

Michael Brown: Unapologetically Affirming Our Statement on Christian Nationalism

Read Time: 4 Minutes 3 Seconds

Last week, Dr. Joe Mattera and I released, “A Collective Statement on the ‘New Apostolic Reformation’ (NAR)” and ‘Christian Nationalism.’” It was signed initially by 64 Christian leaders, some of them representing whole denominations or ministry networks, and the number of other leaders signing on is growing by the hour.

But why did we write this statement in the first place? What were our motivations and what was our purpose?

I should state first that Dr. Mattera and I submitted the statement to a larger circle of leaders, including biblical scholars, theologians, pastors, leaders of apostolic and prophetic networks and others. We listened to them carefully, revising and correcting and expanding the statement as best we could to reflect the important input we received. But in the end, we take responsibility for the statement, and comments and criticism should be directed to us.

As to why we penned the statement in the first place, there were two primary reasons.

First, we wanted to take the narrative into our own hands, sharing with both the church and the world what we really believed and why we believed it.

What did we believe when it came to apostolic and prophetic ministry today? How did these ministries interface with local

churches and local leaders? What were the abuses we rejected? What concerns did we have? And did we identify with what is widely called “NAR” today?

As for “Christian nationalism,” it can be a benign term, a beautiful term or a very dangerous term.

How did we define it? What did we affirm was healthy (in terms of national identity and national security)? What did we consider unhealthy and even dangerous (in terms of marrying politics with the gospel or conflating national identity with the kingdom of God)? What connection, if any, exists between “NAR” and “Christian nationalism,” and where did we stand concerning this connection?

Second, we were acutely aware that, with the 2022 and then 2024 elections looming near, there would be growing concerns about alleged Christian dominionist movements. These concerns would come from the left-leaning media in particular, who would often group all conservative Christians involved in politics with those espousing an unhealthy dominion theology.

We expected that the world would paint with an increasingly broad (and sometimes reckless) brush, mingling together some genuinely dangerous, “Christian” rhetoric with the valid concerns of millions of conservative Christians. The statement was our way of setting the record straight for those who wanted to know the truth.

That being said, we did not think for a moment that we could stem the tide of unbalanced and, at times, hysterical secular reporting. And we fully embrace the reproach of the cross and the slander of the world when it comes to our biblically based stands.

We recognize that to the extent we represent Jesus to the world, we will be treated as He was treated. And we consider it a high honor to be maligned and rejected for the sake of righteousness (Matthew 5:10-12; 10:24-25; John 15:18-20; Acts

5:41; 2 Timothy 3:12).

At the same time, we consider it shameful when the church draws the mockery of the world because of scandals. Or because we have become the appendage (or tool) of a political party (or leader). Or because we have compromised our ethics for the sake of earthly power.

We also did not think for a moment that our statement would stem the tide of criticism from within the body related to apostolic and prophetic ministry today. Just as Jesus and Paul had their critics, every leader in church history has had his or her critics, especially those who were spiritual pioneers. So be it.

That criticism, too, is a badge of honor, as long as it comes as the result of us affirming what is true and biblical and right.

At the same time, there are many valid criticisms of apostolic and prophetic abuses today, criticisms which we affirm and which we have spoken against for years as well.

Now, here in our own words, we have stated what we do believe and do not believe, thereby separating fact from fiction for those who want to know the truth.

Yet our statement was not a response to all critics, in which case we would have needed book-length refutations to expose some of the errors and exaggerations and misstatements and misconceptions.

But now, by looking at the names of those who signed on to the statement, everyone can see what we actually do and do not believe on a number of critically important points of theology and practice.

As for leaders who did not sign on, it's best to ask them directly why they chose not to.

In some cases, they represent large networks of leaders and do not make public statements on their own, since they cannot represent everyone in their network (or denomination). In other cases, they simply have policies not to sign public statements or because they have drawn up their own statements. In still other cases, people did not sign on because they did not agree.

That's why it is best not to draw conclusions without inquiring directly as to why a given leader did not sign on. But for those who did sign on, we urge you to take them at their word. What they signed is what they believe.

As for Dr. Mattera and I, we unashamedly and unapologetically affirm what we affirmed and reject what we rejected. There are no punches pulled and no holds barred.

To read the statement or to add your signature as a leader, [click here](#).

May the Lord bring about what is best for the church and the nations! {eo}

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