



ISSUE# 9 VOLUME# 5 September/October 1998

**A WARNING
To
The Assemblies of God**

by Travers van der Merwe

*(Taken from a transcript of a taped message given in 1989
and edited by Jewel van der Merwe. A copy of the original tape is available.)*

One of the Resolutions which was brought to the recent General Council of the Assemblies of God held in Indianapolis, Indiana was worded as follows:

Whereas *the Pentecostal/Charismatic Movement is besieged by certain teachings that are at variance with the Statement of Fundamental Truths, held and taught by the Assemblies of God; and*

Whereas *the General Presbytery has thoughtfully prepared and issued position papers concerning these teachings; and*

Whereas *the teachings of certain evangelists and teachers tend to gain broad penetration into the homes of Assemblies of God members, through television, radio and print media, and thereby undermine the influence of our pastors in upholding scriptural positions; and*

Whereas in the wake of recent date setting, some Kingdom Now teachers who oppose the doctrine of the imminent, pre-millennial return of Christ are seizing the occasion to discredit Biblical doctrine and are causing confusion;

Therefore be it resolved that this General Council encourages its ministers to bring before their congregations and places of ministry, the General Council position papers and articles published in the General Council publications on first, the Kingdom Now/Dominion teaching and two, the Shepherding Movement; and

Be it further resolved that our pastors, churches and schools be encouraged to screen speakers who are known advocates of these false teachings and doctrines; and

Be it further resolved that our churches be encouraged to study in a positive and systematic way, for their instruction, indoctrination and benefit our Assemblies of God Statement of Fundamental Truths and the position papers issued by the General Presbytery.

This Resolution admits that there are disturbing trends infiltrating the Assemblies of God and more than that, infiltrating established Pentecostal movements throughout the world.

As an organization, we are facing some critical times. Dominion Theology is gaining influence throughout the Assemblies of God movement. Dominion Theology teaches against the rapture and teaches that the Christian's mission on earth is to take dominion over all the political systems that exist in the world, take dominion of the earth and then establish the Kingdom of God.

As children of God, we believe that we are propagating the Gospel of Jesus Christ with a view to enlist, recruit and convert people into the Kingdom of God. The Kingdom of God exists; however, at this point and time - spiritually. The Kingdom exists in the hearts of the Christian.

We are subjects of *His* Kingdom. *His* Kingdom is a very real Kingdom. We are members of that Kingdom and that is why we look forward to a time when Jesus Christ shall personally return from heaven to establish *His* literal Kingdom on the earth - when *He* will come and usher in *His* Kingdom. *He* will establish His Kingdom and earth and *He* will sovereignly rule over *His* Kingdom.

Dominion Theology believes the opposite This belief is based on teaching that the Church will establish the Kingdom of God on earth. Our Commission is to establish the Kingdom of God in the hearts of men and women and to anticipate the time when Jesus Christ shall come and establish His literal Kingdom on earth.

The Shepherding Movement teaches that everyone should have a Shepherd over him/her. It is something like the Alcoholic Anonymous where one should have a "guardian". In other words, I should be accountable to a Shepherd and you should be accountable to a Shepherd. Your Shepherd must be accountable to another Shepherd. All the Shepherds work within a pyramid system - each Shepherd being accountable to another Shepherd and that one to another and then another, until you finally have the Head Shepherd who

exercises a position or authority over all the under-Shepherds. The whole concept flies in the face of the Scripture. It is a threat to a healthy, established denomination. It really threatens the established church in no uncertain terms.

The "Shepherding Movement" is forever undermining the churches and the authority and structure of the churches because their object is to penetrate and ultimately take over the churches as well as the State [government].

My response to this Resolution was as follows (unfortunately, I did not have a chance to present my Response to the Resolution at the Conference). However, I will give you some basic reasons later, but this is my response to Dominion Theology and to the concept of the Shepherding Movement.

A Response to the Warning

A study of {these movements} will clearly show that they pose a real threat to the Assemblies of God denomination. Dominion Theology, with all its weird concepts, is being heaped upon the members of the Assemblies of God by every available means. It is progressively making inroads into the established classic Pentecostal movements, and the Assemblies of God is no exception. If this situation continues unchecked, the Assemblies of God as a Bible-Centered movement, with its deep spiritual roots, will expose itself to the enemy. The fowls of the air will come and lodge in its branches. Carnal trends and heresies will quickly overtake our movement. Kingdom Now theology concepts and objectives are measurably, and in some cases, diametrically opposed to the basic, traditional truths adhered to by the Assemblies of God. If a well defined Resolution position is not adopted against erroneous teachings, and their advocates, the Assemblies of God will find herself at variance with the Scriptures and a purveyor of the knowledge and values of this world.

The disposition of the Dominion Theology is against:

1. *The infallibility, inerrancy and final authority of the Holy Scriptures.*
2. *The literal interpretation and meaning of the Holy Scriptures. (They believe that the Bible needs to be interpreted allegorically. That the Bible uses some symbolic language therefore needs to be interpreted allegorically and to be spiritualized instead of taken and interpreted literally).*
3. *The physical identity of Israel, as a Chosen People of God, destined to literally fulfill all the Scriptures applicable to her. (Dominion Theology rejects Israel as a Chosen Nation of God).*
4. *The Assemblies of God structured denomination discipline and tenets of faith. (With the Shepherding movement spelling out and issuing their judgments on matters pertaining to the denomination, they not only are penetrating our movement, but interfering with the affairs of the local church, or the established denomination. So, it is a direct interference in the work of others and will cause utter confusion.)*

Ever since Constantine's time, Dominion Theology has proved to be an evil force responsible for some of the worst atrocities against the human race. It ushered in the Dark Ages. From the pages of Dominion Theology evil kings and rulers found their inspiration and justification for the merciless slaughtering of millions upon millions of innocent people. History is full of evidence to corroborate this. The nations of Israel as well as the Jews scattered throughout Europe are living witnesses. I come from South Africa where apartheid was practiced for so many years. Apartheid was the cause of many injustices and afflictions and can be traced in part to Dominion Theology.

However attractive Dominion Theology is to some, the fact remains, its treacherous historical watermark betrays its ostensible good. Dominion Theology is earth-bound, and as such, is by its very nature carnal. It finds its fulfillment in its identity with the world. In fact, its ultimate object is to perfect the systems of the world and honor the world of its own making. Its spiritual and secular struggle is to secure dominion of the earth, perfect its subjects and establish its glory. On this path, it is in harmony with the New Age.

In pursuit of its earthly goals, if needs be, it will use force, it recognizes the god of force. Its slogan is "Take it By Force". Whatever force it takes to achieve its ends, it will use, irrespective of whether or not it is scriptural. Its watchword is love, and unity, at all costs. Even at the expense of sound doctrine.

Dominion Theology is eccentric in that it is not totally centered on Christ. In fact, it is more centered on self and the world. The Dominionists pleasure comes from self, taking dominion of the world and not in self dying to the world. The war cry is: DOMINION, PEACE and PROSPERITY, the noise of which deafens their ears to the sound of the Rapture message and the sound of physical Israel being restored and regathered in preparation for the Kingdom in Israel when Christ returns to reign on earth. It also deafens their ears to what the Spirit is saying to the churches in these last days, through the Holy Scriptures.

The Resolution before us is a very serious resolution. It cannot be ignored, time of utmost essence. A delay would invite the enemy to overwhelm the Assemblies of God. The severity of the Resolution demands a responsible decision in defense of the faith. Therefore, I urge you in the name of our Lord, before it is too late, if it is not already too late, that we adopt the Resolution and use to help protect our congregations against further encroachment by Dominionists. I quote Acts 20:28:

"Take heed therefore, unto your selves, and to all the flock over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers to feed the church of God which He hath purchased with His own blood."

So, that was my response. Unfortunately, I was unable to present my response. It was quite apparent to me, and unfortunately, I have no evidence to substantiate it, but it was apparent to me that this particular issue, when it came to the floor was filibustered and deliberately orchestrated to refer the Resolution to a Committee to play for time. Now, unfortunately we didn't adopt the Resolution, nor did the Floor reject the Resolution. Instead, it was moved that we refer the Resolution to a Committee. Now, it will take the Committee the next two years to draft a report on the Resolution and the Committee will then refer it back to the General Conference in two years time.

But, the problem is, two years is a long time. In the last year the Shepherding Movement and Dominion Theology has swept across the country! It is entrenched. I'm using that word discreetly and appropriately. The Shepherding Movement is entrenched in the political realm and entrenched in Christendom. It is gaining momentum by the hour. Believe me when I say to you, by the hour. I am not exaggerating the point. I am not trying to use rhetoric to influence you. It is gaining momentum by the hour! It is appealing to the majority of Christians and it is a way of life with a strong appeal.

I regret that the Conference did not endorse the Resolution and now, unfortunately, they have referred it to a Committee. I only pray with all my heart that the Executive Presbytery will appoint a responsible Committee to investigate the situation and return to the next General Conference with a report that will give total support to adopting this Resolution.

The problem is time. In the meantime, back at the ranch., the house is burning down. The enemy is playing for time. They need time? The truth of the matter is, this is a real problem, not only in the Assemblies of God, but throughout all the churches in the U. S. A. The problem has reached such a proportion in the Assemblies of God, that it needs to be dealt with now. If I perceive the situation correctly, then I have to say that the Executive Presbytery of the Assemblies of God does not really know quite how to deal with this issue. They seem to be confused and our Movement seems to be divided on the question and it is a controversial issue.

The difficult problem is the following:

The majority, or at least half - gathered from my observations and the materials I've read and the many ministries I've listened to, do not understand the magnitude of the problem at hand. Many ministers are not even familiar with the concept of Dominion Theology or Shepherding.

I am speaking of ministers, not even to mention the layman in the pew. Very few members of our churches understand what is happening. However, I am prepared to say that there are many that realize that there is something wrong. Many Christians are confused. They know something is wrong and they can't put their finger on the problem. They can't define it.

Back to the point, the majority of ministers don't know what is happening in the Movement. A well known pastor shared the same conclusion with me. He said he has disseminated his books and literature addressing the issue of Dominion Theology throughout the Movement and in spite of his endeavors, as well as the endeavors on the part of others, the majority do not grasp the magnitude and the hidden evil of Dominion Theology.

We do have a problem. I am taking a stand today against Dominion Theology and the Shepherding concept. However, I know that tomorrow a new family will transfer into our Assembly and it may be a family committed to Dominion Theology because their last pastor had no idea what was taking place.

My word today to this Assembly is: Christians, please for the Lord's sake, let us rally together as an Assembly and take a stand against these attacks and these diabolic infiltration of the Church. Let us take a firm stand and make certain that our Assembly is founded on the Word of God and that we defend the faith. We have to do so at all costs. As I pastor I dare not curry favor with any elements in the Church, because if I do, I will open the door to Dominion Theology and the Shepherding Movement. I take a firm stand against these heresies. So bear with me. Support the Church to every extent. There are very few churches today that are taking a firm stand against these heresies. When I say a firm stand against these heresies, I mean also a firm stand against the advocates of these heresies.

I solicit your prayers. But now, to come to the final thought. Although the Resolution was not adopted and unfortunately referred to a Committee, all is not lost. Now as an Assembly, we have to see it in this light. All is not lost. Yes, I admit time is of the utmost essence, and time could be used to defeat us, on the other hand, time could be used to score a victory. So time is on our hands and time is on their side. From now until the next General Council, everything depends on how we use our time.

If we use our time effectively, we could become a witness and a lighthouse to others. I beg of the Assemblies, let us take a firm stand on the truth. Let us glorify the Lord Jesus Christ. Let us glorify the Word. All of these movements, theologies, endeavors and system is against the Word of God. It undermines the Word of God. In these movements, shepherds are running around speaking as the "voice of God" confusing people and actually claiming that their voice is on a par with Scripture. They claim to speak to the church - as the present day Word of God. It is causing a lot of confusion. The "shepherding movement" can be traced back to what was known in the 1940s as the Latter Rain Movement. The present "shepherding movement" is actually a product of the Latter Rain movement. Of course, in the 1940s the Assemblies of God took a firm action against the Latter Rain movement and by the Grace of God, eliminated the existence of the Latter Rain within the Assemblies of God.

But in these last days, the spirit of the Latter Rain Movement and the teachings of it has once again resurrected. It has resurrected again within the framework of the Assemblies of God. Only this time it is WORSE. Do you know why? When the Assemblies of God succeeded to quiet the voice of the Latter Rain Movement in the 1940s, they sat back and just believed it was all settled and over with. . but unfortunately the spirit of those heresies remained and hibernated for all of these years and now suddenly has resurrected.

But, in the meantime, and this is the frightening aspect, ever since its voice was quieted, it continued to work and ferment in the Body of Christ, but more subtly than ever before. More subtly. . in fact it was so subtle that I only learned of the Shepherding Movement three months ago. I have been teaching you so many things, but I was observing other trends and exposing false teachings. I've warned you about trends, but I was not conscious of the Shepherding Movement taking root in the Assemblies of God and in fact, overwhelming the Assemblies of God. I just didn't see it at the time. Now, when it was brought to my attention, I realized that there is not anything I can do to prevent it or

stem the tide. There is no stopping. All I can say is: "Christians, by the Grace of God, let us stand firm in this time and age and uphold the Word of God as never before".

Although we are only a remnant, a minority - just a handful, our position is likened to Gideon. There were only three hundred men in the army of Israel qualified to represent the truth and to go to war against the enemy. The enemy far out-numbered Israel. We are in the minority. We have to, in a supernatural way, by faith stand and come against the enemy. I am not quite sure how to come against the enemy at this time, but I do know that we must take a firm stand as never before and put on the full armor of God. We must study the Word of God to "show ourselves approved, workmen that needeth not be ashamed." We have a fight to fight in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. The battle is the Lords.

Time is important. Are we prepared to lay our lives on the line for the sake of the truth? This is the question we have to answer before the living God. Let us by the grace of God walk in the light that He has given us. We have received sufficient light to please God and to become lovers of the Word of God. Let us dedicate our lives to the Word. Let our lives be an example to the world. Let us not entertain force or the wisdom of the world that seeks to take dominion of the world by force and by politics. We are not to be associated with the kingdoms of the world. Our kingdom is from above and not of this world. Therefore, we are not disposed or given to human force, human wisdom or knowledge to take dominion of the earth.

Our power is the Word of God and our weapon is the Word of God. The Word of God will bring down the strongholds of the enemy.

The day we seek to take dominion by the wisdom of the world and by force and political means, we are warring in the flesh. Do you understand that? We have to take dominion in the name of Jesus Christ by His Word. Not by the world! Our dominion is not over the world but over Satan and his invisible powers. Our mission is to save souls, to win people into the Kingdom of God, to see men born again, not into a literal society or a literal kingdom here on earth, but born again into the Kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ - anticipating the time when Christ shall rapture His church. All His believers who are members of His spiritual kingdom, He'll rapture away and meet them in the air.

Together with Christ we shall descend from heaven, that Christ may come and take dominion of the earth. I want to tell you today that my Christ is going to fight the great battle. He is coming to take dominion of the earth. He shall establish His kingdom on the earth and He shall build His temple. He shall establish His people and their reign on the earth. I don't need a political system to establish me in God's Kingdom. The Word of God has already established me. I am born again by the Spirit and by the Word of God.

I am taking courage - let us use the time. Expound the Scriptures. Set the record straight to that many will come to the knowledge of Jesus Christ. If you go anywhere and you hear this "garbage" being disseminated, speak out against it. Take a firm stand. Do not curry favor with the people who are in error. If they are in error, in love show them the ways of their errors. Show them, love them, have mercy on them. But take a stand on the side of truth. Use all means to bear witness to the trust. I solicit by the Grace of God, pray, pray

God to raise up laborers. Prayer God to sustain the few prophets. Now listen to me carefully, pray God to sustain the few prophets amongst us. The few prophets that are there, and by prophet I mean true ministers of God. Pray that God will sustain these few who are out there taking a firm stand and are right up front in the firing line. There are some today who are up front in the firing line. They are shouting out the truth from the housetops. They are declaring the Word of God and setting the record straight by the Grace of God. They are being attacked, threatened - and some are "burning out". Those that speak the truth meet with great opposition. They are suffering. There is a cost. There is a price to pay to stand for the truth today.

Christians, pray. Pray for those who are standing for Truth. Pray for those who are in error. Be willing to give your lives for the Truth of the Word of God. There are those who are in error, yet they love the Lord. They are sincere. Our approach must always be to educate other in the Truth so that the Word of God will be hallowed and spoken above all else. We must be an example in every way. Let us keep our hearts pure and not judge indiscreetly and in a manner not becoming to a child of God. Always minister in meekness and lowliness, lest we too find ourselves in the same error. Pray always!

A NEW Resolution Looking for a Champion

In the Assemblies of God, General Council is held every two years and this is the time when Resolutions are brought to the floor for discussion and to be voted on. It was on the heart of several to bring a Resolution to General Council in 1997, but unfortunately it did not succeed in even being presented. Instead it ended up on the internet as: "A Resolution Looking for a Champion".

Some pastors from Southern New England District felt concerned enough that they took the Resolution and presented it at their District Council in May, 1998.

This Resolution is called:

A RETURN TO BIBLICAL INTEGRITY

Whereas: the first of 16 Fundamental Truths asserts unequivocally that the Scriptures are the "infallible, authoritative rule of faith and conduct," and

Whereas: the report of the Spiritual Life Committee in Minutes, Revised Constitution and Bylaws, of the General Council of the Assemblies of God 1993 asserts:

"We believe that God's Spirit never goes where His Word does not. . . We have been lambasted by elements of the electronic church and charismatic renewal as being backslidden and non-Spirit led when we have not jumped on popular bandwagons of the day loaded with the meringue of personality and spiritual excess, rather than the plain meat of God's Word.

So be it! If criticism is the price we must pay for asking the question: "What saith the Lord in His written Word?" - then let us wear that criticism gladly as a sign of fidelity to Christ," and

Whereas: the current "River of God" includes many so-called manifestations of the Spirit which are extra-biblical. These extra-biblical manifestations have become a defacto evidence of a "new level" of spirituality and/or a new anointing. They are eclipsing in importance the biblical anointing called the Baptism of the Holy Spirit, which is witnessed by speaking in tongues as the Spirit gives utterance and

Whereas: Latter Rain doctrines such as "impartation," "birthing," "Joel's Army", and the "five-fold ministries" taught as "offices" with "predictive prophecy" are again being heard in the new revival, and

Whereas: as a result, ministers and churches are being divided and members are becoming confused about the authority of Scriptures, be it therefore

Resolved: that this District Council reaffirm the decision of the General Council of 1949, as stated:

"Resolved: We recognize a hunger on the part of God's people for a spiritual refreshing and manifestation of His Holy Spirit, be it therefore

Resolved: that we recommend to the ministers of the Assemblies of God and to churches affiliated and associated with us, that we set our hearts to seek for a continued outpouring of the Holy Spirit founded upon the clear teaching of the Word of God, and be it further

Resolved: that we disapprove of those extreme teachings and practices which, being unfounded scripturally, serve only to break fellowship of like precious faith and tend to confusion and division among the members of the Body of Christ, and be it hereby known that this 23rd General Council disapproves of the so-called "new Order of the Latter Rain," to wit:

The overemphasis relative to imparting, identifying, bestowing or confirming of gifts by the laying on of hands and prophecy.

The erroneous teaching that the Church is built on the foundation of present day apostles and prophets.

The extreme teaching as advocated by the "New Order" regarding the confession of sin to man and deliverance as practiced, which claims prerogatives to human agency which belong only to Christ.

The erroneous teaching concerning the impartation of the gift of languages as special equipment for missionary service.

The extreme and unscriptural practice of imparting or imposing personal leadings by the means of gifts of utterance.

Such other wrestings and distortions of Scripture interpretations which are in opposition to teachings and practices generally accepted among us.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

That we recommend following those things which make for peace among us, and those doctrines and practices whereby we may edify one another, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit until we all come unto the unity of the faith"

be it further

Resolved: that this action of the Southern New England District Council be communicated in writing to the Executive Presbytery of the General Council of the Assemblies of God, be it further

Resolved: that, in the spirit of the 1949 General Council, it might be "printed in THE PENTECOSTAL EVANGEL" so that "the entire constituency may have the benefit of this decision."

Submitted by: Donald J. Evans, John D. Marston, Carl E. Guiney, et al

You may ask, what happened? It was referred back to the presbytery to consider and study!

Discernment Ministries Inc. PO Box 254 High Bridge, NJ 08829 - 0254