

IHOP Postmortem, Part 2

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Preacher: Chris Oswald

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Welcome to the Providence Podcast. This is Chris Oswald, Senior Pastor at Providence Community Church. . . . Every time I say church, I think about my Zambian pastor friend who was much older than me, since passed on, but he always used to . . .

He had really good English, but just a few words he did weird, and one of them was church, and he would always say choich, like the Three Stooges. I don't know how he . . . Maybe he liked American TV from the 50s, so maybe he watched the Three Stooges.

He watched a lot of Westerns, but he would always say choich, choich. Anyway, we are continuing our conversation today related to the Holy Spirit, and specifically looking at what the Bible actually says about the Holy Spirit versus particular falsehoods perpetrated through what is known as the New Apostolic Reformation.

[1 : 4 6] Here in KC, that would be most commonly associated with the International House of Prayer. Last time we talked about how there is a bit of a nuance in our understanding, if we're looking at things biblically, related to the Apostles.

We would say that on the one hand, the Apostles were just like us. They were saved just like us, and they were sinners just like us, and we see their sin and their weaknesses and so forth, even in the New Testament here I'm thinking of, where Peter is temporarily acting in contradiction to the basic themes of the Gospel, shunning the Gentile believers when the Judaizers appeared in the Church of Galatia, or to Antioch, and just even things that are less malicious than that, like Paul sometimes making plans that didn't work, or Paul asking for a thorn to be removed from his flesh so that, you know, in his mind he could do X, Y, and Z, and how he was actually not correctly understanding the will of God there, and God had a different plan.

So yes, the Apostles are just like us. They call us their brothers. Peter refers to pastors as fellow under-shepherds, and so on and so forth. So yes, they are just like us in that sense.

But they are, in another sense, chosen. And they're chosen simply because of divine fiat. God just decided. And I think that that's probably one of the reasons for the New Apostolic Reformation blind spot related to, like, just this ability that seems pretty simple to say the Apostles were both like us and not like us, and the difference being that God is like, I just think that they have like a blind spot in general toward election.

They don't believe in election in the classical, Reformed, Protestant way. And so if you're special, it's because you've earned it, you know, in the Arminian perspective, which is the way that they think about salvation.

[4 : 0 5] If you're special, it's because you did something to earn it. You did something to deserve it, even if it's just that you listened to the call of the gospel and chose on your own to believe. I share this a lot, and it just seems to work for a lot of people.

But the false gospel, the Arminian gospel, says that I was drowning in a lake and I was frantically kicking and, you know, flailing around. Jesus rode out into the rowboat and threw me a rope, and I grabbed hold of the rope.

And he pulled me onto the boat, and he saved me. But he saved me because I grabbed hold of the rope. And that's the Arminian gospel, which is not the classic Protestant Reformed gospel at all.

And then you have the actual Protestant Reformed gospel. And it's not that I was drowning in the lake and Jesus rode out and threw a line to me, but I was dead in my sins and trespasses, Ephesians 2.

And Jesus rode out and pulled my dead corpse out of the lake and brought me into the boat and breathed new life into me. And when I woke, I saw Jesus for the first time because the God of this world had previously blinded my eyes to the glory of God in the face of Christ Jesus.

[5 : 16] And suddenly, through the power of the Holy Spirit, my eyes are awake, and I see Jesus. And the first thing I do is repent and believe. But all of that is downstream from the fact that I was chosen before the foundation of the world to be a new creation.

And God effectively works regeneration on me. I must be born again. Unless I'm born again, I cannot see the kingdom of heaven. And so my born-again-ness happens before my faith and before my repentance.

And so for the Reformed guy like me, I don't think of chosenness or specialness in direct relationship to merit, because it's not.

But I think for the Armenians, and really there are no, within the NAR movement, there are no Calvinists. I think that's probably pretty obvious. You know, chosenness and specialness is related to merit.

And so it's possible within the Calvinist church to look at a guy like me and say, well, he's the pastor, he's in charge, he's been in charge of things for a long time, he's held to unique account, and so on and so forth.

[6 : 26] But also to say, like, yeah, he's, you know, he's in charge, but he's not, like, like, he's not in charge because he's better. You know what I mean?

That's a pretty consistent Calvinist way of thinking about things. I've told people before that, you know, when my kids were thinking through election and what all this means, one of them came to me one night and said, I just don't get it.

Like, why did God choose me and not someone else? And I pointed him to what Paul tells the Corinthians. God chose what is foolish in this world that confound the wise. He chose what is weak to confound the strong.

We're not chosen because we're better. If anything, we're chosen because we're worse. When the Sanhedrin, when the ruling officials look at Peter and John in the book of Acts, it says they saw that they were uneducated men, you know, and yet nevertheless observed that they had been with Jesus.

That's the whole point. The point of God's elective plan is to sort of contrast what a person is, a Galilean, you know, a Nazarene or whatever, foolish, uneducated and so forth with his divine choice.

[7 : 39] And he does that. He chooses jars of clay to show that the surpassing power of God, the surpassing power belongs to him. You know, Paul was an impressive guy and at some level he was too impressive.

So God gave him the thorn in the flesh so that he could say, my grace is sufficient for you and in your weakness I am made strong. And so part of what's going on with the IHOP thing is this issue of soteriology, of understanding God's elective choice is not tied in any way to merit.

Part of what's going on in their situation where they tend to elevate leaders in a way that is unhealthy and ultimately backfires upon them is they don't really have any kind of original theology that's rooted in a sense of you can both be chosen and not anything special.

That doesn't exist in the Arminian world. It exists in the Calvinist world, doesn't exist in the Arminian world. So that's one of the things that I would have wanted to say in the last podcast about apostolic continuity.

It's just they have a leadership problem. It's very obvious they have a leadership problem. It is very obvious that they allow their leaders to get away with things that make no sense and that in other places would be called to account immediately.

[9 : 04] And we're just looking for answers to why that is. And one of the answers to why that is is because the soteriology, the way they understand salvation.

See, guys, the way you understand salvation is the way you understand everything. It's just the same model reapplied over and over and over again throughout the Christian life.

And so the way you get in is the way you stay in, and the way you get in is sort of the way that you act when you're in. And in the, you know, in the Arminian way, it's like I grabbed hold of the rope.

Jesus threw the thing to me and I grabbed hold of the rope. And the reason I'm saved and not someone else isn't because God has specific elective choices that he's made, but it's because I grabbed the rope and so-and-so didn't.

And that transfers all the way through your understanding of authority and your understanding within a church and so on and so forth. And so until you get rid of that, by the way, you will never have the church as it ought to be.

[10 : 06] Because the whole design of the church, you know, Ephesians 2, the whole design of the church is that it would be a boast-free zone. You can't have a boast-free zone.

And I'm not saying this to pick on anybody. I'm not saying this to, like, self-congratulate because I think I have the right theology because I don't think I have the right theology because I'm better than anyone else.

It carries across the whole thing. I'm just saying you won't have the church that you need to have until you get the gospel right and understand.

Just as Paul says to the Corinthians, who sees anything different in you? And if there's nothing different in you, then why do you act like it? And what do you have that you did not receive? He continues, and then he says, and if you don't have anything you did not receive, then why do you boast as if you did not receive it?

And so, like, you got to get the gospel right. It's going to affect everything, including your understanding of leadership. And one of the things going on in the New Apostolic Reformation is a broken understanding of God's elective purposes in salvation and, you know, so on and so forth.

[11 : 13] So that's one thing that we need to add to this as we are continuing this sort of IHOP postmortem. And we're not doing this gleefully, by the way. If you haven't listened to the last episode, this isn't a triumphal kind of thing.

This is absolutely 100%. You know, my conviction confirms in the Holy Spirit, Paul, Romans 9, that my conscience confirms in the Holy Spirit.

I am not lying. This is literally to help people figure out what went wrong in such a way as to not wind up despairing and disparaging the whole church.

The truth is, is that if you don't identify the specifics of what went wrong there, you will wind up just saying the whole thing's broken, the whole church thing's broken, the whole pastor thing's broken, and so forth.

It's like, no, there were specific things going on here, and you need to understand what those specific things are. One of them was a broken view of specialness that is automatically tied to betterness.

[12 : 18] And that is a uniquely Arminian, Wesleyan, Nazarene, hyper-charismatic perspective. And it trickles up to the way you view your leaders.

Whereas at my church, I have authority. I do. But also, no one thinks I have that authority because I'm better than them.

That's not the way we think of it. And that's definitely not the way the Bible thinks about it either. So that's one area. Another area related to this, and I'm going to get back into the Holy Spirit in the next episode, but a few things have happened since the first episode that make me realize I need to maybe deepen this a little bit.

Another issue that I think is worth pointing out related to the hyper-charismatic movement is the generational effect. So on Saturday, there was a big nationwide demonstration against Trump, against Elon Musk, and so on and so forth.

And one of the sort of observations that's going out amongst the folks online right now is just how old the crowds were.

[13 : 36] I myself was on the way to the gym, so I was kind of on 87th and like real close to 435 and, you know, on the West Lenexa side.

And I was there close to city center and I was stopped because that's where the, you know, Johnson County anti-Trump protest people had decided to be, kind of by Sprouts and McKeever's and Red Door, like that intersection there.

That's right where I come out of my neighborhood to go to the gym. Anyway, I myself noticed, you know, it wasn't a small crowd. I mean, it wasn't like this, you know, sea of AI, you know, AI created masses that you're seeing online, but it also wasn't small.

There was at least a few hundred people there. And it was overwhelmingly obvious that this was a, by and large, an older crowd. By older, I mean baby boomers, older than me.

And so, one of the things, if we're talking about the new apostolic reformation and IHOP and so forth, that we probably need to just handle, at least partially, is that the boomers are a particularly broken generation and are, have, have a particularly outsized effect on American culture as it stands today.

[15 : 06] And I can say that in such a way as to not castigate individual people that I know who are of that age and a leaving room for exceptions and so forth.

And friends, listen, like the number of boomers is so large that even if the exception is say 40% of all boomers are not as I'm describing them to be, and it's like, and then you still got 60% that are, that's a massive number of people.

And so, one of the things that is going on in America right now is that we are really undoing a lot of damage created by this particular generation.

Now, I don't really think I want to get into offering, you know, prognosticative explanations as to what went wrong there. I would just say this, I don't think that blaming the parents is the, probably the correct explanation exactly.

I believe that the most likely explanation, the one that is kind of default in my mind, is that this was a generation with low, with low antibodies for postmodernism and low antibodies for consumerism.

[16 : 28] And what I mean by antibodies is like, you know, when you're kind of surrounded by, you know, the flu or whatever, by a certain age, you're going to have all these antibodies sort of ready to answer a particular virus if it were to enter your body.

But, you know, as you know, the stories of the Aztecs getting wiped out or whatever, you know, if, if there, if, if a native population encounters a particular disease for the first time, there are no antibodies.

And so, there's a really successful infection rate that takes place amongst a population that's not experienced a particular disease before. And so, I think it's kind of over simplistic to blame the parents of boomers for the way that this generation by and large has turned out, even if you grant 40% of those are, you know, turned out great.

I think that that's, it's, it's over, overly simplistic to, to, to say that that's something to do with parents. I think that there are certainly just been cultural developments over the last 60, 70 years that are uniquely and novel to some degree.

Gen Xers, which, of which I'm a part, just barely got out of the, the formative years before internet pornography became a thing. So, millennials are the kind of ground zero there.

[17 : 59] And I don't think there were sufficient antibodies built up against this, like, phenomenon of instantly available 1080p pornography.

you know, that's a brand new concept. You know, and so I think millennials were uniquely hit by, by this.

Another example would be the World War I generation specifically related to automatic gunfire. You know, there was this moment when we have all these soldiers in World War I and suddenly, you know, we have a method of war fighting that is, you know, developed around single-shot munitions and now suddenly we have this thing called a machine gun or, you know, mustard gas or whatever.

And so you find these little overlaps in history where a new virus slash technology, whatever you want to call it, emerges and then like, but the antibodies of the majority of people who are encountering this new thing hasn't really elevated to the level of being able to defend against it.

So I think there's a reason why, you know, for instance, millennials were the hardest hit with porn because, you know, it's like they literally didn't, it didn't exist before then.

[19 : 34] So no one was preparing them. You know, there's just, there were no cultural supports. There was no even cultural conversation happening about internet pornography when most of these millennials became addicted to it and, you know, there just wasn't like a cultural slash spiritual antibody to it.

Well, my sense with the boomers is that they're the first generation to be raised where, in an environment where psychology, self-esteem, and consumerism was sort of unleashed as a virus into the world and they are the ones that have the least number of antibodies.

And so they were just far more gullible and bought it and were affected by it far more than other generations. And you could say, well, I blame the parents for that.

Well, how many parents, you know, how many parents are functionally wise enough to understand a brand new emerging concept has fallen upon popular culture and then help their kids to avoid being, you know, consumed by it.

there are certainly some people who have that level of discernment, but not many. So all that to say, boomers are a uniquely problematic generation, even if you give a massive exception to a lot of people who aren't at all like the rest of them.

[20 : 58] And I know plenty of those people, by the way. But for the most part, or, you know, in a majority segment, there are just a lot of boomers who were, in my opinion, infected by a psychologized self, a sense of self-importance and consumerism such that when the hyper-charismatic movement emerges, they have literally no antibodies to deal with some of the most audacious elements of it.

And I'll just bring up two. one, they were taught very early when there was this movement, and I'm grateful for this movement, but there was a Jesus movement where a bunch of washed-up hippies suddenly became interested in Jesus.

But all of that was done with sort of a very unique thing, and that was, let's take modern cultural expressions of music and put Jesus words into them.

music is a very unique thing, it's almost like food, it's kind of a force of will. You really realize that you're in missions, for instance, when you go somewhere else and you're just willing to eat what is put before you and not be a wuss about it and not whine about it and so forth.

There are these certain kind of things in life that test whether or not you're indeed humble. And one of them is you just presented a plate of food and other countries, will you just eat it and shut up?

[22 : 34] Or will you import all of your personal preferences into this? And music is one of those things. And there's a reason why the worship wars were such a big deal in the time period that they were.

It was mostly a boomer issue. And it was mostly sort of, I would say, connected to this personal deep confidence and their tastes and preferences as being essentially the same as truth.

And so with the hyper-charismatic stuff, one of the things that has been going on there is that they really have perfected the sort of bells and whistles, experiential aspects of worship.

And I don't think that's coincidental that they've grown largely in this kind of boomer centric period of time. Another piece that's like pretty remarkable and looking back rough to consider is just that like boomers are by and large very trusting of their senses.

And very non-critical of sort of like the first take. And so if you as a leader, say you're a wolf, if you can successfully put on the sheep's clothing enough to appear humble and so forth, you know, the one generation most likely to fall for all this stuff are the boomers.

[24 : 07] They just had a more trusting sort of, um, what's funny about it is is that they were kind of classically trained to not be trusting toward outward, you know, overt expressions of authority.

But if you can just put on like a sweatshirt and jeans and some tennis shoes and stand behind a pulpit with your hands in your pockets and sort of have your hair a little disheveled, uh, they're suddenly like, of course this guy's great because look, he's not even trying to impress.

It's like they don't even have a category for the kind of person who's three steps ahead of them and understands that I'm going to, you know, wear these jeans and this sweatshirt and these tennis shoes so as to appear humble.

So there was just a level of trusting one's senses that emerged in the boomer generation and it really elevated, it gave, it gave legs to the new apostolic reformation in a unique way as well.

And listen, if you're a boomer and you get upset about this, like, just try to be logical because number one, I'm granting that there's potentially 40% of all the boomers that aren't like this and I'm suggesting that even if that were so, the numbers are so massive that 60% is effectively, you know, worth talking about.

[25 : 24] But secondly, you know, let's be honest, like, how many times has your Facebook account been hacked? There is a trust issue and it is essentially the trust issue appears to be related to if you appear nice, then you are nice and if you appear mean, then you are mean, which is fundamentally a trusting of your senses.

And that's a problem because the truth is, is that lots of times the kind, gracious, loving action will appear to be a harder action and the mean, cruel person is sophisticated enough to know how to project softness and humility and meekness while being actually terrible as human beings.

And so as I was, you know, parked at this intersection watching all these boomers pass by with signs that literally were just utterly nonsensical. And these are all people, of course, that, you know, all of the cliches are absolutely true.

They, in this sense, they all bought real estate before it had blown up. They somehow managed to perfectly execute this quasi-anti-conformity vibe coming all the way, you know, in through the 60s forward while also just taking advantage of literally every institutional problem, every institutional, you know, what's the word?

Inequity. Anyway, so, like, it's a real thing, but, you know, even the boomers that I know now who I think are godly and I love and respect, probably the biggest issue for them is they really do have an over amount of emphasis on their own tastes and on their own sort of lived experience and on their own preferences and on their own, like, sort of, sort of, like, read on things.

[27 : 22] And, you know, so that would be one reason why the hyper-charismatic movement, in my opinion, emerged when it did. And the other one that I would add is, and I'm trying to make some generational arguments here, is that there's really, I don't know of another generation in church history where a group of people just unilaterally decided that everything that had happened before them was meaningless and unworthy of consulting.

And so one of the other reasons why I think the New Apostolic Reformation has emerged when it did is because there was a particular moment in Western evangelicalism where church history did not matter at all or hardly at all.

And it really allowed people to bring in completely novel expressions of Christianity without really anybody looking and asking, well, you know, we've been at this for 2,000 years.

Like, let's just look back real quick, and I'm not saying you're wrong, but let's just look back real quick and just, like, see what the old guys have said. you know, there was, for the first time that I'm aware of in a very long time, a real kind of Chesterton fence kind of moment in, especially in American church history where we stopped asking, like, why is it that we didn't do music like this before?

Or why is it that we, you know, we weren't asking those Chesterton's fence kinds of questions? And so, one of the main reasons I would say that the Bickles of the world and the Joneses, you know, all of these people who wound up, by the way, being, you know, quite sexually cruel, just like the cult masters of the 60s, the commune masters of the 60s.

[29 : 25] Like, there's a reason that these people got an entrance into evangelicalism, and some of it is generational, partly because they were able to speak this sort of therapeutic gospel language that appealed to this first generation that had basically no antibodies built up against psychology, as we think of it now.

And then also, they just had a really, like, high level of trust in their tastes and preferences and sort of imagined that Christianity could just conform to their particular musical tastes and so forth.

And then thirdly, they just were uniquely sort of susceptible to being deceived because they didn't have really any legitimate amount of respect for church history.

history. And in some facts, some extent, like, a decent percentage of them had a contempt for church history, which goes all the way back to, you know, don't trust anyone over 30 and so forth.

If my music's too old or too loud, you're too old, and so on and so forth. So that's part two of this conversation about the IHOP. I don't, again, I want to be clear, I'm not, I know plenty of boomers who love their Lord and are full of generosity and are out there.

[30 : 43] I see them every day hustling to serve the kingdom and so forth. Plenty of those. I would just argue that they are for sure a minority in a, even within the Christian boomer population.

And that that's one of, and we just have to be somewhat logical about when did this new apostolic reformation arise? Where did they get their money? Who are their leaders? How old were their leaders?

And so forth. I think we can just begin to say, like, yeah, there's probably got to be, at least as we're trying to understand this, some generational element to the explanation.

Okay, well, thanks for listening, and we'll come back next time and talk about how the Holy Spirit is fundamentally in the Bible given for us to serve other people. And we'll talk about that in contrast to what we see in the New Apostolic Reformation.

Thank you. Thank you.

[32 : 04] Thank you.

Thank you.