



Church Position: New Apostolic Reformation (NAR) | Deliverance Ministries

The New Apostolic Reformation (NAR) is a broad movement that emerged in the late 20th century, characterized by claims of restored apostolic and prophetic offices, extra-biblical revelation, territorial spiritual warfare, and various practices that depart from historic Christian orthodoxy. We recognize that most churches in this movement would not self-identify with the NAR label; however, it is a modern term used to describe congregations with these characteristics. While many sincere believers have been influenced by NAR teachings, and while we affirm that God still works powerfully today through the Holy Spirit, we believe this movement contains serious theological errors that distort the Gospel, undermine biblical authority, and have led to documented cases of spiritual manipulation and harm.

As a church leadership team, we recognize that some who have been part of NAR-influenced churches are genuine believers who love Jesus. Our heart is not to belittle or attack another style of ministry or worship, but to provide clear biblical teaching that protects our congregation from theological error. This statement is offered in love, with the goal of helping our church family discern truth from error and build our faith on the solid foundation of Scripture.

Before we address our concerns, we want to proclaim what we believe about our magnificent and powerful God. We serve a God who works miracles, heals the sick, delivers the oppressed, and pours out His Spirit on His people. We believe in the power of prayer, the reality of spiritual warfare, and the ongoing work of the Holy Spirit in the church today. We celebrate those who faithfully use their spiritual gifts to glorify Christ and serve His church. We affirm that God still calls and equips leaders to build up the body of Christ, and we rejoice when believers walk in the power of the Spirit. Our concern is not with God's supernatural power or the spiritual gifts themselves, but with how they are misused and distorted. The danger comes when we focus so intensely on signs and wonders that we love the miraculous gift more than the Giver Himself. This statement provides clarity on our position regarding NAR theology and miraculous ministries, so that we might pursue God in biblical ways that honor Him.

Claims to New Apostles, Prophets, and Ongoing Revelation

The NAR movement teaches that God is restoring the offices of apostle and prophet to the church today, with these leaders receiving new revelations that function with authority equivalent to Scripture. This represents a fundamental challenge to the sufficiency and finality of God's Word.

Understanding Ephesians 4 and the Five-Fold Ministry

Much NAR theology is built upon a specific interpretation of Ephesians 4:11-16, which lists apostles, prophets, evangelists, shepherds/pastors, and teachers. NAR proponents teach that all five offices are ongoing roles in the church today with equal authority and function. However, this interpretation represents a relatively modern development, primarily emerging from charismatic movements in the 20th century.

Ephesians 4:11-13 - "And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ."

- We do not believe this passage establishes an ongoing governmental structure with five equal offices for all churches. Rather, Paul is providing a broad overview of how Christ has equipped His Church from its founding through the apostles and prophets to its ongoing growth through evangelists and pastor/teachers.
- At Selah Hills Church, we hold to the historic church interpretation of this passage, which recognizes a distinction between the foundational offices (apostles and prophets) and the ongoing ministry roles (evangelists, pastor/teachers). While we recognize that sincere

Bible-believing scholars may interpret this passage differently, we hold to the historic position that apostles and prophets served a unique, foundational role in establishing the church and providing the inspired Scripture that would guide all future generations.

- The offices of evangelist and pastor/teacher continue in the church today as God raises up leaders to proclaim the Gospel, shepherd local congregations, and teach sound doctrine. While some in the Church today might operate in missional-frontier or prophetic capacities, the authoritative offices of apostle and prophet—which involved receiving direct revelation from God and establishing the foundation of Christian doctrine—were unique to the early church and are not replicated today.
- This has been the consistent understanding of the church throughout its history, from the early church fathers through the Reformation and more. The modern five-fold ministry interpretation, which treats all five offices as equally ongoing and authoritative, lacks historical precedent.

Ephesians 2:19-20 - "So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone."

- The church is built on the *foundation* of the apostles and prophets. A foundation is laid once, not continuously rebuilt. The apostolic office was unique to those who were eyewitnesses of the resurrected Christ and commissioned directly by Him (Acts 1:21-22, 1 Corinthians 9:1).
- We recognize that in the early church, God used prophetic visions and revelations to guide significant decisions, such as Peter's vision leading to the Gospel going to the Gentiles (Acts 10), the Holy Spirit directing the church at Antioch to commission Paul and Barnabas (Acts 13:2), and Agabus prophesying about famine (Acts 11:27-28). These instances occurred during the foundational period when the New Testament canon was still being written and apostolic authority was actively establishing doctrine and practice.
- We also affirm that God can and does speak to His people today through promptings, impressions, visions, and prophetic insight to provide guidance, encouragement, and direction. However, any such guidance must be tested against Scripture (1 Thessalonians 5:21), submitted to wise counsel and church leadership, and never regarded as carrying the same authority as God's written Word. No new revelation will be given that carries the authority of Scripture. The Holy Spirit will never contradict or add to what He has already inspired in God's Word (2 Timothy 3:16-17). New Testament prophecy is for encouragement, exhortation, and consolation (1 Corinthians 14:3), not for establishing new doctrines or ecclesiastical agendas.
- The Old Testament warns of false prophets (Deuteronomy 13:1-5, 18:20-22, Jeremiah 14:14, 23:16, Ezekiel 13:2-3), as does the New Testament (Matthew 7:15-20, 24:11, 24:24, 2 Peter 2:1). Scripture also warns of false apostles (2 Corinthians 11:13-15). We must heed Scripture while asking the Holy Spirit to lead us into all truth when encountering any new movement.

Hebrews 1:1-2 - "Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world."

- God's final and complete revelation is Jesus Christ. The revelation given through Christ and recorded by the apostles is sufficient and complete.
- The canon of Scripture is complete and closed. We do not need new apostles giving new revelation to supplement what God has already revealed in His Word.

John 14:26 - "The Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you."

- We fully affirm the biblical teaching that the Holy Spirit speaks, teaches, and guides believers. Jesus promised that the Holy Spirit would teach us all things and remind us of everything He said, that He would testify about Christ (John 15:26), and that He would guide us into all truth (John 16:12-15). The Holy Spirit actively works in believers' lives today, illuminating Scripture, convicting of sin, empowering for service, and providing wisdom and guidance.
- However, we must understand the context of Jesus' promises about the Holy Spirit. In John 14-16, Jesus is speaking primarily to His apostles, promising them that the Spirit would guide them into all truth as they wrote the inspired Scriptures that would become the New Testament. The Holy Spirit did exactly this—He guided the apostles to record God's complete and final revelation in Christ.

- For believers today, the Holy Spirit's primary ministry is not to give new revelations equal to Scripture, but to illuminate and apply the revelation already given. He teaches us by opening our eyes to understand God's Word (Ephesians 1:17-18), He guides us by conforming us to the image of Christ through Scripture (2 Corinthians 3:18), and He speaks to us through the written Word He has inspired (2 Timothy 3:16-17). The Holy Spirit will never contradict Scripture or give new truth that adds to the completed canon, because His ministry is to glorify Christ and testify to the truth already revealed (John 16:14).

Revelation 22:18-19 - *"I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book, and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book."*

- While this passage is dealing specifically with the Book of Revelation, the broader principle is abundantly clear that Scripture warns against adding to or taking away from God's revealed Word (Proverbs 30:5-6, Deuteronomy 4:2, 12:32).
- NAR leaders who claim to receive "words from the Lord" that direct strategic decisions, predict future events, or establish new theological frameworks are effectively adding to Scripture, regardless of their claims to honor the Bible.

Distortions of the Gospel and Core Theology

NAR theology often includes teachings that distort the biblical Gospel, including an overemphasis on signs and wonders as validation of ministry, prosperity gospel elements, and a works-based approach to spiritual authority.

2 Corinthians 11:3-4 - *"But I am afraid that as the serpent deceived Eve by his cunning, your thoughts will be led astray from a sincere and pure devotion to Christ. For if someone comes and proclaims another Jesus than the one we proclaimed, or if you receive a different spirit from the one you received, or if you accept a different gospel from the one you accepted, you put up with it readily enough."*

- Paul warns that false teachers can proclaim "another Jesus" and "a different gospel." We must guard the purity of the Gospel message.
- The biblical Gospel is about salvation from sin through faith in Christ's atoning death and resurrection, not primarily about earthly prosperity, supernatural experiences, or spiritual dominion over territories.

Isaiah 61:1-3 - *"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."* (also, Luke 4:18-19)

- We fully affirm the ministry of Jesus as described in Isaiah 61:1-3 and demonstrated in Luke 4:18-19. Jesus' earthly ministry did include healing the sick, delivering the demonized, and setting captives free—and these demonstrations of God's power authenticated His message and revealed the kingdom of God breaking into a broken world.
- However, we must recognize that Jesus' physical healings and deliverances pointed to the greater spiritual reality of salvation from sin. When Jesus healed the paralytic, He first said, "Your sins are forgiven," demonstrating that spiritual healing is primary (Mark 2:5-12). The Gospel is ultimately about eternal salvation, reconciliation with God, and freedom from the penalty and power of sin—not primarily about temporal physical healing or earthly prosperity. While God still heals, delivers, and works miracles today as demonstrations of His kingdom power, the central message of the Gospel remains "repent and believe" (Mark 1:15), and the greatest miracle is a soul saved from eternal death.

1 Corinthians 1:22-24 - *"For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God."*

- The focus of Christian ministry is Christ crucified, not the pursuit of signs and wonders as proof of spiritual authority. While God does work miracles, the NAR movement's constant emphasis on the miraculous as validation of ministry mirrors the demand for signs that Jesus rebuked.
- Jesus pointed to only one ultimate sign—the sign of Jonah (Matthew 12:39-40, Luke 11:29-30). Just as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so Jesus would be

three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. The sign Jesus offers is His death, burial, and resurrection—the Gospel itself. There is no greater sign, wonder, or miracle than a person who was dead in trespasses and sin, who repents and believes in Jesus for salvation, and is raised to new life in Christ (born again) with eternal life (Ephesians 2:1-5, John 3:3-7). This is the greatest demonstration of God's power—not physical healings or supernatural manifestations, but the miracle of regeneration and the transformation of a human heart.

- We believe that signs and wonders are normative for breaking into new Gospel frontiers and unreached areas or hearts, but they are not to be normative as the primary evidence of a Spirit-filled church among existing believers.
- According to 1 Corinthians 13, the evidence of a Spirit-filled church is not signs and wonders, but love. Paul makes this clear when he writes, "If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing" (1 Corinthians 13:1-2).
- Further, Galatians 5:22-23 teaches us that the evidence of a Spirit-filled believer is not signs and wonders, but the fruit of the Spirit—"love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control." These are the qualities and characteristics of Jesus being formed in our lives as we seek to put off the influences of the world and our flesh in order to become more like Christ. The Gospel itself is the power of God for salvation (Romans 1:16), and the transformation of character is the clearest evidence of the Spirit's work.

Galatians 1:6-9 - *"I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting him who called you in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel—not that there is another one, but there are some who trouble you and want to distort the gospel of Christ. But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to the one we preached to you, let him be accursed."*

- Paul pronounces a severe warning against any gospel that distorts the message of grace in Christ. NAR teachings that emphasize spiritual techniques, territorial warfare strategies, and prophetic "words" as necessary for spiritual breakthrough distort the sufficiency of Christ's finished work on the cross.

Incorporation of New Age and Mystical Practices

Many NAR-influenced churches have incorporated practices that closely resemble New Age mysticism, contemplative practices, and techniques that emphasize subjective experience over biblical truth.

Colossians 2:8 - *"See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world, and not according to Christ."*

- We are warned against practices rooted in worldly philosophies rather than in Christ's Word.
- Practices like "soaking prayer" (lying down to absorb God's presence through music and atmosphere), "glory clouds" (claiming physical manifestations of God's presence), and "grave soaking" (lying on graves of dead revivalists to absorb their anointing) lack any biblical precedent and can open believers to spiritual deception.
- In recent years, concerns have also been raised regarding certain prophetic ministries within the NAR, including allegations that "words of knowledge" have relied upon publicly accessible information rather than divine revelation. Practices that resemble cold reading, data gathering, observational profiling, or other natural means of obtaining personal information can create the appearance of supernatural revelation and therefore require careful discernment. Scripture warns that signs and wonders, even when impressive, are not in themselves proof of divine authority (Deuteronomy 13:1-3, Matthew 24:24).

Deuteronomy 18:10-12 - *"There shall not be found among you anyone who burns his son or his daughter as an offering, anyone who practices divination or tells fortunes or interprets omens, or a sorcerer or a charmer or a medium or a necromancer or one who inquires of the dead, for whoever does these things is an abomination to the LORD."*

- God strictly forbids occult practices, including divination and seeking spiritual experiences through mystical means. Some NAR practices, such as "treasure hunting" (using supposed prophetic impressions to find strangers and speak "words" over them) and certain "deliverance" techniques can blur the line between biblical spiritual warfare and occult-like manipulation.

While seeking the wisdom of the Holy Spirit on who and how to minister is vitally important, we must be discerning in our methods.

1 John 4:1 - "Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, for many false prophets have gone out into the world."

- Not every spiritual experience is from God. We must test all things against Scripture.
- The emphasis on subjective spiritual experiences and feelings in NAR circles often bypasses the biblical command to test and discern.
- One of the fruits of the Spirit is self-control (Galatians 5:22-23). Therefore, manifestations like "holy laughter," uncontrollable shaking, barking, or flopping appear to be more consistent with demonic influence than with the Holy Spirit's sanctifying work. The Holy Spirit produces order, not chaos (1 Corinthians 14:33, 40).

Prayer Declarations, Decrees, and Dominion Theology

NAR teaching promotes the idea that believers can "decree" and "declare" things into existence, exercising dominion over spiritual territories and circumstances through authoritative speech.

Isaiah 55:8-9 - "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts."

- God is sovereign, and His will is not subject to human declarations. Prayer is submitting to God's will, not commanding spiritual forces or circumstances.
- At the same time, we recognize that Scripture teaches the power and effectiveness of fervent, faith-filled prayer. James 5:17-18 reminds us, "Elijah was a human being, even as we are. He prayed earnestly that it would not rain, and it did not rain on the land for three and a half years. Again he prayed, and the heavens gave rain, and the earth produced its crops." Elijah's prayers were powerful not because he issued decrees or commands, but because he prayed in alignment with God's revealed purposes and submitted himself to God's will.
- Biblical prayer is characterized by humility, submission, and petition (Matthew 6:9-13, Philippians 4:6), not by believers issuing decrees as if they possess God's sovereign authority.

Matthew 6:10 - "Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven."

- Jesus teaches us to pray for God's will to be done, not to impose our will on circumstances through spiritual formulas. 1 John 5:14 affirms this same truth: "If we ask anything according to his will, he hears us." If we are praying outside of God's will, it does not matter how much we declare or decree something to be so, it will not be so.
- Although God desires us to pray continually (1 Thessalonians 5:17), the purpose of prayer is not to direct God or command Him to do our bidding, but rather to align our hearts with His will. Prayer changes us as much as it moves God to act.
- If we could command God through declarations and decrees, the apostle Paul would have been healed of his thorn in the flesh. But God's answer to Paul, who prayed earnestly three times for healing, was "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness" (2 Corinthians 12:9). Paul submitted to God's sovereignty, even when the answer was not what he desired. This is the model of biblical prayer—persistent, faith-filled petition that ultimately surrenders to God's perfect will and timing.

The Seven Mountain Mandate

- The Seven Mountain Mandate teaches that Christians must take strategic "dominion" over seven spheres of cultural influence—religion, family, education, government, media, arts/entertainment, and business—in order to establish God's kingdom on earth and prepare the way for Christ's return. This concept originated from a secular theory about cultural influence and was adopted and Christianized by NAR leaders like Lance Wallnau in the early 2000s. Proponents use passages like Genesis 1:28 ("have dominion"), Isaiah 2:2 ("the mountain of the house of the LORD"), and a reinterpretation of the Great Commission as ("discipling nations") through cultural takeover.
- However, this theology is not explicitly stated in Scripture and represents a fundamental misunderstanding of how God's kingdom advances. The Bible teaches that God Himself will usher in His kingdom in His own way and timing, not through human strategic efforts to seize

cultural power. Jesus said, "My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, my servants would have been fighting" (John 18:36). We await His return when He will establish His reign: "Then comes the end, when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power" (1 Corinthians 15:24). God does not need us to "take dominion" over earthly institutions to accomplish His eschatological purposes—He is sovereign and will establish His kingdom according to His perfect plan.

- We must distinguish between *influence* and *dominion*. Christians are not called to disengage or abandon spheres of culture like education, government, business, or the arts. Rather, we are called to be in the world and to be faithful witnesses in these places, serving as salt and light (Matthew 5:13-16). Salt preserves, heals, and influences; light exposes darkness and points the way. We must be a city on a hill shining the light for all to see.
- Our calling is to "contend for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints" (Jude 3) wherever God has placed us—in schools, workplaces, government, media, and every sphere of life. We engage culture not by aiming to take dominion, but by living out the Gospel with integrity, speaking truth in love, serving our neighbors sacrificially, and making disciples. We influence through faithful presence, good works, loving service, and bold witness.
- Our hope is not in cultural dominance or earthly kingdoms, but in the return of Christ and the establishment of His eternal kingdom. Until then, we live as sojourners and exiles (1 Peter 2:11), faithfully representing Christ in every area of life while recognizing that our true citizenship is in heaven (Philippians 3:20).

False Prophecies and Failed Predictions

NAR prophets have made numerous specific predictions that have demonstrably failed to come true, violating the biblical test for a true prophet.

Deuteronomy 18:21-22 - *"And if you say in your heart, 'How may we know the word that the LORD has not spoken?'—when a prophet speaks in the name of the LORD, if the word does not come to pass or come true, that is a word that the LORD has not spoken; the prophet has spoken it presumptuously. You need not be afraid of him."*

- The biblical standard for a prophet is 100% accuracy. Even one false prophecy disqualifies someone as a true prophet of God.
- NAR leaders have repeatedly made false predictions about elections, national events, and personal circumstances without ever acknowledging these failures or repenting, instead offering excuses like "conditional prophecy" or "we're still learning."

Jeremiah 23:16-17 - *"Thus says the LORD of hosts: 'Do not listen to the words of the prophets who prophesy to you, filling you with vain hopes. They speak visions of their own minds, not from the mouth of the LORD. They say continually to those who despise the word of the LORD, "It shall be well with you"; and to everyone who stubbornly follows his own heart, they say, "No disaster shall come upon you."'"*

- False prophets speak from their own imaginations and tell people what they want to hear.
- The consistent pattern of NAR prophets giving encouraging, feel-good prophecies about prosperity, revival, and victory—without the biblical balance of calls to repentance and warnings of judgment—fits this description.

Problematic Practices: Sozo, Healing Rooms, and Supernatural Schools

Several specific practices associated with NAR-influenced ministries raise significant biblical and practical concerns.

Sozo Ministry

This "inner healing" practice developed at Bethel Church involves guided visualization, asking Jesus to reveal memories, and mystically dialoguing with "Father, Son, and Spirit" in ways that can involve occult-like practices and psychological manipulation disguised as spiritual ministry.

2 Corinthians 10:5 - *"We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ."*

- True spiritual transformation happens through renewing our minds with Scripture (Romans 12:2), not through mystical visualization techniques. We fully recognize that Jesus' ministry

included teaching, healing, and deliverance (Luke 4:18-19), and we affirm that there are times when people do need freedom from demonic oppression before they can fully engage with biblical truth and experience transformation. The demonized man of the Gerasenes is a clear example—Jesus first delivered him from demons, and then he was able to sit at Jesus' feet, clothed and in his right mind, ready to learn (Mark 5:1-20). We believe in the reality of spiritual bondage and the need for biblical deliverance.

- However, Sozo's methods diverge from the biblical model of deliverance. Rather than commanding demons to leave in Jesus' name (as Jesus and the apostles did), Sozo emphasizes guided visualization, "listening" for God's voice to reveal hidden memories, and dialoguing with manifestations of "Father, Son, and Spirit" in ways that can lead people into subjective experiences that bypass biblical truth. These techniques more closely resemble psychological therapy mixed with New Age practices than the straightforward authority over demons demonstrated in Scripture. Such methods can open doors to demonic deception rather than providing genuine freedom, and they create dependency on the Sozo "ministry tool" rather than on Christ and His Word.

Healing Rooms

While we believe God heals and we should pray for the sick, "healing rooms" often promote the idea that healing is guaranteed if one has enough faith, leading to guilt and condemnation when healing doesn't occur.

James 5:14-16 - *"Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith will save the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up."*

- The biblical model for healing prayer involves church elders praying in faith, trusting God's sovereignty, not specialized "healing rooms" run by those claiming special healing authority.
- God's ways are higher than ours, and sometimes His purpose includes suffering and weakness (2 Corinthians 12:7-10). Healing ministries that guarantee results or blame lack of healing on insufficient faith contradict Scripture.

Bethel School of Supernatural Ministry (BSSM) and Similar Programs

These programs teach techniques for accessing the supernatural realm, pursuing signs and wonders, and developing prophetic gifts in ways that prioritize experience over sound biblical doctrine.

2 Timothy 4:3-4 - *"For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths."*

- The pursuit of supernatural experiences and techniques for "accessing" spiritual power reflects a consumer approach to spirituality that seeks experiences rather than sound doctrine.
- True spiritual maturity comes through studying Scripture, godly character development, and humble service, not through supernatural "training" programs.

Spiritual Abuse and Manipulation

The structure of many NAR churches, with their emphasis on apostolic authority, prophetic words directing people's lives, and the pursuit of spiritual experiences, creates an environment prone to spiritual abuse.

Matthew 20:25-28 - *"But Jesus called them to him and said, 'You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. It shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be your slave, even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.'"*

- Church leadership is to be characterized by servant-hearted humility, not by claims to special apostolic or prophetic authority that places leaders above accountability.
- When leaders claim direct revelation from God about individuals' lives, this creates a power dynamic that can silence questions, prevent discernment, and lead to manipulation.

3 John 9-10 - *"I have written something to the church, but Diotrephes, who likes to put himself first, does not acknowledge our authority. So if I come, I will bring up what he is doing, talking wicked*

nonsense against us. And not content with that, he refuses to welcome the brothers, and also stops those who want to and puts them out of the church."

- Leaders who exalt themselves, demand unquestioning loyalty, and punish those who disagree reflect the characteristics of Diotrephes, not godly shepherds.
- Reports of spiritual abuse in NAR contexts often involve leaders using "prophetic words" to control members, shaming those who question teachings, and creating environments of fear disguised as spiritual authority.

Association with False Prophets and Questionable Figures

The NAR movement has consistently platformed and defended individuals who teach blatant heresy and engage in deceptive practices. While we do not judge their hearts, we must evaluate their teaching and practices against Scripture.

2 Timothy 4:3-4 - *"For the time will come when people will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths."*

Benny Hinn

Known for false prophecies, prosperity gospel teaching, staged "healings," teaching heresy (including multiple gods, claiming Jesus took on Satan's nature), and manipulative fundraising. Despite decades of failed predictions and questionable practices, he continues to be embraced by NAR leaders.

Kenneth Copeland

A prominent Word of Faith teacher who has taught that believers are "little gods," that Jesus died spiritually and was "born again" in hell, and that faith is a "force" that can manipulate God. His extreme prosperity teaching has led countless believers into financial ruin while he lives in extraordinary wealth.

Todd White

Associated with leg-lengthening "miracles" (which have been exposed as illusions) and hyper-charismatic practices. White promotes a version of Christianity focused on supernatural power demonstrations rather than the Gospel of repentance and faith. **currently under investigative scrutiny.*

Bill Johnson and Bethel Church (Redding, CA)

Bethel Church has been highly influential in spreading NAR teachings, including claims that Jesus operated only as a Spirit-filled man (effectively denying His deity), "grave soaking" practices, gold dust and feathers appearing as signs of God's presence, and the consistent promotion of false prophets. While Bethel produces worship music that many churches use, we must be discerning about the theological framework from which it emerges and the theology it subtly teaches.

Matthew 7:15-20 - *"Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves. You will recognize them by their fruits... Every healthy tree bears good fruit, but the diseased tree bears bad fruit."*

- We are called to recognize false teachers by their fruit. Consistently false prophecies, manipulative practices, doctrinal error, and spiritual abuse are bad fruit that must be rejected.
- The pattern of NAR leaders defending and partnering with proven false teachers demonstrates a fundamental failure of discernment and a prioritization of experience and influence over biblical faithfulness.

The Danger of NAR-Influenced Worship Music

Much NAR theology is being spread through worship music from their large churches. While worship music can be a beautiful expression of praise, NAR worship often focuses on signs and wonders, subjective experiences, and self-centered declarations rather than the glory of God, the finished work of Christ, and biblical truth.

Colossians 3:16 - *"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God."*

- Worship music should be filled with the Word of Christ, teaching sound doctrine and pointing to God's character and works.

- NAR worship often emphasizes what God will do for us, how we can access His power, and our spiritual experiences—rather than worshiping God for who He is and what He has already accomplished in Christ. While not all songs from NAR-influenced churches are theologically problematic, we must exercise discernment.
- We must be discerning about the theological content of the songs we sing. Music is a powerful teacher, and lyrics that subtly promote NAR theology can shape our beliefs over time.

The Passion Translation: A Dangerous Paraphrase

The Passion Translation (TPT), created by Brian Simmons and promoted heavily in NAR circles, is not a legitimate Bible translation but a highly subjective paraphrase that inserts NAR theology and doctrinal bias into the text. It is not based on rigorous scholarly work but on Simmons' claimed mystical experiences and personal interpretations.

Proverbs 30:5-6 - "Every word of God proves true; he is a shield to those who take refuge in him. Do not add to his words, lest he rebuke you and you be found a liar."

- The TPT adds words, changes meanings, and imports theological concepts that are not present in the original Greek and Hebrew texts.
- Reputable biblical scholars and translation committees have condemned the TPT for its lack of scholarly wisdom and its departure from the biblical text.
- We strongly discourage the use of The Passion Translation and encourage believers to use trustworthy translations like the NKJV, ESV, NASB, or CSB that are based on careful scholarship and faithful translation principles.

Addressing Deliverance Ministries

While distinct from NAR in some ways, many deliverance ministries share similar problematic emphases and theological errors. We affirm that spiritual warfare is real and that demons exist, but we reject unbiblical approaches to deliverance.

Overemphasis on Demonic Activity

Some deliverance ministries see demons behind every sin, struggle, or difficulty, leading to a hyper focus on casting out demons rather than on sanctification through the Spirit and the Word. This approach can often minimize personal responsibility for sin and place excessive focus on external spiritual forces that may or may not be actively present in the issue.

Can Christians Be Demon-Possessed?

Some deliverance ministries teach that Christians can be "demon possessed" or have demons "inside" them that need to be cast out. This contradicts Scripture's teaching that believers are indwelt by the Holy Spirit and that Christ has already defeated Satan.

1 Corinthians 6:19-20 - "Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body."

- Believers are temples of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit does not share His temple with demons.

1 John 4:4 - "Little children, you are from God and have overcome them, for he who is in you is greater than he who is in the world."

- The One who is in believers (the Holy Spirit) is greater than any demonic force. Christians cannot be possessed by demons.
- While Christians can be oppressed or influenced by demonic forces from the outside, and while we must resist the devil (James 4:7), the idea of a Christian being possessed contradicts the reality of the Spirit's indwelling and Christ's complete victory.

Unbiblical Methods and Techniques

Practices such as attempting to identify and name specific demons, lengthy "deliverance sessions," and techniques for discovering "generational curses" lack clear biblical support and can create dependency on deliverance ministers rather than on Christ.

Colossians 2:13-15 - *“And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross. He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him.”*

- Christ has already defeated Satan and demonic forces through His death and resurrection. Our spiritual authority comes from our position in Christ, not from special techniques or formulas.
- Believers are secure in Christ. While we must resist the devil and put on the armor of God (Ephesians 6:10-18), we do this through Scripture, prayer, and walking in the Spirit—not through elaborate deliverance rituals.

Theological Framework: What We Affirm

Our concerns with the NAR movement and problematic deliverance ministries are not about God's power, the reality of spiritual gifts, or the Holy Spirit's ongoing work in the Church today. We affirm all of these biblical truths. Our concerns are about protecting the Gospel, upholding the authority of Scripture, and guarding believers from spiritual deception.

2 Timothy 3:16-17 - *“All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.”*

- We believe the Bible is fully sufficient and final for faith and practice. We do not need new revelation to supplement what God has already revealed in His Word.

1 Corinthians 12:4-7 - *“Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.”*

- We believe spiritual gifts, including prophecy, healing, and miracles, continue today and are given for the evangelism of the world, and the edification and building up of the church.
- However, these gifts must operate within biblical parameters. We are not to abuse the gifts, prioritize gifts over godly character, or focus on the gifts more than the Giver.

Titus 1:9-11 - *“He must hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict it. For there are many who are insubordinate, empty talkers and deceivers... They must be silenced.”*

- Church leaders have a responsibility to protect the flock by exposing and refuting false teaching. Calling out error is not unloving; it is an act of faithfulness to God and love for His people.

Pastoral Encouragement and Call to Action

If you have been influenced by NAR teachings, participated in NAR-related practices, or been part of deliverance ministries that emphasize unbiblical methods, please know that this statement is not meant to condemn you but to call all of us back to biblical faithfulness. Many sincere believers have been caught up in these movements out of a genuine desire to know God and experience His power. We understand that, and we do not question your love for Jesus.

However, we must return to the foundation: God's Word is sufficient. Christ's work is finished. The Holy Spirit is within us. We do not need new apostles, new revelation, or new techniques to experience God's power and presence.

The Reformation principle of Sola Scriptura—Scripture alone—is more relevant today than ever. In an age of subjective experiences, heretical cults, prophetic "words," and claims to new revelation, we must return to the solid foundation of God's written Word as our final authority for doctrine and practice.

Acts 17:11 - *“Now these Jews were more noble than those in Thessalonica; they received the word with all eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so.”*

We call you to examine everything—including this statement—against Scripture. Test all teaching. Be like the Bereans who searched the Scriptures daily. Do not accept claims to prophetic authority or apostolic revelation without testing them rigorously against God's Word.

Practical Steps Forward:

- Ground yourself in Scripture: Read the Bible daily, study it carefully, and let God's Word—not subjective experiences—be your authority (Psalm 119:105, 2 Timothy 2:15).
- Be part of a biblically faithful church: Commit to a church where the Word is preached faithfully, where leadership is accountable, and where the Gospel of grace is central (Hebrews 10:24-25).
- Grow in discernment: Test all teaching against Scripture, ask questions, and don't be afraid to speak up when something doesn't align with God's Word.
- Pursue godly character over experiences: Focus on growing in love, humility, faithfulness, and the fruit of the Spirit rather than chasing supernatural experiences.
- Evaluate your digital diet: Be discerning about the worship music you listen to, the Bible translation you use, and the teachers you follow. Reject sources that promote NAR theology.

If you have questions about these issues or have been hurt by NAR-influenced churches or deliverance ministries, please reach out to our pastoral eldership team. We want to walk with you in processing these issues and helping you grow in biblical discernment.

Our desire is that Selah Hills Church would be a place where God's Word is honored, where the Gospel is clear, where the Holy Spirit is welcomed and encouraged to work according to Scripture, and where believers are equipped to discern truth from error in an age of confusion. We pray this statement helps equip you to stand firm on the solid rock of God's Word.

All for His glory!