

Tasmania, Tsunamis and the Prophecy of Dr. Owuor

The following video has been doing the rounds for a few weeks and is starting to arc up in some church circles here in Tasmania. Situated as we are on the coast of Bass Strait you might imagine why some people find the content, um, topical...

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pibLaKPs5kA>

So, how to respond? My habit, initially, is to give a generous consideration.

Before examining *what* he says it's useful to find out *who* he is. Unfortunately google doesn't have much beyond the typical contemporary hagiography. Youtube has a couple of videos speaking against him but they are generalistic theological counter-messages and don't give me much information. Other videos are almost as outlandish as his own style. There are no obvious skeletons in the cupboard, but neither can I find out which movement he is associated with, who can vouch for him, etc. etc.

What is prevalent is the claim that his prophecies have a 100% fulfilment rate. It seems he is confident that he passes the test of Deuteronomy 18:21-22 – “You may say to yourselves, ‘How can we know when a message has not been spoken by the LORD?’ If what a prophet proclaims in the name of the LORD does not take place or come true, that is a message the LORD has not spoken. That prophet has spoken presumptuously, so do not be alarmed.” He submits himself to this test a number of times including in this extended video of Australia-related prophecies.

The claim is repeated on his website. But this is where some skepticism kicks in: One of the “fulfillments” mentioned on the website (it links to another video) is the recent floods

in Queensland and other parts of Eastern Australia. Yet the prophecy that is apparently fulfilled here clearly refers to an earthquake and that the “ocean will fail to stop” – not the monsoonal floods of recent weeks, no matter how intense or how much the rhetoric of “inland tsunami” was used. Maybe the Deuteronomy 18 thing is a little bit shaky after all.

So I am not really concerned about the ocean crashing through my north-facing kitchen window at which I am sitting at this moment. It seems that specificity is not a significant aspect of his message.

Perhaps, however, there is a symbolic element to his message that taps into its underlying heart. It’s one thing to prophesy something – but what’s the “take home message”, what’s the “so what?”

In the communications I have received the video is accompanied by an email. In it, the specific message attached to the Tasmania prophecy is this:

Precious people, in Matthew 24 the Lord said there would be famines and earthquakes. In Matthew 24, 7, there would be famines and earthquakes in various places, and then He said `these are the beginning of birth pains`.”

This references a stark eschatological reality. But still, no clear message of what do about it.

The broader prophecies concerning Australia, however, have a clear point of application – repentance of the nation and the church.

“I have come to announce the controversy between Jehovah and the church in Australia, unless you repent it is going to be horrific. This is the eastern side of Australia ... correct? Ive have seen the ocean failing to stop. Around all these places. Yesterday He showed it to me TWICE. He and said “IF

THEY DON'T REPENT, TELL THEM THAT THE OCEAN WILL FAIL TO STOP"

And the Lord said "THIS LAND MUST REPENT". The time to engage in sexual sin by the beaches is over because the Lord has sent me here now.

DONT HANDLE THIS CARELESSLY LIKE THE PEOPLE OF HAITI DID. Please don't do that.

Don't start prophesying on top of it He will strike you. The Lord has spoken period.

Let us prepare for the coming of the King.

He has healed people here, He has loved people here.

He is a good God, He wants to love people, He wants to heal the land.

But let us return to righteousness, because this is the moment for Christ to be enthroned in this land

Even within the leadership, but let the church begin by repenting

So the take home point is "repent and prepare the way." This is his kerygma, his proclamation. It's even his domain name – <http://www.repentandpreparetheway.org>.

There is some strength in this: A call to repentance is a clear part of the gospel. It is useful that he calls for that repentance to begin in the church. The good-hearted people who have engaged with this video have responded with increased honesty and transparency about where the churches in our part of Tasmania are at. I can applaud that.

But the rest concerns me. I am not anti-charismatic or anti-prophetic. It's not foreign to Scripture (including the New Testament – see Acts 11:28), to have someone speak by the power of the Spirit about a forthcoming calamity. But here are just a few of my concerns.

1. It's too much about Dr. Owuor and not enough about Jesus. The focus is on what Dr. Owuor says and wants of

us. Wise prophets submit themselves to the discernment of other prophets and leaders in the church and in this way take themselves out of the equation and the focus.

I don't see evidence of that here.

2. It's too much about fear and not enough about grace. It actually taints any repentance that does take place – leading to confusion in motivation. Will my / our repentance be out of fear of a tsunami, an act of appeasement against an unpropitiated God, or as a joyful response to the work of God in my life / our lives because of what Jesus has done? In this way it actually taints and muddles the gospel.
3. The imprecision is damaging. When the prophecy is not fulfilled or is fulfilled in some insipid way the repentance that's been linked with it is undermined. Hearts end up harder than before.

I have mentioned in other times and places of the need for repentance amongst the churches in Tasmania, particular the North-West. The refusal to acknowledge and remedy sin in the church is the key factor preventing effective promulgation of the gospel in this area. Repentance in the church is paramount.

So here is my final overall concern. **By linking this essential element of repentance to an imprecise, fear-focussed, legalistic word, Dr. Owuor is actually undermining essential gospel work.** I fear the end result will be of more devilish use than any other – not least the confusion about what the people of God should do and why they should do it.

If he were to actually visit this place about which he has prophesied, and meet with the people of God here, perhaps he would see.