



A TEACHING ARTICLE BY PETER HORROBIN  
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## MIXTURE IN THE CHURCH

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Whenever there is an outbreak of revival manifestations somewhere in the world, people are quick to ask questions such as “What is it all about?!” and “Is this revival?” People are looking for answers. They want to know if such events are straight from the pages of the Book of Acts or if they are a subtle variation of new age or even occult practices? Confusion reigns!

Rather than answer these questions directly, I believe it is important for people to know how to weigh and test such things whenever they occur in the Body of Christ. These are not the casual thoughts of someone who is coming fresh to a new topic, but the fruit of more than twenty years experience of pioneering and teaching in discipleship, healing and deliverance, as the work of Ellel Ministries International ([www.ellelministries.org](http://www.ellelministries.org)) has been established at many different centers across the world.

In response to some of the previous “revival” outbreaks in North America, many respected leaders took the stand that it’s a mixture – God’s at work, but so is the flesh as well as the enemy. However, instead of exercising discernment and Godly authority to deal immediately with the things that were not of God, most embraced a tolerance attitude towards what was happening. Some claimed scriptural support for this approach from the parable of the wheat and the tares in Matthew 13:24-43.

Here, Jesus said, let the wheat and the tares grow together to harvest. This was taken as support for a policy of allowing the good and the bad to happen simultaneously, in spite of the obvious danger that people could be deceived into thinking that the Holy Spirit was behind all the manifestations, some of which were, very obviously, not of God!

Jesus, however, explicitly stated that the field in which the two crops are growing is the world, not the church. Here, the wheat and the tares must be allowed to grow together until the final end-time harvesting, otherwise many potential members of the Body of Christ will be robbed of the opportunity to decide for themselves and choose salvation. Applying this parable, out of context, to the church, is like saying that the principle of letting the good and the bad grow together is equally appropriate inside the Body of Christ. This is not true.

Nowhere in Scripture can such a view be found or substantiated. As Derek Prince said, “the Bible gives us no liberty to tolerate the incursion of evil into the church.” If you want to know how to handle things in the church, you have to look at the Pastoral Epistles, where discipleship and a journey towards holiness are the expected norm. Unrestricted freedom

for the demonic to produce manifestations, which are then labelled as the work of the Holy Spirit, will always result in the possibility that even the very elect might be deceived, as Jesus foresaw in Matthew 24.

The fact that God may be doing good things in some people's lives is not a valid reason for allowing the bad to prosper alongside the good. The counterfeit must always be discerned, exposed and dealt with. Otherwise, in the eyes of the sheep, the bad is validated by the shepherds, as if it is good. That is how deception and counterfeit spirits are given license in the Body of Christ – whether it is the deception of false signs, false miracles or false prophecies, all of which we are warned about in Matthew 24. Jesus began this critical discourse on the end-times with these telling words, "Watch out that no-one deceives you."

On another occasion, Simon Peter had just spoken out the most amazing, God-inspired, truth about the identity of the Messiah. But when, a few minutes later, the same man spoke deceptive words, Jesus did not validate the error by allowing it to stand unchecked alongside the truth. He immediately took authority over the enemy working through Peter and said, "Get behind me Satan." And then to Peter, he said, "You are a stumbling block to me; you do not have in mind the things of God, but the things of men." (Matthew 16:23).

Jesus was quick to discern the mixture and did not mince his words in addressing the problem. In doing this he was teaching us an important lesson. This is wholly consistent with Jesus's teaching in John 15 where pruning of the vine (not undisciplined growth) is the key to fruitfulness. The more prominent and influential a person is (Peter was a very prominent leader), the more important it is to deal with such error, otherwise the leaven of deception will have far reaching consequences in the wider body of believers who look to such leaders for their inspiration.

## MIXTURE IN THE CHURCH

Which brings us to the title of this article – Mixture in the Church. If Jesus was not willing to tolerate such mixture in the life of one of his disciples, why should we allow mixture to go unchecked inside the Church? Surely we, too, should not only bless and commend whatever God may be doing, but also deal firmly with anything that is from the enemy?

Isn't that the heart of discipleship, as expressed by the senior Apostle Paul to young Timothy? Paul warned Timothy that "in later times, some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons" (1 Tim 4:1). Then he said, "have nothing to do with godless myths" (1 Tim 4:7), and "guard your life and your doctrine closely" Most tellingly Paul then says that this will "save both yourself and your hearers!" (1 Timothy 4:16). Paul knew that the sheep would also be affected if deception were to be tolerated in the shepherd or by the shepherd in the church.

The gifts of the Spirit include the gift of discernment and this is, perhaps, the most needed gift of all in the Body of Christ today. Myriads of people have written and spoken on the prophetic and healing, but where are the complimentary voices teaching on how to apply Paul's guidance to Timothy and how to discern the true from the false? Surely God would want the Body of Christ to give equal prominence to the gift that can either validate or raise genuine concerns about the practice of the other gifts? Often, those who have been courageous enough to speak, even those with a balanced voice, have been dismissed as an unwanted intrusion into what "God is doing"!

# HOW DOES MIXTURE GET IN?

The primary sources of mixture inside the Body of Christ are 1) the world in the church, 2) undiscerning and unhealed leaders, 3) false prophecies, 4) ignorance of the enemy's devices, and 5) lying signs and wonders (supernatural occurrences that have their source in the power of Satan and not the power of God).

## I. THE WORLD IN THE CHURCH

The Lord's Prayer encourages us to pray that the Kingdom of Heaven will come on earth. This is not a prayer for the second coming, but a prayer that Kingdom principles will be the determining factor for the followers of Jesus – the King. But there is another ruler, who reigns over the kingdom of darkness and, because of man's choice at the Fall, he is the ruler of this world's systems (1 John 5:19).

Satan's principles and practices are always at variance with those of God's Covenant love and His Kingdom. Paul challenged believers not to "give the devil a foothold" in their lives (Ephesians 4:27) and stressed that the battle we are all involved in is not a physical one, but against "the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms" (Ephesians 6:12).

Ungodliness opens the doors to the enemy. When so many of the practices endorsed by the god of this world, are left unchallenged in the lives of the citizens of the Kingdom of God, then Satan is given a right to exercise his power in the lives of its members and in the church. Paul warns believers that tolerance of all forms of immorality, occult practices, selfishness, idolatry, drunkenness and greed etc will even disqualify people from inheriting the Kingdom of God (Galatians 5:21). When the world is given license in the church, the spiritual powers of the god of this world are also given license to operate there.

## 2. UNDISCERNING AND UNHEALED LEADERS:

All leaders have a responsibility to discern and deal with the work of the enemy - in both their own lives and inside the Body of Christ. When people operate out of an unhealed past they are open to self-deception and deception – and leaders are not exempt from the possibility of being deceived.

As a result they can become an unwitting channel for the enemy's influence and can even find themselves battling with secret issues such as immorality, inner compulsions or addictions. And because they are the shepherds, acting as a covering for the sheep, whatever spiritual powers may still be operating in their lives can then, also, influence the sheep.

This is especially evident in the lives of people who have been saved out of a rejected, traumatic, broken or abusive past; or have been caught up in the world of drugs, new-age deceptions, witchcraft or even satanic things. On conversion their sins are forgiven, but forgiveness and healing are neither the same nor are they usually simultaneous experiences. The salvation gift is received in a moment, but the salvation process of discipleship, healing and deliverance has to be "worked out with fear and trembling" (Philippians 2:12).

We live in a world (and a church) where instant results and solutions are so often expected. This contrasts sharply with the path of patient discipleship – especially of leaders. This is a costly, time

consuming but essential process. But if this discipling, healing and delivering process does not take place, untrained character and inner brokenness can remain a hidden source of demonic power in a person's life, causing everything from ungodly behaviour and relationships to bizarre manifestations and off-the-page supernatural experiences. It can also be the source of false prophetic words and the enemy can work through leaders in this way to cause havoc in the Body of Christ. While there may have been some deliverance of such people following conversion, the woeful lack of discernment in the Body of Christ can lead to a false assumption that it is all done, when, in reality, the journey to wholeness has only just begun!

This can be dangerous. Deep damage requires deep healing as well as major deliverance and it is unwise to allow people with a very damaged past to exercise any form of leadership until it is abundantly clear that they have been walking maturely for a significant period of time and are operating under secure and discerning spiritual cover. Some of the most profound healings we have experienced have been the outcome of a journey of discipleship training.

### 3. FALSE PROPHECIES:

When a "prophet" proclaims "God said it", there is rarely any room left for discernment and testing. Such words are usually accepted uncritically by all and rapidly emailed round the world. The prophet gets affirmation, and even acclamation, from the crowds and few people seem willing to ask the hard questions. And those who do are put down with responses such as "If God has said it, isn't that enough?"

Unfortunately it's not enough, for there are many verses in Scripture warning about the dangers of false prophecy. And they are there for a reason. The vessel through which all prophecy is given is fallible and both he and his words need to be tested.

In Deuteronomy 13 a prophet may give an accurate word, but he may still be leading people away from the real truth about God. Amazingly, Scripture does not always commend prophetic accuracy! Psychic powers can parade as prophetic words of knowledge – they may even be right, but that doesn't necessarily mean they are from God. I have seen accurate words being given by a so-called "prophet" while he was inviting donations to his offering. The words were not from God. Similarly, accurate words of knowledge, about someone's healing need, can be used to encourage someone to submit to receiving a false anointing.

Ezekiel 13 warns that when prophets say "Hear the Word of the Lord", they may be prophesying out of their own imagination. Such words are described as lying divinations. Jeremiah 23:16 even tells the people not to listen to what the prophets are saying! For those prophets were filling the people with false hopes, speaking visions out of their own minds. God said "I did not send these prophets, yet they have run with their message." (Jer.23:21). In all these cases the severest judgment of God is spoken out on those who lead the people astray through false prophetic words.

I passionately believe in prophecy – but because I do so, I also want to test a prophetic word and its source very carefully, so as not to run the risk of being deceived. This is not doubting God, and it is being obedient to Scripture. It is in the context of prophecy that Paul commands his readers to "Test all things and only hold on to that which is good" (1 Thessalonians 5:21). Testing is not a sin. There is a

dearth of real understanding about both Old and New Testament prophecy in the Body of Christ.

If the prophetic vessel is unhealed of major issues of brokenness, or still walking in hidden sinful practices, he or she is ripe for exploitation by the enemy and can be open to all the experiences of the new age and the occult, with the resultant prophetic words being tailored to suit the Christian marketplace. I have witnessed many such words, most of which were little different from psychic pronouncements telling people what they wanted to hear. We should never underestimate a broken person's inner need for the affirmation and significance that being recognised as a prophet (or a leader) can give them.

Occult practices deliberately induce such brokenness, so as to release people into the supernatural realms, where they freely interchange with the powers of darkness. The resultant words may excite, but the substance is deception. I listened to one such person describing how he was able to go all over the auditorium, listening to the sicknesses and conditions of the people. These observations then became his words of knowledge. These are not words of knowledge from God, but information obtained through occult means.

#### 4. IGNORANCE OF THE ENEMY'S DEVICES:

Satan is a master deceiver. He takes advantage of the sins we commit to gain power in our lives and uses the hurt and bruised soul as a generation point for demonic power. If leaders, especially, do not understand how he operates, they will not be in a position to truly care for their people by protecting them from the devices of the enemy.

For example, when people are led to believe that certain demonic manifestations are not demonic, but are told they are from God, they are being conditioned to want whatever that manifestation might be. They then think they are receiving God's blessing! In reality, transference is taking place and what they have received is a spirit, which is causing the external manifestations, and which has been validated by others as a sign that God is at work. Deception is complete.

I have no problem with there being physical signs in a person that God is at work in their lives to bring healing or deliverance. I have seen them on countless occasions. But I do have a huge problem with anyone thinking it's God, when everyone (or at least many people) get the same sign and it is passed around the Body of Christ, and even around the world, like a commodity.

The occult world knows all about anointing, transference and impartation. In the Scriptures an anointing is for service. The passing on of a mantle (as in Elijah to Elisha) is wholly appropriate, but the idea of mass impartation as an experience to be clamoured for is foreign to Scripture. The enemy clones his followers into "sameness" through such deceptive impartations, so as to make them all do the same things. This is the foundation of many cults and false religions. But God releases each of his children into the uniqueness of their gifting and anoints them specifically for their individual destiny.

When something is described as a transferable anointing, or there are attempts to impart to all and sundry an anointing so that they can take it away and give it to others, you can know that this is very dangerous ground. There is no Biblical foundation for transferable anointings and mass impartations. Baptism in the Holy Spirit is for all, but the impartation of an anointing from God is uniquely for the person receiving it.

To imply, for example, that if you give into a certain offering, God is going to give you an impartation to deal with your debts, is simply manipulation and deception. Encouraging people in debt, to give what they manifestly cannot afford leads them to believe for something, which in most cases will only end in disillusion. Each individual is accountable for their own choices – that is the protocol of the Kingdom – no anointing can remove accountability for the choices people have made! It is these sort of practices, which are not rare, that are so destructive to the credibility of the Body of Christ and God's name.

## 5. LYING SIGNS AND WONDERS:

Satan has power and he uses it to great effect. Power is a drug which can even seduce Christian leaders. And when there is an unhealed heart, which gets its affirmation and significance through being a person with power, then the enemy can have a field day through using demonically inspired soul power to put on a very impressive show.

"Minor miracles", which have the saints reeling, such as alleged gold dust and gold fillings are welcomed as being evidence of a visitation of the glory of God. Anyone who has researched even the fringes of occult power knows there are many deceptive things the enemy can do – even healings. No wonder Jesus warned that in the end times "false Christs and false prophets will appear and perform great signs and miracles to deceive even the elect" (Matthew 24:24). We are living in those days.

It is no big deal for a person who is sick with a spirit of infirmity to be healed by the action of a more powerful demon – either by dismissing the spirit of infirmity (demons casting out demons) or by controlling the lower spirit so that it is inactivated for a season. Such "instant healings" are often proclaimed as miracles. While in such cases people may claim to be healed, their healing is often at the price of more powerful demonic control in their life, which can take them into yet deeper deception.

## HEALING AND DISCIPLESHIP

Healing, without the discipline of discipleship, leaves people and Churches vulnerable to many deceptive influences. Healing, and not Jesus, becomes their focus. Jesus is not a technique, or a piece of magic, He is a person. When Jesus becomes a power source, outside of a personal relationship in which there is submission, love and obedience, you can be sure that the enemy is on the prowl!

On the other hand, discipleship, without healing, forces leaders in the direction of heavy shepherding to control unhealed people! People then lose their capacity to exercise their own freewill. Inside they become weak and have to be propped up by the rigidity of external rules. They then become vulnerable to temptation and it is not unusual for such people to suddenly fall victim to pornography, drugs, an affair or many other things.

Healing with discipleship is the Biblical norm for the Body of Christ. If we elevate unhealed people into positions of power and authority we are putting them into a situation where they become more vulnerable to the enemy's temptations, increasing the possibility of further deception being released in the Church.

All of the above adds up to one thing – a serious lack of discernment in the Body of Christ. Having now ministered to hurting and broken people for over twenty years, we have seen how an unhealed person

is vulnerable to deception and to being used by the enemy in many different ways.

But, praise God, we have also seen how, when the Lord truly heals a broken person, whatever their background may have been, that there is a solidity and spiritual strength about them, which gives them inner security, and they have no need to depend on the false to substantiate their life or ministry.

## AND SO TO OUR ORIGINAL QUESTIONS!

Whilst all the above only scrapes the surface of understanding of deception and how it operates, I pray that there is enough here to help people make their own assessment and answer their own questions about such things when they happen in the Body of Christ.

We do have to be on our guard, for it wasn't a modern day critic who said, "Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?' Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you, Away from me, you evil doers.'" (Matthew 7:22-23). These are the words of Jesus. They are a daily challenge to my own soul as I seek to walk in obedience to the Lord in a ministry of discipleship and healing.

## A FINAL WORD

I have no doubt that the majority of the people who inadvertently get caught up in the world of false spirituality are not deliberately trying to deceive or be deceived. Most are still very hurting people, desperately in need of real healing. All of us in the Body of Christ need to share accountability for the situation and hold out a hand of love to those who want to be healed and be there for them when their time of need comes.