

Naked Bible Podcast Transcript

Episode 180

Continuing the NAR Conversation with Dr. Michael L. Brown

October 7, 2017

Teacher: Dr. Michael S. Heiser (MH)

Host: Trey Stricklin (TS)

Guest: Dr. Michael L. Brown (MB)

This episode continues our discussion of the New Apostolic Reformation (NAR) from the previous episode. Our guest on this episode is Dr. Michael L. Brown, biblical scholar and host of the well-known radio show, *Line of Fire*. Dr. Brown has long been part of the charismatic wing of Christianity and has ministered in a wide variety of capacities in that context. He has also been a persistent internal critic of the abuses and fringe behaviors within the charismatic movement. In this episode Dr. Brown relates his own experience with the NAR as an infrequent point of discussion within charismatic circles. He therefore doubts its validity as a movement, though the general influence of charismatic ministry has had great impact despite clear abuses in doctrine and practice.

Transcript

TS: Welcome to the Naked Bible Podcast, Episode 180: Continuing the NAR Conversation with Dr. Michael L. Brown. I'm the layman, Trey Stricklin, and he's the scholar, Dr. Michael Heiser. Hey, Mike, how are you?

MH: Very good, very good. And just like the episode title describes it, we're going to continue what we started last time with Holly Pivec and the criticisms of the New Apostolic Reformation and sharing her concerns. Now we're going to get a little bit of perspective on the other side from someone who's in it and sees positives and certainly some negatives, too.

TS: Personally, I haven't been exposed to anything NAR really, and I got an email from somebody who was talking about another subject and they sent me a link to a video which is the Bethel Music one. I noticed some of the music and some of the people having great conversations in our Facebook group (if you're not in there you need to get in there) about Bethel's music and things of that nature. I played the video and I loved it! I have never really... I'm not that big of a fan of "worship music" (I guess that's what you'd label it as). I know at my own

church I pooh-pooh the music a lot because the songs are like 12-15 minutes long and we've got to stand...

MH: And six words over and over again...

TS: Yes! And as soon as I think that one song is over, right into another song... The last service I went to (it's been awhile) was 45 minutes of standing up and it was nothing but singing. And I was like, "I don't have to time to sit here through 45 minutes of songs."

MH: Have you seen "Ain't Nobody Got Time for That?" [laughter]

TS: And so I'm just not a big fan of worship music. Having said that, Mike, I started listening to... Granted, I didn't listen to *all* the Bethel music. I know they're very popular. But I absolutely loved it. I got goosebumps on some of it.

MH: I'm about the most unmusical person on the face of the earth. Maybe somebody like born in the Antarctica or something...

TS: I'll tell you, I can see what the hype is about! Bethel music is awesome. Granted, I can see the appeal. What's scary... I don't know if "scary" is the right word. But I can certainly see the appeal of how music is drawing in younger crowds. And then also, I haven't seen a lot of them but I watched another video and they started kind of tying in some gifts, like healing and things like that. I could see some of the danger... I don't know if "danger" is the right word. But I could see how you could mix some of the NAR or just charismatic influence into the music through repetitive...

MH: You could mix anything into there, yeah.

TS: I can see where it's a doorway into those thought processes and how it could potentially be abused. But having said all that, I think personally I'm so grounded in my faith that I can still enjoy the music and not feel like I'm being brainwashed or like the piper leading the children out.

MH: See, now you make me want to listen to it just to sort of have that conspiratorial perspective. Again, I am so unmusical. I get mocked all the time at home because I have like 11 songs on my iPhone. The nation could pass a law outlawing music in church and I wouldn't bat an eye. That's just kind of the way it is. [laughing]

TS: Yeah, I don't listen to worship music, either, but let me tell you: I loved it. From the limited sample that I took... I know some people criticize about their lyrics and what-not, and I get all that, but I'm spiritually mature enough to know what's what. Having said that, all things being equal I can enjoy worship music

even if they've introduced in some NAR stuff (or whatever it might be if you don't agree with it). I can still appreciate it.

MH: It's not like baptizing a Madonna song? I've actually heard... I get my kids reporting to me stuff they heard. Like, "That was so-and-so's song! I heard that before and I knew what that song was and it was in church! What are they doing?" So it's not like that?

5:00 **TS:** No, no. This is all original.

MH: Again, I'm not musically informed enough to know if my kids are just yanking my chain or if they're alarmed and telling me... This isn't our church. This isn't happening where we go (Grace in Bellingham). My kids tend to go to lots of different things—youth rallies and groups and what-not. I've heard some strange stuff. [laughing] Let's just put it that way!

TS: So that's why I'm interested in this whole NAR conversation, and hopefully Dr. Brown can squash some of the fears that we have out there. Because after seeing the music, I love it! But people pooh-pooh Joel Osteen. I'll listen to some of his stuff and I'm like "Yeah, I love that stuff! That's right!" You know? Amen!

MH: It makes you feel good. [laughs]

TS: Yeah! And there's a place and a time for all of that stuff.

MH: Well, I'm expecting Mike to be halfway between Holly and me. [laughs] Or something like that. I'll put it the other way around—I'm going to be halfway between Holly and Mike. That's the correct way to put it. I'm glad that he has decided to come on board here and talk to us. We should get him up here now and begin the discussion.

Well, it's great to have Michael Brown on the Naked Bible Podcast. I've been on Mike's show a couple of times and he's been very kind and gracious helping to promote *Unseen Realm* and to just have some good discussion about biblical theology and the biblical text. I didn't really imagine I'd get you on this show, Mike, as quickly as this. But I think the circumstances are good to help further the discussion—to have sort of a balance to the earlier interview with Holly. Thanks for being on here!

MB: My joy to be with you!

MH: Great! I want everybody to hear a part of the email I sent to Mike as preparation for this. I gave him a heads-up after the earlier interview, since he

was mentioned in that interview. Again, I've known Mike for a while. We've met for about seven seconds face-to-face at the Dallas airport. [laughs] But we've spent time corresponding with each other and, of course, I was on his show, as well. So I wanted to give him a heads-up. But here's part of what I sent to him. I have some personal thoughts in here, and then to sort of help give him some context for what we wanted to do here, I wrote:

The NAR has a lot of wackiness going on, but also a lot of sincere people in it. Holly admitted the latter, though she thinks the wider "thing" is dangerous. I think she has a point but I'm also sure there are a lot of good people who are touched by this in some way that don't give the organizational structure or agenda a second (or even first) thought.

For me, the dangers are: (1) the authority claims related to networks of churches, (2) theonomy talk (certainly not isolated to NAR), and (3) defining one's relationship with God by "gift performance" vs. character and faithfulness. I've seen the latter destroy people personally. More than once. Historically we've seen #2 happen. Church-state marriages don't work out well. In a nutshell, I have a very low view of people who use the Bible or the cross to manipulate others, or who conflate the kingdom of God with political power and influence.

I don't care much about the gifting issues. I have problems with some of the gift talk (like you can hold classes to teach people how to do XYZ gift — I don't see that anywhere in the NT - or that techniques of spiritual warfare involve things like using dance and tambourines — actually saw that one a few days ago), but God can do what he wants when he wants with whom he wants to do it.

I'm not your classic cessationist. I actually don't think the terms mean a whole lot anymore. They just don't allow nuancing. We got into this a little bit in this past week's live stream. I did a live stream with my friend, Rich Baker. We were at a coffee house in town. Rich has been in the major NAR and Charismatic conferences and lots of churches associated with both NAR (as they would affiliate with NAR in some way) or those who don't. He actually helped organizationally with some of those, and so he knows some of the major figures and talked really positively about them. So if you haven't watched the live stream, you should. He's also seen a lot of crazy stuff, but also a lot of good people who want to serve the Lord and are actively doing so right now. And I'm the same, though my experience is limited. This audience knows, of course, that I spend a lot of time on what I affectionately call "Christian Middle Earth." Within that orbit, there are a lot of people who would be in the Charismatic circle. Most of them would probably not have heard of the NAR, because I've actually asked a few and gotten blank expressions a lot. But I enjoy them, and I like my time in Middle Earth. You've heard me talk about this before. I might be talking to a person and think that the idea they're asking me to consider doesn't have a prayer of being

10:00

correct, but if they're not harming the gospel, diluting it, defaming it, driving people away from faith, preaching another gospel—their heart is in the right place—I'm just not going to rain on their parade. I'm not going to create an antagonistic sort of relationship.

The thing that really concerns me is when people take something they're passionate about and they elevate it to the level of the gospel or they force it on other people. I'm not going to name a name here, but I know of someone who was doing a TV show—a show that is absolutely having really important figures from the New Apostolic Reformation on it—and right before the show, the host ambushed this guy and said, "I can't have you on unless you speak in tongues." And so the guy like peppered him, "Just say this" and "say that, do these syllables" and that. The guy felt cornered and he just blathered something. "Okay, you're good now." That's just aberrant doctrine. That's spiritual abuse. This wasn't me personally because my answer would have been, "Well, then, you can fill my empty chair because we're done here." That's the kind of thing that I don't like to see. I care that people aren't lorded over, and I don't want to see doctrine shelved in favor of experience. But that isn't to deny that God can do things experientially.

So we wanted to have Mike on because he is linked into this tradition in some way, but I want to let him tell us what that means. So as we get started here, Mike, how would you define all this stuff? What is the NAR to you and how do you articulate the difference between that term and Pentecostals/Charismatics/Vineyard, or any other adjective you care to throw in here?

MB: Sure thing. It's great to have this time to talk. When I was a boy, we traveled across country as a family—my sister and I and my mom and dad. I remember we were in Texas and my dad ordered a New York cut steak. I remember he said, "I've lived in New York all my life, and I've never seen a New York cut steak." In other words, in Texas they thought there was such a thing, but as a lifetime New Yorker he had never heard of it. So commonly, when people attack me about the NAR or whatever... In Charismatic/Pentecostal circles (which I've been in for the better part of the last 46 years), no one has heard of it and no one knows what in the world you're talking about. So this idea that there is this thing that's controlling all these churches... A DVD just came out and said they have over 300 million people worldwide. That's a complete myth. That's basically like the Nephilim or the Illuminati and they rule everything and Michael Heiser is the honorary president of the whole thing.

MH: [laughs] No, no—I'm a Jesuit. Get it right!

MB: Sorry, sorry. Okay. I mean, I get called everything day and night. I am, by the way, "an apostle and a leader in the NAR," and then my great sin is that I deny it on top of that! [laughs]

15:00

Let me say a few things. Number one, the Charismatic movement spreading around the world is the greatest harvest of souls in the history of the Church, in terms of numbers of people coming to faith around the world. Many church historians/missiologists will attest to that. Number two, there are lots of abuses, lots of errors—especially as it spread very rapidly. If you're in, say, kind of a Baptist or Presbyterian tradition church, a lot of the abuses will be spiritual deadness—spiritual coldness. A lot of abuses in the Charismatic side will be loud, outward spiritual abuses. Those exist. I can tell you what I've written to address abuses—about a book I have coming out next year that addresses abuses. I'll gladly tell you about that. But when it comes to "the NAR"... As I understand this, it's associated with Dr. Peter Wagner. Long before I ever heard of Peter Wagner, I concluded (based on scripture) that there were small "a" apostles and prophets that continue to minister, based on Ephesians 4 and 1 Corinthians 12, and that they have been with us through church history, even if we didn't call people by that name. In my mind, Hudson Taylor would have been an apostolic leader going to plant in new territories and a spiritual father who gave birth to many other works. I look at a man like Allan Moeller (who is a non-Charismatic) as being a prophetic voice in the Body today. Again, he's a non-Charismatic—and perhaps even anti-Charismatic in that way.

So I believe those things, just based on my study of scripture. And in the different circles where I traveled spiritually, many people believed in those. And then Peter Wagner, who's a Fuller prof and very influential, began to write on this. I didn't read all his stuff, but apparently he pointed to a certain point in time of a transformation and that God was now raising up apostles, etc. So I guess that when people talk about the NAR, they're talking about that specific thing. But the guys that I've been friends with over the years, like Ché Ahn or Lou Engle or Mike Bickle, that are allegedly part of the NAR... First, I never heard any of them talk about being part of that thing. That's the first thing. Second thing: nobody I know in the Charismatic movement or that I've worked with for decades is theonomous. I've never heard the talk in all my years being in these circles. The great majority are not Post-Millennial. The great majority are Pre-Millennial. Many are Dispensational—that's the tradition a lot of us got saved out of. Even some of the things you talk about, like going on Christian TV and having them speak in tongues... I've been on Christian TV many times and I have several shows on Christian TV. One of my friends just took over GodTV. I've got plenty of friends that have Christian programs. I can't imagine any of us ever doing any of that in a million years—or the question ever coming up! Some of the craziest, wackiest stuff is on Charismatic TV and I'm ashamed of it! It's miserable. And some of the fundraising is all messed up. I've written about it and I speak out about it. It's embarrassing—no question! I'm not minimizing that.

This last introductory point: The only real abuse or abuses that I've seen among those who associate with various "apostolic movements" (I think there are many or several) is the idea that everybody needs to have an apostle over them. I think

what that comes from is you have a ton of independent Charismatic churches that have no denominational affiliation so there's no order, there's no sense of accountability, there are no senior leaders to go to, and there's no network to connect to. So I think it tries to meet that need, which is fine in terms of just looking for spiritual elders. But the other side of it is I've seen that Peter Wagner rightly addressed the issue of the *sola pastora* kind of thing—that the pastor is everything, that it's the only real gift today, that the pastor is supposed to do everything, and the way we run our churches is kind of a one-man show. I agreed with that, but then it seemed that what he was saying is that if you have more than one church, then you're an apostle. Everybody became an apostle. Tons of people started to identify as apostles. I thought that was an abuse that I have always differed with.

So that's my introductory response to what you've put out.

MH: That's interesting because of a couple things there (and I'll try to remember to go back to the one to ask a question)... You just described Wagner as reacting to... That was what I grew up in—the sort of "one man show" kind of thing. I want to be clear here. My initial spiritual tradition when I came to the Lord as a teenager was Fundamentalism. You see a lot of that kind of thing, where "nothing can happen in the church unless it crosses over my desk"—that sort of leadership. But I want to be clear: I look back on my past in those things and I think it had more benefits than liabilities, as far as my own spiritual upbringing, but I did see things like that that I came to view as heavy-handed and just as spiritual abuse. I could go a long time with a lot of stories like that. If you're framing Wagner (because I haven't read C. Peter Wagner either... why would I go out and read Charismatic guys if I'm in this other strain of Christianity?)... If that's what he's reacting to, that deserves a reaction and a rebuke. I would certainly agree with that. It probably is part of why I take the priesthood of the believer pretty seriously. I don't see the need to have a hierarchy of men telling us things that the Spirit of God could prompt us to do just fine by himself. In other words, I have people on my radar a lot (since movements are composed of people) that seem to want to try to do the Holy Spirit's job for him, not with him. So I tend to react to that pretty strongly because I've just seen that there's a trail of wreckage behind that approach to ministry. It doesn't really matter what label goes on it. I'm not surprised at all that you've seen that sort of thing—I know I have. So I'm glad to hear that.

20:00

But the other thing you said that sort of popped a question in my head was you brought up the fundraising. Is there a relationship between... This is like a Venn diagram, I realize here. I don't know what the proportions are, but "Prosperity Gospel"... is that a subset of something within the Charismatic movement? Is it something that you would associate with the NAR or is it independent of that? Give us the Venn diagram of these kinds of terms. I'm quite unfamiliar with all of that.

MB: I think I can help there. Number one, remember that I have a real hard time telling you what is NAR and who is part of it. Again, I simply don't know. I don't know that it's that easily defined.

MH: Right. Unless somebody says, "Hey, we're on this bandwagon" how would you know?

MB: Or, look, again—there are lots of leaders that I work with and some of my friends would identify or really look with respect on Peter Wagner and so on. But I never knew them to say that they were part of that thing. So if it's more clearly defined for some, so be it. But the fundraising abuses are more of a kind of a classic Charismatic thing that may even go back to the healing revival of the 40's and 50's, when men like Oral Roberts and T.L. Osborne and their ministries came to national attention. With that, there were some abuses from different ones, and I think that's been kind of a manipulative thing that's found in some Charismatic circles because you believe in the man of God and you believe in the anointing on the man of God. We are people of faith and we step out, but I've not seen that... All the guys I know that say they work in Peter Wagner's circles... Let's put it like that. If that's what NAR is, fine. But let's just say they are associated with Peter Wagner's circles, none of them have been guilty of that. Nor are they primarily associated with the prosperity message. That came specifically out of the Word of Faith movement that would be associated with Kenneth Hagin and Kenneth Copeland and people like Creflo Dollar today.

MH: What is that movement in relationship? Is that a subset of the Charismatic thing?

MB: Yes, a subset of Charismatic. That's one. Not related to NAR, as far as I can define it and understand it. But in countries like Africa... they have been a prominent part of the Charismatic movement, although African leaders have told me there's a lot of course-correction being made now. In America, it's definitely a subset. But here are the strengths and the weaknesses. The strengths are that a lot of the message reacted against kind of a poverty mentality, that there was never any money for the gospel. There was never money to fund the gospel, but the way that you honored the pastor or the leader was by depriving them of income so that they were always short on money. The joke when I got saved was that the pastor is so holy he has holes in his shoes, and that all the verses that we know from the Old Testament that associate the blessing of God with earthly riches, or all through the Proverbs that as we honor the Lord with our first-fruits, he honors us. We take these verses and others in the New Testament that God will make us rich in every way (1 and 2 Corinthians, the words of Jesus about "give and it will be given to you" and things like that) and we talk about principles of generosity, which are great. We talk about principles of giving, supporting the gospel, underwriting missions worldwide. That's tremendous. Some of these Word of Faith guys are incredibly generous and have given millions of dollars to the gospel. The weakness is that it was totally tied in with the carnal mentality

25:00

that Jesus died to make me rich—that physical riches are a sign of spirituality, that if you really follow Jesus you won't be poor. So there are some real aberrant teachings. And then there are some other disturbing things about atonement and stuff, so that there are some (like Hank Hanegraffe) that put Word of Faith in the camp of heresy. I join in every year at the Southern Evangelical Seminary... They do an annual apologetics conference near Charlotte, NC, that draws thousands of people, and they will often have seminars on Word of Faith being heretical just like Mormons are heretical. Most of the Word of Faith people I've known have been clear, born-again believers who held to the fundamentals of the gospel, but who had an error in terms of earthly riches being a sign of spirituality. Now, that Word of Faith message, then, ties in with different types of carnal fundraising. "The Lord showed me the number 777, and if you'll give me \$777 and sow into our ministry today, you'll get a hundred-fold return over to the next year" and that kind of nonsense. It's an ugly abuse, and I agree with the critics on it. I make no excuses for it. But I don't associate it particularly with NAR guys. None of them that I know of are into that.

MH: I think that's really helpful. It's helpful for me, and I think it's helpful for our audience, as well. Like I said, I'm way out of this orbit. And when you're way out of the orbit, everything that you hear is easy pickin's. It tends to be all the stuff that's abusive and what-not. In my own Christian life, I've just come to meet other believers that are Charismatic—and not just that, but they believe other things that I wasn't raised to believe. Sometimes I've ended up changing my mind and sometimes I haven't, but their hearts are in the right place, is how I like to say it. I know enough people that you're describing, just in the broader Charismatic sense, that this isn't news to me. Most of the ones I know are just fine people.

As far as the NAR goes, there's somebody writing that stuff, and there's somebody writing the material that Holly references. Somebody wants it to be a big thing or treats it as a big thing, but to be honest with you... I'd like to talk a little bit about what are the solutions here, but for me (just to chime in here because I want to give Mike most of the time here), I think one of the solutions is to not pay attention to movements. [laughs] That's a little self-serving because I don't, but there are lots of reason why I don't. I just think, "Look, if we're trying to learn scripture, we're trying to develop as disciples, we're trying to do ministry, we have churches that we go to, we find like-minded people within those churches, we are hopefully mature enough to realize that no church I go is going to just thrill me in every way and that might be the opportunity to do that thing I see missing, or at least I can find a few people that are like-minded and enjoy fellowship with them, maybe in certain ways that I can't with other people." Whatever. To me, it's just a mistake to define your relationship with the Lord and what the Lord would have you do, both on a daily basis and sort of taking the big-picture look in terms of how you can be salt and light to as many people as possible within the span of your lifetime—that doesn't need to be filtered through a movement. I just think we would be a lot wiser if we kind of focused on our own relationship with the Lord and the people that are there to partner with us. Just do

things that need to get done and not filter things... not be about fostering or filtering this particular group or movement or set of initials or whatever it is. I'll grant—that's easy for me to do. I know it might not be easy for other people to do. I don't know, Mike. What do you do intentionally to address the problems? And then sort of setting all of it aside, what's your advice to people just living their lives and trying to do something for the Kingdom of God? How would you talk to somebody about that?

MB: First, that's where it all starts. It's our own relationship with God and understanding who we are as his children—loved, forgiven in the messiah, called to serve him, called to revere him, and be disciples and make disciples. I only perceive myself as being part of the worldwide Jesus Movement... So I have dear friends who are Charismatic all around the world, and I have dear friends that are non-Charismatic. I've worked with people for years and didn't even know if they were Charismatic or not because we worked together for the cause of the gospel.

30:00 It's interesting, I just pulled something up that Peter Wagner wrote in 2011. He said:

The NAR is not an organization. No one can join or carry a card. It has no leader. I have been called the “founder,” but this is not the case. One reason I might be seen as an “intellectual godfather” is that I might have been the first to observe the movement, give a name to it, and describe its characteristics as I saw them. When this began to come together through my research in 1993, I was professor of Church Growth at Fuller Theological Seminary, where I taught for 30 years.

The roots of the NAR go back to the beginning of the African Independent Church Movement in 1900, the Chinese House Church Movement beginning in 1976, the U.S. Independent Charismatic Movement beginning in the 1970s and the Latin American Grassroots Church Movement beginning around the same time. I was neither the founder nor a member of any of these movements, I was simply a professor who observed that they were the fastest growing churches in their respective regions and that they had a number of common characteristics.

So they were not part of a particular denomination. He used "Postdenominational" and that didn't work, so he tried to just come up with a way to describe what he was seeing. So again, it's something that's organic in that respect. Different churches that function with a different understanding than having a centralized headquarters and look more in terms of an organic, reproducing movement and that were Charismatic—that's what he was classifying. But back to the individual level, it's interesting that when I had Bill Johnson on my radio show, I got a lot of criticism. Of course, a lot of people love him, but I got a lot of criticism for it. He agreed to come on the show and let me ask him hard questions. I especially put out invitations of those who are critical of Bethel to call in with their criticisms. And some things I asked him because no

one called that was critical. They just had other questions. I raised certain questions to him about practices and he said, "No, we don't believe that. We repudiate it. We heard some people were doing it. We teach against it." I said, "Okay, what about this quote?" And he said, "Yeah, that's my son or son-in-law. That was a misstatement and we regret that he's said it. He has corrected it." And I say, "How about this?" "Yeah, that was my daughter, and she doesn't use that..." He told me honestly, "Yeah, I wouldn't have said it like that. I don't agree." He responded in a mature, godly way. What's fascinating, though, is one of my friends spent time with their students in their ministry school there, and he said their big emphasis was not gifts, but identity in Jesus and being a son or daughter of God—not "I have this gift" or "I have this calling" or "I have that calling." That grounded them in security so that there was no competition. You're not being measured by how much you're producing or whether you can heal the sick or prophesy. You're not being measured by a title associated with your name. Rather, your identity is found as being a son or daughter of God. With that identity now, you joyfully serve him in whatever capacity he calls you to.

MH: Where did you read that or hear that? Where did you get that information, specifically?

MB: One of my colleagues spent some time visiting the Bethel School of Supernatural Ministry. He wanted to see what they were doing. He was a faculty member at our own ministry school. He roomed with some of the students just to see what they were thinking, and he went on to meals with them. He saw... and again, there are certain emphases there I'm sure I'd disagree with—there was a lack of understanding of the role of Israel and some other things, and I'm sure as all of us talk, we're going to have areas of disagreement. That's normal. We each have strengths and weaknesses. But what he found was that there wasn't a sense of competition or a sense of earning something or proving something. Rather, there was a security grounded in being in Christ—our primary identity being sons and daughters of God and that we're on a mission to share Jesus wherever we go.

MH: Do you happen to remember what year that was? Was that pretty recent?

MB: No, he went over there probably 6, 7, 8 years ago. But I've had other friends that have been involved there over the years. I think that's a pretty steady emphasis. I think that's one of the foundations.

MH: Here's why I'm asking. It seems to me (and again, I'm not conversant with any literature that says one way or the other) that people like him (the higher-ups that would be associated with the NAR) have got to know about the abuses, they've got to know about the criticism being levied against them. If it were me, I would think, "We need to produce a book or something that articulates just exactly what you just described." If nothing like that exists, I'd like to know why. In other words, why are they not making this clear to both their critics and also to

people who are participating within the movement? Because if you don't hear that, like about the competition and all that kind of stuff—if you don't hear those kinds of things that you need to hear—of course you're going to have people just veer off into all these areas. It's interesting that you used the word "competition," because without naming any groups or any of that... Again, I have very few experiences with something where people would directly tell me they're part of this, that, or the other thing, but that was a big deal, in a negative sense. It just became a kind of a cycle of gifted one-upsmanship. If you didn't come across as a certain kind of person, if you didn't present yourself in a certain way, if you didn't exercise these "gifts," then there was just something wrong with you. That's the kind of thing that really operates in a vicious circle because, "Okay, I'll do this thing and I'll smile a lot" and whatever. And I saw this is Fundamentalism that had nothing to do with Charismatic stuff. There was a certain kind of litmus test—what we look for in someone who's "committed to Jesus" or really "on fire for Jesus." You start checking the things off, and then something else will come along that will strike someone's fancy, and then I've gotta add that to my bag of tricks. I've got to make sure people identify me with this thing—this new behavior over here. It's like a death-spiral. [laughs] Why aren't they—or are they?—making this clear? It would be great for everybody to hear what you just said. We don't have that big of an audience here, but it would be great to just set that record straight—articulate something.

MB: What I'm going to say may surprise you. I doubt that Bill Johnson and some of the guys are even aware that they're criticized in some of these ways. I think it's so foreign to them and so out there. Do you know how many times I have to defend *you* from being a heretic? [Mike laughs] I just got another lengthy email forwarded to me. You may know about this because of your scholarship, etc. But I'm serious—I just got someone else writing to me about your dangerous beliefs, etc. You may know some about this, but the reason you may not clarify certain things... As a scholar, you would. You and I tend to think ahead of what objections are going to be raised, and "I'm not saying this and I am saying this." But most of these guys are completely oblivious to the attacks coming their way. You say they should know, but you have to understand that most of the critics that are the loudest are so extreme and so ugly. One guy attacked me the other day (it was just forwarded to me—that's how I saw it) and he said to me, "You are more dangerous than ISIS terrorists." I decided I'm older than him and I'm going to reach out, so when I reached out to him, I said, "Hey, I appreciate you being sincere. I think I can help you." He said, "If you don't repent of your Charismatic ways, you're going to burn in the fires of hell." This stuff is so idiotic, so far-fetched, that they don't even bother with it. One of the values is you don't respond to critics because you just look at it as destructive. It's so ugly and so misrepresentative. Why should I respond to something I don't even believe? Why should I repudiate something that has nothing to do with me? That's one thing.

The second thing is, from what I know that's a primary message that comes out of Bethel about being secure in the love of God. It's the primary message that Bill

Johnson has written on for years. I've only read snippets of his books, but I'm almost sure that's a major theme—the love of God and being secure in him, and your identity is found in Jesus, not performance.

40:00

The last thing is, the performance question is a big problem through the whole Body for many. You'll find it in Fundamentalist Baptist circles and in radical Charismatic circles. That tends to be a works mentality—that if I didn't have a good day and pray enough, God doesn't love me as much. And if I pray more, he loves me more. In fact, I see a reaction against that that goes too far and what I've written about called "hyper grace." The primary leader associated with that would be Joseph Prince, and he and I have dialogued face to face. His whole thing would be when you know that you know that you're forgiven by grace and establishing grace you're going to be holy and love God with all your heart—that's the response of love. Because he says sin is destructive, but holiness is beautiful, but the way to get it is not by hitting people over the head with the Bible but by preaching the love of God to them. I would say "Amen, but it's gone too far." So I think that's a message... Some people have accused Bethel of being hyper-grace, as well, and I don't know that they'd be familiar with that term. It's not something that they used, but there is a strong emphasis that your acceptance comes from what Jesus did, not what you do. And then based on that, now as an accepted believer who has found rest, we run and seek to do the will of God. But look—there is always immaturity. There's always pressure that someone is going to feel to conform. There are things we do unconsciously that can create that. I'm sure some of the messages I've preached calling people to lay down your life for the gospel and give yourself to the Lord, they've felt some kind of pressure to perform through that. So we all have to do our best to ground people in grace and then, from that place of grace, call them to serve.

MH: Yeah. I would agree. It's just this ubiquitous problem.

MB: It is!

MH: Christians everywhere are just plagued... They can spit the gospel back to you and get it right. They could pass the exam, so to speak, but then they struggle so much with how God looks at them, based on performance issues—sins of omission and commission and all that sort of thing. That's a huge problem. Boy, we could spend a lot of time on that! [laughing]

Go ahead. Where else would you like to take the conversation in particular? We'll give you sort of free-rein here.

MB: Sure, a few things. Someone had sent this to me before you were kind enough to do it—something that Holly had mentioned. We're going to reach out to have her on my show. I'm not questioning her sincerity. It's just when you present things to the people involved and they can't even recognize it, I think something's amiss there and perhaps sometimes as outsiders we don't really

understand rightly what's happening on the inside. That's why it's always important to say, "Hey, have I represented you accurately? Have I understood you accurately?" From the things coming back to me, I question that.

But she had thought that I taught once at Wagner Leadership Institute and then said, no, she was mistaken and I taught elsewhere. I've taught at seven different seminaries, from Fuller to Denver Theological Seminary to Trinity to some of the finest seminaries in the nation. I've had the joy of doing that. Years back, I believe, once (it may have been twice) I did teach at the Wagner Leadership Institute. So she was right in thinking I did. She wrongly corrected herself. But that's not a training place for "Here's how you learn how to be an apostle." Rather, Peter Wagner had a lot of issues as a professor at Fuller for decades with a lot of the accreditation associations and a lot of their requirements and their lack of recognizing practical ministry as part of your learning and training. So maybe you pastored for thirty years, but you came into seminary as if it was just from ground zero. So he tried to come up with a way to accommodate people's schedules more. As I understand it (I was never part of the planning or anything, I just taught it once or twice), it was to have a network where you'd have in all different cities intensive modules taught by recognized professors, and then with that they would have their own accrediting and their own accountability, in terms of academic credentials and classes. You would get a certain amount of credit for years of pastoral experience if you were working towards a DMin. or something like that. If I remember, I taught on revival—revival in history, what revival is biblically, the keys to seeing revival. But I never knew of a class where they teach you how to be an apostle or they teach you how to be a prophet (something specific to NAR). You would have been at home in many of the classes. Those that were more Charismatically-oriented might have been a bit foreign, but otherwise it would have been good stuff like they teach at seminaries. They're just making it more fitting where someone is not in a full-time program the same way or having to deal with the rigors of a regular schedule. So that, again, is kind of a bogus idea.

45:00

I think the biggest thing that your listeners need to grasp is that around the world for the last hundred-plus years there has been a growing movement of people who believe speaking in tongues is for today, who believe that healing and miracles are for today. According to major church historians, there's a new series coming out from Oxford: *Modern Church Studies*. The second volume is called *To the Ends of the Earth*. It's about the worldwide growth of the Pentecostal movement. I have a volume that *LIFE Magazine* put out in the year 1999 of the one hundred greatest people and events of the last thousand years (from 1000 to 2000). I think number 68 was the modern Pentecostal outpouring. So you're talking about something that spread massively and that, for the most part, does not have a specific denominational affiliation. You don't have a pope over it or anything like that. Some groups within that, Peter Wagner would have identified as having similar characteristics. But you have house church movements that are Charismatic and Pentecostal. You have some that use liturgy that are much more

classic and the pastor gets up there and he's called a priest, and he wears a robe. You have others who are kind of camp-meeting style. It's very broad and wide. But all of them would agree on the fundamentals of the Apostles Creed. All of them would agree (except for little groups that are aberrant and not part of the mainstream) with the authority of scripture. I have a chapter of my book (*Authentic Fire*) that I wrote in response to John MacArthur's *Strange Fire* called "Sola Scriptura, and Therefore, Charismatic." So for me, my experience has confirmed things I believe. I believe in divine healing and I believe in gifts being for today—not primarily based on what I've experienced, but primarily based on what's written. Yet I know many who identify as cessationists who used to be Charismatic and had bad experience, because of which they deny things. And I say, "You're telling me I'm basing things on experience! I'm basing them on the Word. You had a bad experience so you changed your beliefs. So can we look at what the Word says?" That's my big issue. The extreme critics—the ones like John MacArthur, who obviously has done great good and is a man who's not been associated with scandals and is a serious teacher of the Word and a great example in many ways, but I'm profoundly different from him on certain points (respectfully so, as he's an elder to me)... He would say the vast majority of Charismatics worldwide are not saved at all—that there's no healthy baby in the bathwater. In the *Strange Fire* conference when he was asked a question head-on, he said "We're not dividing the Body, we're trying to identify the Body." So that, to me, is very disturbing. When people look at the worldwide church...

MH: What's the basis for a claim like that? I've not read *Strange Fire*. Years ago (30 years now?), I read his original book—*Charismatics*. I had to read it for a class. But I've not read this recent thing. Is this a totally new book, or is it like a rehash of the old one?

MB: There's some rehash, but it's a totally new book. What happened was (as he explained it), he had back surgery and was laid up for a while and ended up watching a lot of Christian TV and that's what prompted...

MH: Wow. [laughing] It's like I can't blame him!

MB: I can't, either, but you have to remember that I'm in this. I travel around the world and I don't see these abuses. In other words, it's the rarest of rare. For every bad experience I've had where someone's been abusive with finances or has been some spiritual prima donna and wants to stay in the penthouse suite in the hotel...

MH: You're saying that for every crazy Charismatic TV show, there are 50 churches that aren't doing that...

MB: Or a hundred or a thousand. Now here's the negative: A lot of them still *watch* those guys.

MH: Yeah, that's true.

50:00

MB: And maybe this principle will be helpful to you. When I wrote *Authentic Fire*, I had a chapter about spirit and truth, word and power, left brain/right brain, and different ways of thinking of things. John MacArthur looks at the abuses as being so extreme and he looks at them as being so manipulative financially—believing in false prophecies, teaching things that are aberrant. He cannot see these people being truly born-again. I hope I'm summarizing that position correctly. As far as I know, he views me as a brother. In his book, *Strange Fire*, he actually quoted from my 1991 book, *Whatever Happened to the Power of God?*, which asked the question, "Is the Charismatic church slain in the Spirit or down for the count?" So I've been an internal critic and I have book coming out next year called *Playing with Holy Fire*. So I am an internal critic. If someone is saying, "Who's raising their voice?" I have and I am and I will, and I point the first finger at myself for self-examination. But here's what struck me: We each have strengths and weaknesses as human beings and within the Body. And that, I think, is part of the richness of the Body—that we need each other. If some non-Charismatic is watching Christian TV and it's one of these corrupt fundraisers and he gets the "\$777 word," there's no way this person is going to pick up the phone and call. Absolutely not! Yet, some Charismatic... the wife may turn to the husband and say, "Honey, I feel this is the Lord" and he says, "Let's do it. Let's give our last \$777." The non-Charismatic has a strength of being more circumspect and examining things more, based on whether this is a clear testimony according to scripture. The Charismatic has a weakness of gullibility. Now let's flip it around. The non-Charismatic is walking through the mall and sees someone in a wheelchair and feels this strange prompting, "I should go pray for this person, that God will heal them." And he says, "I'm not gonna do that! That's crazy!" Well, the Charismatic feels the prompting, goes over and prays for the person and they get healed. Next thing, they're rejoicing there in the mall and they go tell their non-Charismatic friend and their non-Charismatic friends says, "I don't believe that. There's obviously another explanation." So the Charismatic that has the weakness of gullibility has the strength of stepping out in faith. The non-Charismatic, who has the strength of being circumspect, has the weakness of being a cynic and being skeptical. That's where I feel we can help each other.

That's where I appeal to John MacArthur. Rather than writing people off, help them. If the criticism was not so extreme, then you could befriend more people and teach them to do expository preaching like you've done. Teach them to base everything on passages of scripture and not just an inspirational thought here and there. And help, because there's a massive movement around the world but much of it is very, very new and very, very young and, therefore, needs more discipling. But if we think of our 1 Corinthians, Paul never wrote off the Corinthians. He said, "You don't lack any spiritual gift." And yet they had immorality, they had doctrinal error, they had division, they had carnality. Some people were sick and others died because of abuses associated with the Lord's Table. So I think we need to have the same viewpoint: Thank God for what he is

doing. It's wonderful. It's amazing. It's God-glorifying around the world. I've seen it with my own eyes on over 150 trips ministering outside of the United States. And where there are abuses, let's do our best to correct them. And let's do our best to learn from each other, because just like we need scholars... Look at how Logos has served the Body through making scholarship available in a practical way and eliminating so many exegetical and hermeneutical errors. But not everyone is going to be a scholar. And then the scholars need the people who are burning to their last breath to take the gospel to the furthest corner of the earth. We need each other in that regard.

MH: That's well-said. I have felt conflicted about exactly what to do, but I've kind of landed... Because of what I write (Divine Council, *Unseen Realm*, all this kind of stuff), there are a lot of people in the Charismatic orbit that are drawn to that material. I've had a number of them say, "This is really helpful because there's this crazy idea over here, but this really helps me sort that out." I'm glad to hear that because my thing is that I just want to do something useful. I'll go to this or that event, I'll go to this or that church. I have a short list of things that I won't do, like one of these crazy TV shows (because if you go on that, then it looks like you're endorsing it or they can use your appearance to endorse themselves and all that stuff). So I do have a list of places I won't go. But just generally speaking, it's like if I can go into that context—and people who invite me will know because I'll tell them that this isn't my context—I might not be entirely comfortable with everything but I'm going to come because I'm going to do something useful. I'm not there to endorse anything—you or anybody else. I'm just there. You tell me what you want me to teach and I'll do that and hopefully that's going to be beneficial. That's sort of the position I've adopted, but I don't necessarily know how to sort of work that out—how to live that out. Because I don't know the lay of the land. I'm learning. I'm learning a few things along the way, but I have the same kind of attitude. I just wish that Christians would get along and we would be secure in the gospel. This performance thing, to me, is a huge issue.

55:00

We're going to disagree. People tell me, "I read this or that or heard this or saw this YouTube video where this guy got healed or this guy got... Is that real?" And it's like, "Well, maybe. How would I know? I'm not omniscient." Yes, because I have a very strong interest in paranormal stuff, I *know* stuff can be faked. I know that the power of suggestion is absolutely real. I know people can convince themselves of things that are not true. But on the other hand, I've had plenty of contact with people who are in that sort of orbit or who themselves have experienced this or that, and they're entirely trustworthy. They have no reason to lie to me. Look, I'm not going to consider this person a liar! I'm going to assume that God did that. And that's okay with me. I don't need to sort of try to correct God at some point. I'm not going to be disappointed when I get to heaven and find out "That guy really did heal that guy over there, Mike. You were wrong." This is God's job. God has his own job description. I'm not going to tread on it. I'm not going to get in his way. God expects us to evaluate things, especially in the world in which we live. There's just a lot of stuff that really isn't of the Spirit.

Scripture itself knows that... There are passages where Paul accuses people of claiming the title of apostle and they are false teachers. He actually uses both terms in the same passage. We know that. We know that's going to happen. God doesn't expect that we're omniscient. He knows what he's dealing with, again. So we need to evaluate, but we also need to be open to God doing stuff. [laughs] As though his hands are tied. So I come from the other side, where we felt very comfortable tying God's hands. It just shouldn't be.

MB: You know what's fascinating in what you say there? I got saved in a little Pentecostal church in 1971 as a heroin-shooting, LSD-using, hippie rock drummer—16 years old. I was radically born again. My life was transformed. I had a wonderful encounter with God and a rich spiritual life—loving him, serving him, sharing the gospel. Over the years in the church, I started to get a little skeptical. I saw a couple of things that rubbed me the wrong way. I was starting grad school. I was interacting with a wider part of the Body. I began to see that most of the scholars were Calvinists and they weren't Charismatic. I began to wonder about the traditions that I was saved in and started to enlarge my horizons. One way that was positive, but in another way it fed into an intellectual and theological pride. Because after all, like you, I got my PhD in Semitic Studies and I studied at all secular universities under people who didn't believe what I believed. Being a tongues-speaking Pentecostal is not really sophisticated when you're in grad school! But "holding to the historical orthodox doctrines of Calvinism" appealed to me more. I'm not critiquing Calvinists, I'm just talking about me and my experience. I actually tried to distance myself from my Pentecostal roots. I remember reading Robert Gromacki's book against the modern tongues movement and B.B. Warfield's *Counterfeit Miracles* and acquiring other books that attacked Charismatic beliefs. I joined another church that was barely Charismatic, if at all. But I couldn't get away from it. I tried to talk myself out of it, and I couldn't scripturally. That was one. And two, when I was really praying and in communion with the Lord, it only confirmed to me the reality of the gifts of the Spirit. And then in 1982, as I was working on my doctoral dissertation—my initial one was on abbreviated verbal idioms in the Hebrew Bible (so *nasa*—does it mean to lift the voice, does it mean to lift the hand)...

MH: [laughing] A best-seller right there!

MB: Oh yeah—trust me man! To this day, people groan when I tell them I didn't finish it. [laughter] I mean, *shalach*—to send, to send a messenger... just man, it would have been a classic! So I put that down and God brought me through a season of personal repentance because of leaving my first love. I was a serious, committed believer. We had the poor and refugees living in our home. But I'd really left that place of earlier intimacy and faith. And what happened during this time is the Holy Spirit was mightily poured out on me and touched many in our church. People started getting healed, but in my view, they were misquoting scripture! I'm saying, "No, that doesn't refer to physical healing—that refers to spiritual healing!" And yet they were being healed. So I ended up switching my

1:00:00

doctoral dissertation to the *rapha*. That's how it happened. I focused all my time in trying to understand what this Hebrew word meant—"restore, heal"... what was the root of it, how did it work out in other Semitic languages. So that was my dissertation: "I Am the Lord Your Healer: A Philological Study of the Root Rapa in the Hebrew Bible and the Ancient Near East." And then ten years later, I did a fresh wave of research that took about ten or twenty percent from my dissertation and then wrote a whole volume for Zondervan (which is still in print) called *Israel's Divine Healer*. It looked at the broader issues and even went into the New Testament, as well. So I've been very dogmatic in believing these things to be scriptural, even though healing is not my primary ministry and even though I've prayed for all too many people with cancer and seen them die. But I thoroughly believe that God still heals today and that we can come to him with faith and expectation, but it's based on... First I was convicted by what I read, but what jarred my world was seeing God move in undeniable ways. And because I've ministered around the world and have friends around the world, I mean outstanding miracles—even resurrections from the dead and people blind for many years... One of my friend's ministry in Africa in one single meeting (this is a colleague and this is known and documented), three kids in one family that had all gone blind through disease were instantly healed in one meeting. These things are shared publicly, because the people in the villages say, "We know them! We know their family! We've been with them and we carried that cripple in with us!" And then Muslims are getting up and getting saved and you go back there ten years later and you see the churches are thriving and Jesus is being glorified. Why are we so skeptical? The God who raised the dead and raised Jesus from the dead—the God who has given authority to Jesus so that in his name we go and preach and heal... Why should we question it? This is God moving around the world! To me, we should be rejoicing! If we see error, then we step in to help.

Last thing. In John 5, Jesus healed the man who had been lame for 38 years, and he tells him, "Take up your mat and walk." It's the Sabbath, so obviously Jesus did this intentionally. Just like in John 9 and the way he heals the blind mind violates what were apparently Jewish traditions of the day (a couple of them). So when the religious leaders see the man, they've known this cripple for years, right? What's the first question they ask? "Who told you to pick up the mat?" That, to me, is the mentality of destructive criticism and of dead religious tradition. Instead of saying, "Whoa! What happened?? You're healed! What happened to you? Oh, by the way, you shouldn't carry that mat—you should put it down. But you're healed! What happened?" Instead, they didn't ask about the healing. They wanted to know who told him to carry his mat. I think sometimes we can have that tendency that because something violates my style... The same thing when the disciples come to Jesus and say, "There's a man driving out demons in your name, but he's not one of us. Should we shut him down?" And Jesus said, "No, you can't work a miracle in my name and then the next minute be against me." So I think sometimes we (and Charismatics do it the same way) can be so narrow that if it's not exactly the way we're used to doing it, then we

reject it. I think we should rejoice and say, "Hey, let's be Berean. If this is the Lord, wonderful! But we'll study and be sure."

I said "last thing," but another last thing. I should have said this right at the outset. I do believe that because we use the terms "apostles" and "prophets," there are potential abuses with that, in terms of either authority or lording it over people. When they're used and it's just part of the parlance, it's not different than "pastor, teacher, evangelist." It's just a descriptive term and we don't see them as lording it over people. That's great. It just gives different aspects to the different ways God uses people today. But if someone thinks "apostle" means that I have New Testament apostolic authority, that's a big, big dangerous red flag. If something thinks that because I'm a prophet I can now tell you the will of God, that's a big dangerous red flag. So yes, in those circles where those titles exist, there's more *possibility* of abuse in those ways, but it's something, again, that's an abuse that we address and deal with. It's certainly not part of the mainstream.

MH: Well, I know you have to run. I'm glad you summarized that. Before you go, you have a new book coming out and I want to give you a chance to mention it. Real quick, tell us the title and what it's about.

MB: Yes. *Enoch Takes on the Nephilim*. No, no, just kidding!

MH: [laughing] You stole that!

1:05:00

MB: I'm still trying to write one that'll sell like some of yours! It just came out last week and it's called *Saving a Sick America: A Prescription for Moral and Cultural Transformation*. It's literally a book about the fall and rise of America—how low we've fallen morally and spiritually, but how through the scripture we can, as believers, turn back to God and even influence the nation—even to lay out the very real possibility that there could yet be another Great Awakening ahead and that our best days could even be ahead. So it's called *Saving a Sick America*. And if folks want to stay in touch with me, we're on Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, my daily radio show, normally 8-10 new articles and videos a week, www.askdrbrown.org.

MH: All right, well thanks for coming on with us. Good discussion. I think it's going to be helpful. I think the audience is going to get a lot out of it. So thanks.

MB: Thanks, and thanks for all you do, man. I appreciate it. So glad you're doing what you do. It does help a whole lot of people.

TS: All right, Mike. I feel like I can sleep now. I can calm down because there's no big Illuminati/NAR conspiracy. There doesn't seem to be some organized plot within the Church. I feel like I can calm down a little bit.

MH: Well, that's good. You know, I think it's like anything else. It's a mixed bag—the Charismatic stuff, the NAR stuff. The NAR thing sort of reminds me of how Roman emperors might have functioned. Roman emperors were supposed to be gods, you know. And some of those guys are like, "Yeah, whatever. I know I'm not a god, but if you want to talk that way, whatever." But then other ones took it really, really seriously. So it just seems to me that some of the leadership of something that could be called NAR or might be affiliated with NAR (either openly or they're doing the same kinds of things as people who would declare themselves to be NAR) and that whole thing... It seems that the more seriously they take it, as though that's the thing to promote—either their own status within it or some idea within it—then we've got a problem. If we take it more seriously than the gospel, more seriously than a commitment to scripture, elevating experience above scripture and this sort of idiosyncratic idea of not really caring to investigate it scripturally, then we're going to have problems. Lots of problems here, lots of problems within the Church in other areas, so there we go. I think it's an issue of organization, it's an issue of caring too much about something that is peripheral. Bad ideas get magnified when people grab them, they see some advantage to them, and then they run with them—either for self-aggrandizement or maybe they're needy and they need attention or power or something like that. I'm glad we had the discussion on both sides of it. I think Mike was pretty clear that there are absolutely things to be concerned about here, but it's not (like he said) a big conspiracy. In other words, there's not a unified commitment of thought that's driving an agenda. People can get swept up in it. They can latch onto some terrible theology and it can be quite destructive.

I'm going to go back to what I said earlier as we wrap up here to say that you were not saved to perpetuate a subculture. You were not saved to perpetuate a movement. You were not saved to perpetuate some denomination. Your focus should be on your individual walk with the Lord, trying to do something for the Kingdom of God, which is not of this world and is not tied to political structures or cultural structures or anything like that. But what can you do to do something positive there as often as possible through the course of your life? Have that as your focus—the people around you. And don't live for this kind of stuff—this movement-level stuff. It's completely unnecessary. So I'm glad we had the discussion.

TS: I think Dr. Brown articulated it very well that the Charismatics and non-Charismatics can learn from each other. Rather than us Christians fighting amongst ourselves, let's learn what the other one brings to the table. I thought he articulated that very well.

MH: Yeah, and I'm fine with doing that, as long as it's disconnected from a power agenda.

TS: Sure, there's abuses for everything.

1:10:00

MH: I've seen the same kinds of things on the other side within Fundamentalism. Again, I've shared this before. My imperfect way of parsing this is that you can tell me you believe this or that and you experienced this or that or you saw this or that. Ultimately, I don't know if it was of God, I don't know if it was true or not. I'm going to evaluate it by scripture. Especially if I know you, I'm going to assume that you have no reason to lie to me. And I am content to just leave it there. I don't feel burdened that I've got to go out and imitate it or validate it or study it to destroy it. If your heart is in the right place, if it doesn't alter the gospel, if you're not adding to the gospel and marrying it to some other doctrine or your own experience—whatever—I'm just going to let it go. I'm content to let it go and be warmed and filled, but I just want people to think scripturally—think well—about whatever that thing is. We'll find out. The cream usually rises to the top. It'll bear fruit one way or the other. But it's not our job to be fixated on defending this or that. What are we doing for the Lord, honestly? What are we getting done? Anyway, I'm glad we had both sides of the discussion and were able to do this. We didn't expect to do two in a row, back-to-back, but I'm glad we were able to do that.

TS: I know I said last episode that next week is back into Hebrews, but we mean it this time!

MH: Yeah, we mean it this time! That's right.

TS: We want to thank Dr. Michael Brown for coming on, and I just want to thank everybody else for listening to the Naked Bible Podcast! God bless.