by an apostle, for a specific reason—so that congregations can receive from the apostles “revelation,” which “comes upon entire congregations” and enables the people in those congregations to do “the work of the ministry” that is essential for the type of societal transformation that Mattera believes the church has been tasked with. Furthermore, “God has anointed” apostles “in each region” to unite churches and “bring societal change.” Indeed, a church or Christian movement that is not led by apostles, and influenced by prophets, will “lose ground in their communities and culture because the apostolic mission of the church has been stripped away.”

Clearly, apostles and prophets bring something to the table (particularly authoritative revelation) that other church leaders (pastors, teachers, administrators) do not. These are Mattera’s words:

When apostles lead local churches an apostolic spirit of wisdom, revelation and courage comes upon entire congregations and releases all the saints to the work of the ministry (Ephesians 4:12) to fill up all things in creation (Ephesians 4:10). This produces (marketplace) apostles and prophets of government, economics, education, science, media and creative innovators that are at the (prophetic) tip of the spear by applying the biblical worldview to their spheres of influence. Hence, when a local church and/or movement of churches is not apostolically led and prophetically influenced they lose ground in their communities and culture because the apostolic mission of the church has been stripped away. . . . Local churches need to embrace and celebrate the ministry and function of apostolic leaders so their congregations can be connected to an ever expanding horizon of ministry that is called to influence every realm of life and plant centers of influence in every major city of the world (a la Paul the Apostle). . . . Local church pastors need the input and inspiration of apostolic leaders to be balanced in regards to their church mission and vision. Local churches and movements need to nurture apostolic leaders and financially support them so each local church is connected to apostolic vision and mission that is beyond their community and religious subculture.¹⁹

Mattera also, writing specifically about the “new apostolic reformation” (his choice of terms), has said:

This reformation recognizes visionary leaders in each region that God has anointed to unite the Body of Christ and bring societal change. Often denominational bishops and/or superintendents are just gifted administrators without the leadership capacity to galvanize churches to reach a city or nation. Recognizing apostolic leadership (irrespective of denominational affiliation) can remove this bottleneck and release the authority and power of the Kingdom of God in a city!²⁰

Mattera’s message is clear: churches must defer to apostles’ leadership, and receive their revelation as well as revelation from prophets, lest they miss out on God’s will and purpose for their church.

Mattera is quite explicit that apostles receive new prophetic revelation: “It is my experience that apostolic truth includes strategy that emanates directly from the Spirit of God and not from mere intellect. True apostolic leaders need to be continually led by the Spirit and not by mere emotion, circumstances or other people’s opinions. Thus apostolic theology depends greatly on the prophetic to work.”²¹ But since “true” apostolic leaders receive revelation, this undermines the claim, made in the Mattera/Brown statement, that one can be an apostle and not even hold to Pentecostal or charismatic theology. Mattera repeated that claim in a recent interview about the statement and he named examples of such non-charismatic “apostles”: the Christian leaders Tim Keller, Billy Graham, and D. L. Moody.²² It is important to realize that, when challenged on their teachings about apostles, NAR leaders often point to especially effective missionaries and church leaders, as Mattera did, and say that this is all they mean when they use the word “apostle.” But, obviously, given their teachings about apostles receiving revelation, that is not all they mean.

This threatens the statement that “we affirm the full sufficiency of Scripture for the health and mission of the Church.” If Scripture is fully sufficient (as Protestant Christians, including ourselves, have historically believed) then Mattera’s teachings about apostles giving revelation to congregations enabling them to fulfill their ministry is puzzling. No new revelation by apostles and prophets would be necessary in just the way he suggests. (Since they do not say what they mean by the “full sufficiency” of Scripture, the statement may need a further revision that permits another loophole for admitting the special need for additional revelation.)

Also in his *Anthology*, Mattera describes different types of legitimate apostles today, including “The Prophetic Apostle,” “The Cultural Apostle,” and “The Military Apostle.” Consider his description of “The Military Apostle”:

These are like military generals in the Body of Christ who create hierarchical networks with a strong top-down leadership approach. They usually lead strong vertical networks with high commitment and are not interested in participating in ecumenical associations (unless it fits their particular agenda or they lead it). This is because they are so focused on their purpose and lack patience and grace to work with other strong leaders who have a different view of the church or who do not want to submit to their leadership.²³

Notice that Mattera’s Military Apostles are described as “generals in the Body of Christ” whose leadership is “hierarchical,” “strong,” and “top-down”; submission to them is the expectation. Such teachings about the necessity of submission to apostles are common in NAR, as we show in our books. (For the record, when Mattera says Military Apostles “lack patience and grace,” he is not chiding them for some deficiency, but drawing attention to their unique strengths as leaders.)

In the same book, in a section addressing “some of the blessings of recognizing apostolic leadership,” Mattera makes a case that use of the title “apostle” is important to prevent confusion about the church’s “chain of command.”

When we recognize the title we can also more easily release the function. Some who favor the use of the title “apostle” say we need to recognize apostles in the same way we need the military to have uniforms, titles and ranks that release them to their functions.

Not having the title will cause confusion in the chain of command as well as among civilians since they will not know who is responsible to enforce the laws of the land and protect them.²⁴

In his recent book, however, he argues against a focus on titles. For example, he writes: “Those of us within the United States Council of Apostolic Leaders (USCAL.US), have made a concerted effort to ensure that our movement is one that is formed and function [sic] around real relationships and not titles.”²⁵ It is not clear how Mattera would harmonize this practice with his earlier insistence that titles be used. In any case, just because the title may not be used, or emphasized, does not mean that any changes have been made to the apostles’ “functions,” as Mattera terms them, or their position in the “chain of command.”

John Kelly

Mattera is not the only initial signer who affirms statements in the “NAR and Christian Nationalism” document that conflict with what has been written elsewhere.²⁶ One of the document’s other most notable signers is John Kelly, the founder and “international convening apostle” for the International Coalition of Apostolic Leaders (ICAL)—the largest society of apostles in the world.²⁷ Even though Kelly signed the document, he has promoted extreme NAR beliefs that contradict statements in the document. For example, in 1999, Kelly co-authored a book titled *End Time Warriors*. This book records revelation that God is supposed to have given Kelly in 1996, through a three-month series of dreams and visions and a personal appearance from Christ. That revelation is an “end-time warfare strategy” for the church, the “Army of God,” to build the kingdom of God on earth.²⁸ Given his claims to receive such critical revelation for the global church, why did Kelly sign a document that rejects “the belief that ‘new revelation’ is essential for the life and growth of the Church”? (And how does the specific content of that revelation mesh with concerns expressed in the new document about Christian nationalism?)

As part of that strategy, Kelly assigns a high level of authority and functions to present-day apostles. He teaches that apostles lead that church army, since “warfare is the number-one role of the apostle.”²⁹ According to Kelly, “it is the apostle who will declare war on the enemy and lead the Church to war. The apostle is the one who will unify the Church into a fighting force. The apostle is the one who will bring all past and present truth and every past and present move of God to bear against the enemy.”³⁰ His reference to “present truth” is related to his teaching, found in the same book, that, “Since the Dark Ages, God has been progressively restoring the Church,” including restoring the church to its proper government of leadership by apostles.³¹ To win the present war, churches must embrace this government.

Kelly also alleges that God showed him, in a vision, a victorious group of warriors. The strongest ones were those present-day Christians who were bigger and stronger than the Christians in the Bible, because those present-day Christians “had received the sum total of past and present truth and the past and present moves of God.”³² In other words, they had embraced all the revelation given to present-day prophets and apostles, including (according to Kelly) revelation about the necessity of restoring apostles and prophets to government. In his book,

Kelly cites, with apparent agreement, another leader who disparages denominational churches as “Babylonian churches.”³³ (In labeling denominational churches as “Babylonian churches,” Kelly is following the practice of other NAR leaders and leaders of the Latter Rain movement before them.) Kelly teaches that apostles and prophets—not denominational leaders or other types of church leaders—must be the “foundation” of the church since they alone can “raise up a strong generation that fights effectively for the Lord.”³⁴ And he teaches that a pastor “needs an apostle over him.”³⁵

But how does Kelly’s teaching—that every pastor needs an apostle over him—square with the Mattera/Brown document’s rejection of “the belief that every church must be submitted to apostles and prophets to be in right order before the Lord”? Did the document leave a loophole so that a signer could believe that every *pastor* should submit to an apostle, but not necessarily every *church*? In his book, Kelly does note that, when he visits a local church that is part of his own apostolic network, he does not interfere with the local pastor’s authority, but submits to that pastor on the pastor’s home turf. However, as soon as the pastor is not with his congregation, “the dynamics of authority change.” Kelly says, “When I’m alone with him or any brother who is committed to our network, he is back in my ‘house’—my sphere of authority.”³⁶ Whether or not the Mattera/Brown statement deliberately incorporated a loophole for this purpose, it appears that one may hold to a common NAR teaching—that all pastors must submit to an apostle—and still sign the statement. The document is very NAR-friendly, despite its disclaimers.

Ron Cantor and Dan Juster

Now, let’s take a brief look at two of the document’s other initial signers, Ron Cantor (CEO of Tikkun Global) and Dan Juster (the founder and director of Tikkun International). Both are leaders of an apostolic network based in Jerusalem, named Tikkun, which has promoted extreme NAR teachings. Tikkun’s teachings nearly resulted in the breakup of the fragile and historically close-knit Messianic Jewish congregations in Israel.³⁷ In addition to promoting the core NAR teaching that present-day apostles must hold governing offices in the church, Tikkun leaders have taught that Gentile Christians worldwide must come into “alignment” with (read: “submission to”) Messianic Jewish believers and, especially, to the Messianic Jewish apostles based in Israel.³⁸ Only when believers worldwide are properly aligned with Israel’s apostles will the government be in place for God’s kingdom to be set up on earth and the end-time prophecies of Scripture be fulfilled. In Juster’s 2017 book *Apostolic Ministry and Authority*, he writes, “The government of the Body [of Christ] is birthed out of Israel.”³⁹

Juster has also taught that today’s apostles have authority and functions that are remarkably similar—though not “equal”—to those of Christ’s Twelve apostles. And their authority, like the authority of the Twelve, is regional. It is also pivotal to the establishment of the church’s unity and “Kingdom authority.”

The conclusion of the Synoptic Gospels is that the Twelve are chosen as the original witnesses and governing authorities in the New Covenant community. As such they are the foundational teachers after Yeshua [Jesus]. Though no one can equal their authority, nevertheless the patterns they established for ministry and government are examples for

the authority and ministry to follow. Are we to believe that after their departure there is to be no unifying authority from city to city, or even joining cities, but that all is to be fragmented? . . . As part of the great prayer for unity, Yeshua requests that God send them into the world as He was sent into the world. The context shows that Apostles have an important role in establishing unity and Kingdom authority in the earth. They will carry on a similar ministry and an extension of it. We should assume that apostles today are involved in similar extension with authority and are responsible for the unity of the Body.⁴⁰

Consider Juster's words in light of the "NAR and Christian Nationalism" document's rejection of "the belief that contemporary apostles carry the same authority as did the original Twelve Apostles." Without knowing Juster's teachings, or the teachings of other NAR leaders who signed the document, their rejection might convey the impression that since today's apostles do not claim "the same" authority as the Twelve apostles, therefore they do not claim to possess extraordinary authority. But clearly that is not the case. Consider, also, Juster's words, quoted above, in light of the statement's opposition to "the possible abuse of ecclesial titles that manifests itself in self-proclaimed apostles and prophets claiming territorial authority over pastors in a community, city, or nation." Juster sure seems to teach that apostles have authority over cities and regions.

The restoration of apostles to church government is so essential in Juster's view that it must take place for the Body of Christ to be restored to its "fullness" and witness Christ's return. He writes: "It was not until the Latter Rain movement in the late 1940s that the restoration of apostles and prophets was emphasized as a key to the restoration of the Body to its fullness before the Messiah returns."⁴¹ Juster claims that he and another Tikkun leader, Asher Intrater, received revelation directly from God regarding this restoration.⁴² This revelation is presented as revelation that is essential for the life and growth of the church—indeed, for the global church—despite the document's explicit rejection of any such new revelation. Juster also teaches—in an article aptly titled "Apostolic Order"—that every congregation should be "under apostolic leaders who are chosen by God today and supernaturally confirmed as the servant-overseers of congregations." He adds, "This is an issue of God's government" and that "local congregations are not to be independent."⁴³ Why, then, has Juster signed a document stating that "We reject the belief that every church must be submitted to apostles and prophets to be in right order before the Lord"?

Mark Chironna

Before moving on, we want to mention one more of the document's initial signers who has promoted overt NAR teachings, Bishop Mark Chironna. When Chironna speaks at conferences, he is described as "the revelatory apostle giving access to supernatural strategy."⁴⁴ In his book *The Prophetic Perspective*, he writes of the New Apostolic Reformation as part of a "revolutionary leap in the Spirit that is already underway." It involves "the renewal and restoration of an emerging apostolic company" and "apostolic culture" that is part of God's "government."⁴⁵ He writes, "The pressing need in this hour is for a new apostolic reformation." He says, "In His [God's] intent to fill all things in Christ, the foundation of apostles and prophets must be strong."⁴⁶ What Chironna means when he refers to apostles and prophets is clear: they

are governmental offices in the church. Throughout his book—nearly thirty times—he refers to apostles and prophets as offices. And he teaches that apostles and prophets have a special God-given “anointing” that enables them to receive revelation. Indeed, their receiving revelation is “critical.” He writes, “The anointing is also essential for revelation, which is critical to the function of apostles and prophets. Unless these divine gifts rest on the bedrock of divine revelation, the foundation of the Church will necessarily decay.”⁴⁷ Those who hold the office of apostle function on an unparalleled “level of genius,” according to Chironna.

No matter how many degrees you earn or how many books you read about apostolic ministry, if you are not called to the office of the apostle and have not been groomed (by anointing and formation), as a true apostle, you will not function at the level of genius reserved for the office—and neither will those to whom you minister in the Body of Christ be built up as God desires.⁴⁸

In Chironna’s view, every local church will have apostolic and prophetic offices.

Remember what undergirds the Body of Christ: it is the specific foundation of apostles and prophets. Remember also what holds the building together: He is the Chief Cornerstone, Jesus Christ (see Eph. 2:20). When Paul referred to these apostles and prophets, he was speaking of the apostolic and prophetic offices. A local church will typically have numerous prophetically-motivated people; but a sound foundation will include apostles and true prophets who will serve together to build and ensure the health of the building.⁴⁹

We could say much more about these NAR leaders (and the published views of other initial signers of the Mattera/Brown document), documenting other equally concerning claims. Despite their teachings about the extraordinary authority of today’s apostles and their ongoing provision of critical new revelation, these individuals have signed the “NAR and Christian Nationalism” document, which denies and downplays those same teachings. What are the document’s readers to make of this? How candid and clear is a document that welcomes these NAR leaders into the fold of initial signers?

They Employ Euphemisms

Brown and Mattera say in their document that they “affirm the importance of Ephesians 4:11 ministries for the Church today and believe that such ministry functions have existed throughout Church history, even if not described in these exact terms.” In response, we note that “Ephesians 4:11 ministry” is an understated euphemism used by many NAR leaders to refer to their teaching that present-day apostles and prophets must hold governing offices in the church. But it is important to know that some NAR leaders have moved away from using the word “offices” when referring to apostles and prophets and instead refer to “divine gifts,” “ascension gifts,” “grace gifts,” or “functions” (though some of these terms have been used by some outside of NAR, including classical Pentecostals). They have done this knowing that the term “office” is controversial and that it draws too much direct attention to differences between themselves and other continuationists (including classical Pentecostals and non-NAR charismatics) who believe

there are apostles and prophets today but do not believe that those apostles and prophets govern or hold formal offices.

Observe, for example, that the term “office” is never used in this statement (in reference to apostles or prophets) or in the “Prophetic Standards” statement, also drafted by Mattera and Brown, though multiple leaders named as “initial signers” of both documents do use that term, including Mattera.⁵⁰ It does not matter much whether NAR leaders use the term “functions” or “gifts” or “offices,” if they mean the same thing. Yet by constantly switching their terminology, NAR leaders can mislead people into thinking they are not part of NAR.

Also, we note what Mattera and Brown do not say in their “NAR and Christian Nationalism” statement, namely, that they affirm what is called “the fivefold ministry” that they believe to be reflected in Ephesians 4:11. But we have seen Brown, for example, recently and enthusiastically affirm the fivefold ministry.⁵¹ This doctrine carries more freight than the more neutral-sounding words they use in this statement to express the meaning of this passage. We do not say that everyone who affirms the fivefold ministry is NAR, but this term is used widely by NAR leaders in their teaching that the church should be governed by apostles and prophets.

They Mischaracterize the NAR “Dominion Mandate”

We will not comment at length here on their denial of affiliation with a specific form of “Christian nationalism.”⁵² (In truth, they really aren’t very specific about that.) We note, however, that Mattera and Brown write:

We reject the triumphalist, top-down, take-over of society as part of a so-called “dominion mandate,” also noting that we do not know of any major Christian movement that espouses such a top-down, take-over mentality.

Despite their rejection here of the “dominion mandate,” many NAR leaders have indeed taught that the church, under the leadership of apostles, has a mandate to take dominion (or sociopolitical control) of society. That is the case, whether or not they describe that mandate as being enacted through a “triumphalist, top-down, take-over.” The dominion mandate is promoted, by that name, in Lance Wallnau and Bill Johnson’s book *Invading Babylon: The 7 Mountain Mandate*.⁵³

In addition, the dominion mandate seems to be promoted in Mattera’s own book. Note his description of what he calls the “Cultural Mandate of Genesis 1:28” in a book where he advocates the use of Old Testament law (apparently without the death penalty for certain types of offenses) as a “template” for enacting public policy in nations and enacting “possibly even some form of Sabbath laws forbidding certain activity on Sunday that would compete with or impede Sunday church attendance.”⁵⁴

We discuss the NAR dominion mandate in greater detail in our books, along with the “Seven Mountain Mandate,” which, allegedly, is new revelation given by apostles and prophets for fulfilling the dominion mandate by taking control of the seven major societal institutions (government, media, education, church, family, business, and the arts). Wallnau and Johnson promote it as a “strategy” to “take over the world.”⁵⁵ We wonder why Mattera and Brown did not

mention the Seven Mountain Mandate in their recent statement since it is frequently cited by critics of NAR as a concerning doctrine and evidence that NAR seeks to establish a theocracy led by apostles. Failure even to mention the Seven Mountain Mandate (whether by way of affirmation or denial) seems like a glaring omission. And to say that the Great Commission “does not include a mandate to the Church to take over society through geopolitical means” is not to deny that it calls for a takeover by other apostolic means—as many teach.

Lessons Learned from the List of Initial Signers

As we have shown, the meaning of the Mattera/Brown statement emerges more fully when you examine the published statements of the initial signers. Even the most extreme cases are relevant to interpreting the document, since they are authorized signers of the statement. Their views, as detailed elsewhere, represent the outer limit (so far) of what is permitted by the statement. And it forces suspicion about how many signatories privately believe what is permitted at that limit. Here’s what we’re saying. If an individual (such as John Kelly, Dan Juster, or Mark Chironna) is authorized by the framers of the statement to embrace the statement as an official signatory, then the terms of the statement must be understood in a sense that is compatible with their allegiance to what they have published on the topic. What they teach becomes what the statement means.

Closing Observations and Suggestions

In short, the Mattera/Brown statement is gloss and spin, and it does nothing to diminish the real and serious concerns that have been raised by critics of NAR. If anything, it raises concerns about the tactics that increasingly have been deployed to defend NAR leaders and to deflect attention away from their teachings about authoritative apostles and prophets giving new revelation. We conclude with a few general observations and suggestions.

Observation No. 1

Many NAR leaders seek to legitimize and mainstream NAR. For example, in 2018, Mattera wrote about an emerging coalition of Christians, including evangelicals, getting on board with NAR (in an article titled “The NAR and the Restoration of the Apostolic Ministry Today, Part 2”).

I believe that the present embrace of the five-fold ministry of the evangelical pastors in the USA is going to bring a convergence between the charismatic, independent apostolic networks, evangelical networks, and ultimately even evangelical bible confessing denominations. The implications of this will be extraordinary! The church will go from being pastorally led to apostolically led and prophetically inspired.⁵⁶

And the International Coalition of Apostolic Leaders has written about their efforts, including a specific strategy, “to bring legitimacy to the New Apostolic Reformation.”⁵⁷

So signing this sort of statement might project innocence of being part of NAR, but it really would be no guarantee. If leaders who have explicitly promoted the NAR agenda over

many years can sign this document—including Joseph Mattera, Randy Clark, and Mark Chironna—then the statement does not mean what it may appear to. (The inclusion of New Testament Professor Craig Keener's signature was somewhat unexpected. We have never seen him associated with NAR.)

Many who might see wisdom in signing such a statement, or who might not detect any risk in doing so, may not be alert to specific tensions between what Mattera affirms and denies in this statement and what he has said in the past or written elsewhere. If Brown and Mattera believe their statement to be in harmony with the passages we have quoted here, then their statement probably does not mean what it appears to mean on the surface. Readers who are not familiar with Mattera's teachings will miss the substantial discrepancies we have noted between the plain sense of this statement (insofar as there is a plain sense) and what he has said elsewhere.

Now it's *possible* that Mattera and Brown, in making this new statement public, are tacitly rescinding what Mattera has taught before. There certainly is no explicit declaration to that effect, however. And a natural reading of their document would be one that assumes that they are in no way contradicting or recanting previous claims of his own. The document projects a tone of continuity with all that he's said on the relevant points before. And Brown, in drafting this document together with Mattera, either is not familiar with Mattera's previous teachings, does not see glaring inconsistencies between Mattera's previous teachings and their statements in the document, or is not concerned about those inconsistencies. Whatever the explanation, Brown's ongoing joint ventures with NAR leaders such as Mattera, and his defense of them (despite their extreme teachings), will continue to raise questions about his own affinity with NAR.

Observation No. 2

Some may believe our assessment of the Brown/Mattera statement is too harsh. They might say that we should credit them for attempting to bring correction to dangerous teachings that have gained traction, even if their statement does not go far enough. We certainly do not want to criticize them for seeking to bring much-needed correction. But if they wish to produce a statement that brings true correction, we believe they should not recruit the signatures of NAR leaders who have promoted the very teachings the statement purports to reject, unless those leaders are prepared to recant their years of such teachings. Otherwise, the statement is meaningless.⁵⁸

Observation No. 3

Our judgment in this matter of “gloss” and “spin” and “damage control” is rooted not in some presumed ability to see into their hearts and directly judge their motives. It is grounded in a close analysis of what they have written and said elsewhere and at length. We are simply saying that their statement glosses over significant issues (for example, by not mentioning “offices,” “governing apostles,” or the “Seven Mountain Mandate”) and it spins NAR teachings. (For example, whether or not NAR apostles claim to “carry the same authority as did the original

Twelve Apostles,” they do claim a very similar authority.⁵⁹ As we noted above, they acknowledge that present-day apostles cannot write new Scripture.)

Another example of spin can be seen in the document’s rejection of beliefs that Brown himself, in the past, has said are not widespread. During an informal debate between us and Brown on The Alisa Childers Podcast, Brown said very few people believe the extreme teachings we have attributed to NAR. So why would his new document bother repudiating those beliefs? The influential leaders and masses of people who follow them are mere phantoms, as far as Brown is concerned. Has he changed his mind so that he now finally believes that these teachings are significant problems and must be corrected—meaning the NAR critics have been right all along? Or is the document’s rejection of those teachings merely for show? Either way, we are glad they have repudiated them. But there is much more they have not repudiated.

Brown has stated that he is concerned to repair the damage to the reputations of those he believes have been falsely associated with NAR. That is why we speak of the document as “damage control”; it is an appropriate term given Brown’s own recent efforts, as he has described them. He has publicly discussed his concerns that he has taken flak for sharing platforms with those who have been identified as leaders in NAR.⁶⁰ When we met with him to film for *American Gospel*, he told us that a reason he has been so outspoken against the NAR critics is that his colleagues and friends have had their reputations damaged after being accused of being NAR. So it is no secret that he has been seeking to repair that damage.

Some Suggestions for Joseph Mattera and Michael Brown

If Mattera, Brown, and their associates do not want to be suspected of NAR sympathy, NAR affinity, or outright NAR conviction, then we offer the following recommendations:

- Define their terms with much greater precision than they have so far.
- Abandon this refrain that NAR critics exaggerate.
- Acknowledge openly that NAR is an influential movement that wrongly promotes present-day governing apostles and prophets who exercise extraordinary authority.
- Acknowledge the specific dangers of false teachings/teachers in the NAR movement.
- Emphasize the need for correct doctrine on all points addressed by Scripture, and call out NAR teachings that are an aberration.
- Be prepared to identify examples of the most high-profile NAR leaders they disagree with who would not be free to sign the “NAR and Christian Nationalism” statement.⁶¹

When defining their views about present-day apostles and prophets, we urge them to be candid, thorough, and clear, not leaving out anything that is part of or permitted by their view. They make a big deal about there being apostles and prophets and then are vague about what these are. For example, their statement that apostles are “visionary leaders who are missional, fathering, and pioneering, such as church planters, networkers, or movement leaders, often marked by their focus on gospel expansion beyond one local region” does not say what is the

precise nature of their authority and functions, and how they are related to the other church “offices.” To be truly clarifying, they should answer the pertinent questions, such as the following:

- “Do apostles today have special authority, beyond what they would attribute to the average missionary or church planter? What is the precise nature and role of their authority? What are its specific limits?
- What criteria may be used to confidently and accurately identify a legitimate apostle or prophet of God today?
- What do they believe about the authority and capacity of today’s apostles and prophets with specific regard to new revelations?
- Are there levels of apostolic authority? What is the highest level of authority that an apostle may exercise today?

Until these questions are answered, and the other deficiencies are addressed, the Mattera/Brown statement on “NAR and Christian Nationalism” is far from clarifying. Rather, it fosters confusion and seems like an attempt to disguise the NAR credentials of prominent NAR leaders.

A Suggestion for the Document’s Readers

To further appreciate how negligibly meaningful this statement is, convert each of its denials into an affirmation and each of its affirmations into a denial, then ask this question: Who would affirm or deny *that* proposition? For example, take the following statement of rejection—“We further oppose the possible abuse of ecclesial titles that manifests itself in self-proclaimed apostles and prophets claiming territorial authority over pastors in a community, city, or nation”—and convert it to the following affirmation: “We support the possible abuse of ecclesial titles that manifests itself in self-proclaimed apostles and prophets claiming territorial authority over pastors in a community, city, or nation.” Now ask, who would support that? And then consider, if no one (or almost no one) would support that precisely, how does the Mattera/Brown statement really distance signatories from NAR teachings? It would be good to do this for each of the affirmations and denials or rejections in the statement.

Notes

¹ “NAR and Christian Nationalism,” <https://narandchristiannationalism.com/>.

² Julia Duin, “Pentecostal Leaders Disavow Christian Nationalism in Stark Statement,” *Newsweek*, October 20, 2022, accessed November 11, 2022, <https://www.newsweek.com/pentecostal-leaders-disavow-christian-nationalism-stark-statement-1753287>.

³ Michael Brown, “Why We Wrote Our Statement on ‘NAR’ and Christian Nationalism,” *The Stream*, October 25, 2022, accessed November 11, 2022, <https://stream.org/why-we-wrote-our-statement-on-nar-and-christian-nationalism/>.

⁴ See Brad Christerson and Richard Flory, *The Rise of Network Christianity: How Independent Leaders Are Changing the Religious Landscape* (NY: Oxford University Press, 2017).

⁵ See our books R. Douglas Geivett and Holly Pivec, *A New Apostolic Reformation? A Biblical Response to a Worldwide Movement* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2018, reissue ed.; Wooster, OH: Weaver Book Company, 2014); R. Douglas Geivett and Holly Pivec, *God's Super-Apostles: Encountering the Worldwide Prophets and Apostles Movement* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2018, reissue ed.; Wooster, OH: Weaver Book Company, 2014); Holly Pivec and R. Douglas Geivett, *Counterfeit Kingdom: The Dangers of New Revelation, New Prophets, and New Age Practices in the Church* (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing, 2022); and Holly Pivec and R. Douglas Geivett, *Reckless Christianity: The Destructive New Teachings and Practices of Bill Johnson, Bethel Church, and the Global Movement of Apostles and Prophets* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, forthcoming).

⁶ See Julia Duin, "Charismatics Are at War with Each Other Over Failed Prophecies of Trump Victory," *Religion Unplugged*, January 12, 2021, accessed November 11, 2022, <https://religionunplugged.com/news/2021/1/12/charismatics-are-at-war-with-each-other-over-failed-prophecies-of-trump-victory>.

⁷ Mike Chapman, "'Olive Hasn't Been Raised': After Praying for Miracle, Girl's Family Now Plans Memorial," *Redding Record Searchlight*, December 21, 2019, accessed November 11, 2022, <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2019/12/21/bethel-church-prayer-hasnt-brought-olive-back-life/2724417001/>.

⁸ Michael Brown has chastised us and other critics of NAR for using the term "New Apostolic Reformation" and he has implored us to stop using it. He has suggested that the term "should only be used with reference to the organization once led by Peter Wagner" (even though Wagner did not so limit his use of the term). See, for example, Michael Brown, "Dispelling the Myths About NAR (the New Apostolic Reformation)," *AskDrBrown*, April 30, 2018, accessed December 17, 2022, <https://askdrbrown.org/article/dispelling-the-myths-about-nar-the-new-apostolic-reformation>. But the document's initial signers, and even one of its framers (Mattera), use this term themselves. For example, the International Coalition of Apostolic Leaders (ICAL) used this language on their website as recently as January of this year—juxtaposed with a picture of Jesus and his Twelve apostles—though the term "New Apostolic Reformation" (not the picture) has since been removed. (See International Coalition of Apostolic Leaders, "Definition and Description of an 'Apostle,'" archived at the Wayback Machine January 29, 2022, accessed November 11, 2022, <https://web.archive.org/web/20220129052441/https://www.icaleaders.com/about-ical/definition-of-apostle>.) It is clear by other statements ICAL removed from that page that they viewed the New Apostolic Reformation as a very significant movement for the global and historic church, echoing the controversial teachings of C. Peter Wagner in statements like this one: "The Second Apostolic Age began roughly in 2001, heralding the most radical change in the way church is done since the Protestant Reformation." ICAL also removed Wagner's definition of an apostle, which they had featured for years on their website and attributed to him. (Wagner defined an apostle as a "Christian leader who is gifted, taught, and commissioned by God with the authority to establish the foundational government of the Church within an assigned sphere of ministry by hearing what the Spirit is saying to the churches and by setting things in order accordingly for the advancement of the Kingdom of God.") Also note that the term "new apostolic reformation" could still be found on the website of the United States Coalition of Apostolic Leaders (USCAL), which, notably, is led by Mattera, as recently as November 2022. An article written by Joseph

Mattera and featured on the site spoke of “usher[ing] in a new apostolic reformation.” See Joseph Mattera, “Abuses and Blessings of the Contemporary Apostolic Movement,” United States Coalition of Apostolic Leaders, 2016, archived by the Wayback Machine on November 12, 2022, accessed December 17, 2022, <https://web.archive.org/web/20221112013359/https://www.uscal.us/featured-entries/2017/3/28/abuses-and-blessings-of-the-contemporary-apostolic-movement>. (This article is excerpted from his book *An Anthology of Essays on Apostolic Leadership*. Sometime earlier this month, December 2022, the USCAL website expired and is suddenly no longer available online. But the article can still be found on Mattera’s personal blog at [JosephMattera.org](https://josephmattera.org/abuses-and-blessings-of-the-contemporary-apostolic-movement/): <https://josephmattera.org/abuses-and-blessings-of-the-contemporary-apostolic-movement/> (accessed December 30, 2022). In Mattera’s latest book, released in September of this year (2022), he connects the New Apostolic Reformation named and described by Wagner with the “contemporary apostolic movement” that Mattera promotes. (See Joseph Mattera, *The Global Apostolic Movement and the Progress of the Gospel* [Ames, IA: BILD International, 2022], introduction.) In a recent interview, Mattera acknowledged that he used the term NAR in *An Anthology of Essays on Apostolic Leadership* but did so in “an innocent way” to refer merely to a “postdenominational or non-denominational movement.” (See Joshua Lewis, Michael Rowntree, and Joseph Mattera, “Reviewing the NAR and Christian Nationalism Statement with the Author Joseph Mattera,” YouTube video, 59:29, uploaded by The Remnant Radio, December 12, 2022, accessed December 19, 2022, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0nhIxOs8BfE> [11:00].) But anyone who reads that book can see that he is talking about much more than a non-denominational movement and is promoting many controversial teachings about apostles and prophets. Also note that Michael Brown is a National Council member for USCAL, this despite his criticism of critics of NAR for using the same NAR terminology used by USCAL, ICAL, and other NAR organizations and leaders, including C. Peter Wagner, Ché Ahn, Mark Chironna, and Joseph Mattera. (See C. Peter Wagner, *The New Apostolic Churches* [Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1998]; Ché Ahn, *Modern-Day Apostles: Operating in Your Apostolic Office and Anointing* [Shippensburg, PA: Destiny Image, 2019]; Mark Chironna, *The Prophetic Perspective: Seeing and Seizing Our God-Intended Future* [Shippensburg, PA: Destiny Image, 2013]; and Joseph Mattera, *An Anthology of Essays on Apostolic Leadership* [CreateSpace, 2015].) So, why has Brown urged critics to stop using the term NAR? And why has he sought to downplay the close alignment of Wagner’s teachings with those of many present-day apostles and prophets?

⁹ Rediscover Bethel, YouTube videos (six episodes), uploaded by Bethel, June 2021–July 2021, <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLUaRIP0u98p0clsG0U0jGoU91t15q3-sK>; International House of Prayer, “What is IHOPKC’s Stance on the New Apostolic Reformation?”, accessed December 22, 2022, <https://www.ihopkc.org/press-center/faq/ihopkc-part-new-apostolic-reformation/>.

¹⁰ See, for example, Daniel Kolenda, “What is the N.A.R. and Am I Part of It?,” YouTube video, 1:40:50, uploaded by *Daniel Kolenda: Off the Record Podcast*, May 10, 2021, accessed November 11, 2022, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BzcBsvnErkc&t=2166s>. Also note Mattera and Brown’s words in their “NAR and Christian Nationalism” statement: “We also believe that reports of an alleged conspiratorial, worldwide, dangerous ‘NAR’ movement are highly exaggerated and misleading.”

¹¹ See Geivett and Pivec, *A New Apostolic Reformation?*

¹² See a video clip of Michael Brown’s leading role in the Brownsville Revival—which began on Father’s Day in 1995 at Brownsville Assembly of God in Pensacola, Florida—shown in The

Messed Up Church, “Dr. Michael Brown and Strange Fire at Brownsville,” YouTube video, 5:07, February 21, 2018, accessed November 11, 2022, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aqFsKjP6cHM>.

¹³ See Mattera, *The Global Apostolic Movement and the Progress of the Gospel*, chap. 2.

¹⁴ In his recent book, *The Global Apostolic Movement and the Progress of the Gospel*, Mattera argues that the proper form of church government is not seen in today’s denominational churches, but rather consists of apostles, prophets, and elders. He writes: “While pastors and board of trustees lead denominational churches, apostolic and prophetic leaders along with a team of elders lead the New Testament church. . . . The New Testament pattern for church government is seen in Ephesians 4:11; 1 Timothy 3:1–15, as well as Acts 15 in which the general council for church deliberation is seen to be comprised of apostles, prophets and elders” (chap. 4). Note that many NAR leaders, including Mattera, have stated in their writings that they are not promoting a church hierarchy. But it is clear from their teachings that they believe apostles hold the prime position in church government. For example, in the same book by Mattera cited above, Mattera calls for apostolic leaders to “have an egalitarian spirit,” yet he still insists on “apostolic government,” writing, “The apostolic leaders need to have an egalitarian spirit while being able to exert the apostolic government. What I mean by this is to treat everyone like a peer even if you are their spiritual father or if they are under your oversight” (chap. 5).

¹⁵ Michael Brown, “How to Have a Constructive Conversation About the New Apostolic Reformation,” *Charisma News*, August 15, 2022, accessed November 12, 2022, <https://www.charismanews.com/opinion/in-the-line-of-fire/89901-how-to-have-a-constructive-conversation-about-the-new-apostolic-reformation>.

¹⁶ In addition to the examples we provide in the main text of our response, consider this definition of an apostle currently given on the website of the International Coalition of Apostolic Leaders (ICAL): “An apostle is defined by ICAL as a Christian leader gifted, taught, commissioned, and sent by God with the authority to establish the foundational government of a church or business within an assigned sphere by hearing what the Holy Spirit is saying and one who sets things in order accordingly for the growth and maturity of the group or complex of groups (churches or businesses).” (See International Coalition of Apostolic Leaders, “About ICAL,” accessed November 12, 2022, <https://www.icaleaders.com/about-ical>.) Note that this definition, which is nearly identical to C. Peter Wagner’s definition quoted in note 8 above, requires that apostles receive revelation. The current ICAL site also describes apostles as “generals” and “governors” and it speaks of an apostle as “the strategos, an authorized representative of the government sent to maintain order,” adding, “That is what an apostle of God is: God’s appointed, anointed, authorized ambassador to maintain right government (shaphat) in his sphere of ministry.” (See “Definition and Description of Apostle and Apostolic Leaders,” accessed November 12, 2022, <https://www.icaleaders.com/about-ical/definition-of-apostle>.) The differences in definitions between ICAL and the Mattera/Brown statement are significant given that the current leader of ICAL, the apostle John Kelly, is an “initial signer” of the Mattera/Brown document. This shows that individuals who signed the document invest much more meaning in the term “apostle” than the statement on “NAR and Christian Nationalism” does (and it indicates that the document is not giving its readers the whole story about present-day apostles). (Also note there is evidence that ICAL is presently shifting its definition of “apostle.” Besides the definition we cited above, a different definition is given on another page of the current ICAL site—a definition that is now featured in the very place where Wagner’s definition once was featured. The new definition is broader and, therefore, less controversial—

not to mention that it's circular. The website states: "ICAL believes an 'Apostolic Leader' is a servant-leader with the recognized gift and fruit of an apostle." But ICAL's definition of an apostle varies within pages of their own website. As NAR has become more controversial, both the ICAL definition of apostle and the terms they use for one ["apostle" vs. "apostolic leader"] have been changing.)

¹⁷ Mattera, *An Anthology of Essays on Apostolic Leadership*, chap. 14.

¹⁸ Mattera, *An Anthology of Essays on Apostolic Leadership*, chap. 14.

¹⁹ Mattera, *An Anthology of Essays on Apostolic Leadership*, chap. 10.

²⁰ Mattera, *An Anthology of Essays on Apostolic Leadership*, chap. 8.

²¹ Mattera, *An Anthology of Essays on Apostolic Leadership*, chap. 9.

²² Joshua Lewis, Michael Rowntree, and Joseph Mattera, "Reviewing the NAR and Christian Nationalism Statement with the Author Joseph Mattera," YouTube video, 59:29, uploaded by The Remnant Radio, December 12, 2022, accessed December 19, 2022, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0nhIxOs8BfE> (57:00).

²³ Mattera, *An Anthology of Essays on Apostolic Leadership*, chap. 6.

²⁴ Mattera, *An Anthology of Essays on Apostolic Leadership*, chap. 8.

²⁵ Mattera, *The Global Apostolic Movement and the Progress of the Gospel*, 67.

²⁶ There is evidence that the initial signers of the statement on "NAR and Christian Nationalism" were recruited by Mattera and Brown. The document was initially released with all of these signatures. We would be interested in hearing from Mattera and Brown about how they assembled this group of initial signers. How much care was taken to ensure that only those who could sign in good faith and unequivocal agreement were initially invited (or subsequently permitted) to sign? And why shouldn't observers use what is known about the teachings of these initial signers to determine what the statement actually means?

²⁷ Note that the International Coalition of Apostolic Leaders, which Kelly oversees, established the United States Coalition of Apostolic Leaders, overseen by Mattera. So it is no surprise that Mattera includes Kelly in a list of "outstanding and legitimate apostolic leaders in the Apostolic Reformation," despite Kelly's extreme teachings, which we document here. (See Mattera, "Abuses and Blessings of the Contemporary Apostolic Movement.") Another individual included by Mattera in that list is Bill Hamon, who also promotes extreme NAR teachings, as we have documented in our book *A New Apostolic Reformation?* We think Mattera's promotion of Kelly and Hamon—giving them as examples of model apostolic leaders—is revealing because it shows the types of apostolic leaders Mattera views as legitimate, including those who promote extreme and unbiblical teachings.

²⁸ John Kelly and Paul Costa, *End Time Warriors* (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 1999), introduction and chap. 9.

²⁹ Kelly and Costa, *End Time Warriors*, chap. 3.

³⁰ Kelly and Costa, *End Time Warriors*, chap. 3.

³¹ Kelly and Costa, *End Time Warriors*, chap. 2.

³² John Kelly and Paul Costa, *End Time Warriors*, introduction.

³³ John Kelly and Paul Costa, *End Time Warriors*, chap. 5.

³⁴ John Kelly and Paul Costa, *End Time Warriors*, chap. 8.

³⁵ John Kelly and Paul Costa, *End Time Warriors*, chap. 5.

³⁶ John Kelly and Paul Costa, *End Time Warriors*, chap. 7.

³⁷ David Lazarus, "Messianic Jews Head Toward Breakup," *Israel Today*, February 3, 2020, archived by the Wayback Machine March 28, 2020, accessed November 12, 2022,

<https://web.archive.org/web/20200328011131/https://www.israeltoday.co.il/read/messianic-jews-in-israel-head-toward-breakup/>.

³⁸ Hannah Weiss, “Apostles, Alignment, and That Other ‘A’ Word (Part 1 of 5),” *Kehila News*, April 29, 2018. accessed November 12, 2022, <https://news.kehila.org/apostles-alignment-and-that-other-a-word-part-1/>.

³⁹ Daniel Juster, *Apostolic Ministry and Authority* (Gaithersburg, MD: Tikkun International, 2017), 5.

⁴⁰ Juster, *Apostolic Ministry and Authority*, 9.

⁴¹ Juster, *Apostolic Ministry and Authority*, 48.

⁴² Dan Juster, “Restoring the Church and Israel,” YouTube video, 22:53, uploaded by Revive Israel Tikkun Global, November 21, 2017, accessed November 11, 2022, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Geyh3Nu3NME&t=11s>.

⁴³ Daniel C. Juster, “Apostolic Order,” Restoration from Zion (a ministry of Tikkun International), accessed November 11, 2022, <https://restorationfromzion.com/apostolic-order/>.

⁴⁴ “Come to the Engagement Conference in September.” YouTube video, 1:09, uploaded by The Life Center Atlanta, June 5, 2018, accessed November 12, 2022, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JyRLbuAxxk0>.

⁴⁵ Mark Chironna, *The Prophetic Perspective: Seeing and Seizing Our God-Intended Future* (Shippensburg, PA: Destiny Image, 2013), afterword.

⁴⁶ Chironna, *The Prophetic Perspective*, chap. 11.

⁴⁷ Chironna, *The Prophetic Perspective*, chap. 11. According to Chironna and other NAR leaders, the *doma* are the five governing leaders God has given the church (apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers). These NAR leaders base their doctrine about the *doma* on Ephesians 4:11.

⁴⁸ Chironna, *The Prophetic Perspective*, chap. 3.

⁴⁹ Chironna, *The Prophetic Perspective*, chap. 11.

⁵⁰ See, for example, Mattera, *An Anthology of Essays on Apostolic Leadership*, chapters 9 and 14. In Mattera’s new book *The Global Apostolic Movement and the Progress of the Gospel*, he writes: “The present apostolic paradigm will bring a course correction to the so-called New Apostolic Reformation (NAR). The Apostolic will no longer be viewed as an office, or a title, but will be used as an adjective, as a ministry function” (introduction). He also warns of “Super Apostles . . . who attempt to usurp authority over pastors because they operate under the belief that ‘Apostle’ is an office, not a mere function.” And he adds, “Although I am not in a relationship with any or know of any so called ‘Super Apostles’, there may indeed be some in the Body of Christ” (note 52). We think it is good that he warns people about such “super apostles.” But he says he does not know of any such individuals. Yet, as we have noted, multiple initial signers (including himself) have promoted the teaching that apostles and prophets hold “offices” in church government. Even the organization led by him, USCAL, referred to apostles and prophets as holding church “offices” in the “Statement of Faith” found on USCAL’s website, as recently as last month (November 2022), before the USCAL website expired. That statement of faith was archived by the Wayback Machine and can be accessed there. (See United States Coalition of Apostolic Leaders, “Statement of Faith,” archived by the Wayback Machine November 12, 2022, accessed December 27, 2022, <https://web.archive.org/web/20221112224037/https://www.uscal.us/statement-of-faith.>)

⁵¹ Brown, “How to Have a Constructive Conversation About the New Apostolic Reformation.”

⁵² We are not saying that Brown and Mattera are Christian nationalists. But the clarity they promise is not a standout feature of their statement.

⁵³ See the chapter written by C. Peter Wagner titled, “Stewarding for Reformation,” in Lance Wallnau and Bill Johnson, *Invading Babylon: The 7 Mountain Mandate* (Shippensburg, PA: Destiny Image, 2013), chap. 4.

⁵⁴ Mattera, *An Anthology of Essays on Apostolic Leadership*, chapters 9 and 18. In Mattera’s new book *The Global Apostolic Movement and the Progress of the Gospel*, he writes, “We need to have an understanding of the ‘Cultural Mandate’ (Genesis 1:28) that precludes top-down Dominionism” (chap. 13). He also writes that the Cultural Mandate is about exerting “dominion” over the land, plants, and animals—not over other human beings (see the introduction). We are not sure how he reconciles these statements about the Cultural Mandate with the public policies he advocates in his earlier book, *An Anthology of Essays on Apostolic Leadership*.

⁵⁵ Wallnau and Johnson, *Invading Babylon*, chap. 2.

⁵⁶ Joseph Mattera, “The NAR and the Restoration of Apostolic Ministry Today, Part 2,” JosephMattera.org. April 18, 2018, archived at the Wayback Machine April 21, 2018, accessed November 12, 2022, <https://web.archive.org/web/20180421173855/https://josephmattera.org/the-nar-and-the-restoration-of-apostolic-ministry-today-part-2/>.

⁵⁷ Mark W. Pfeifer, “AIM Strategy,” International Coalition of Apostolic Leaders, PDF, preserved by ChurchWatchCentral.com accessed November 12, 2022, <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/54ee03eae4b079e02992c160/t/555dc044e4b0d64b50ff2f7a/1432207428329/The+AIM+Strategy.pdf>.

⁵⁸ Signing the statement is not evidence that signatories have recanted.

⁵⁹ Others have made this same observation of “damage control.” See Frederick Clarkson and André Gagné, “Statement on NAR and Christian Nationalism Answers Few Questions But Exposes Growing Rift,” *Religion Dispatches*, October 21, 2022, accessed December 28, 2022, <https://religiondispatches.org/statement-on-nar-christian-nationalism-answers-few-questions-but-exposes-growing-rifts-in-the-movement/>.

⁶⁰ Michael Brown, “The Truth About NAR and 7 Mountain Theology,” The Line of Fire with Dr. Michael Brown, uploaded by AskDrBrown, YouTube video, 58:52, February 5, 2018, accessed December 28, 2022, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P73T0iQzJQA>.

⁶¹ Given what we have demonstrated about the explicit teachings of several who have signed the Mattera/Brown statement, it is anyone’s guess what figures in the NAR movement Mattera and Brown truly wish to distance themselves from. We cannot simply assume that they wish to distance themselves from the clearest cases of NAR allegiance who have not signed the statement. For all we know, some of those people were invited by Mattera and Brown to sign the document, but, for reasons of their own, those people preferred not to sign. We suspect that it would be awkward for either Brown or Mattera to identify specific individuals whose signatures they would not permit. That would invite comparisons between those who are excluded from signing and those who have already signed. And the contrast between the two groups might be negligible. Alternatively, it may be that only a handful of the most extreme outliers would be prevented from signing the statement; but then it would be less clear why Mattera and Brown believe their statement is needed. In any case, the roster of initial signers demonstrates that the criteria for being permitted to sign are quite flexible.