

9 Apostolic Functions

Things Apostles Do | By Dr. John Polis

The Reality Of Apostles

- Jesus is still operating in two official functions to His Body, Apostle and High Priest.

***Hebrews 3:1-2 NKJV** “Therefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our confession, Christ Jesus, who was faithful to Him who appointed Him, as Moses also was faithful in all His house.”*

- Apostles are builders of the Church and are appointed such by God who has called and gifted them for the task.

***1 Corinthians 3:10 NKJV** According to the grace of God which was given to me, as a wise master builder I have laid the foundation, and another builds on it. But let each one take heed how he builds on it.*

- We see three apostolic functions laid out in this explanation of God’s people at work to build the Tabernacle:

***Exodus 39:42-43 NKJV** “According to all that the Lord had commanded Moses, so the children of Israel did all the work. Then Moses looked over all the work, and indeed they had done it; as the Lord had commanded, just so they had done it. And Moses blessed them.*

1. **INSTRUCTION:** “According to all that the Lord had commanded Moses.”
2. **INSPECTION:** “Then Moses looked over all the work.”
3. **IMPARTATION:** “And Moses blessed them.”

Exodus 40:33-38 KJV “...And he reared up the court round about the tabernacle and the altar, and set up the hanging of the court gate. So Moses finished the work. Then a cloud covered the tent of the congregation, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle. And Moses was not able to enter into the tent of the congregation, because the cloud abode thereon, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle. And when the cloud was taken up from over the tabernacle, the children of Israel went onward in all their journeys: But if the cloud were not taken up, then they journeyed not till the day that it was taken up. For the cloud of the Lord was upon the tabernacle by day, and fire was on it by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel, throughout all their journeys.

- God’s intention for the Church today is to have the same supernatural manifestations of the glory of the Lord happening in our midst. There are five definite manifestations of the glory of God that we should expect today.

1 Corinthians 10:1-4 NKJV “Moreover, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware that all our fathers were under the cloud, all passed through the sea, all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, all ate the same spiritual food, and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ.”

1. Supernatural Deliverance - “all passed through the sea”
 2. Supernatural Guidance - “under the cloud”
 3. Supernatural Leadership - “baptized into Moses”
 4. Supernatural Food - “Manna”
 5. Supernatural Drink - “living water from Christ.”
- **The Apostles of the Lamb**

These twelve men were chosen by Jesus before His death and resurrection, in that sense they are unique apostles and cannot be duplicated for obvious reason.

***Matthew 10:2-4 KJV** “Now the names of the twelve apostles are these; The first, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother; James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother; Philip, and Bartholomew; Thomas, and Matthew the publican; James the son of Alphaeus, and Lebbaeus, whose surname was Thaddaeus; Simon the Canaanite, and Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed him.”*

***Matthew 19:28 NKJV** “So Jesus said to them, “Assuredly I say to you, that in the regeneration, when the Son of Man sits on the throne of His glory, you who have followed Me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.”*

***Luke 22:28-30 NKJV** “But you are those who have continued with Me in My trials. And I bestow upon you a kingdom, just as My Father bestowed one upon Me, that you may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.”*

The idea among some churches that “there are no apostles today” is the result of a dispensational teaching that relegates the supernatural aspects of Christianity to the “First Century Church” only. We shall see that there are still apostles indeed in today’s Church as well that are needed to continue “starting” the Church in the whole world and building it to maturity.

- **The Ascension Apostles**

Christ also gifted some as apostles after He ascended to the Father, These apostles have the same Holy Spirit enablement to do the work of apostles as the first twelve who were chosen by Christ before He left earth. Just like there is no difference in the prophets, teachers and evangelists that we read about in the Book of Acts with those in the church today, there is no difference in the “gift of apostle” either.

***Ephesians 4:7, 8 & 11 KJV** “But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ. Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.....And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;”*

According to Apostle Paul, all five of these “ascension gifts” will be needed as long as the Church is on earth. Paul gives a “nine fold purpose” for these “fivefold gifts as follows:

***Ephesians 4:12-15 NKJV** for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, **13** till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; **14** that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, **15** but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ— **16** from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.*

The Bible teaches us that the “Hand of God” has five fingers which include the five gifts listed above.

***1 Peter 5:6 KJV** “Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time:”*

We know that the “arm of the Lord” must have a “hand” to release the power of the arm. If you have a great bicep in your arm with much strength, but have no hand on the arm, you have no way to use that power. When we receive from these gifts, we receive the power of God into our lives, that is the reward God has for us.

This “mighty hand of God” has been illustrated in the following way for clarity,

1. Apostles Govern: Like the “thumb” which can work with all the other fingers.
 2. Prophets Guide: Like the “pointing finger” of the hand.
 3. Evangelists Gather: Like “the longest finger” for outreach.
 4. Pastors Guard: Like the “wedding finger” that is preparing the bride for Christ.
 5. Teachers Grow: Like the “littlest finger” because it is the only one that can open the ear.
- **Modern Day Apostles:** There are many people recognized in today’s Church as “apostles” because of the fruit of ministry manifested in their lives. Some more

recognized apostles would be Chuck Smith, Founder of Calvary Chapel; John Wimber, Founder of Vineyard Churches; C. Peter Wagner, Founder of The New Apostolic Reformation; John Kelly, Founder of International Coalition of Apostles, and Naomi Dowdy, Founder of Global Leadership Network.

Function 1: Revelation

1 Corinthians 12:28 NKJV “And God has appointed these in the church: first apostles, second prophets, third teachers...”

- **PROTON:** This verse shows a distinct order in God’s unfolding strategy for His Church. The word “first” is the Greek word , “proton” and means “first in rank, order and importance.” The Greek words for “second and third” are sequential and follow the apostle in rank, order and importance. When God is going to break a fresh revelation to the Church, He will begin with an apostle who usually will become a pioneer of that particular message to the body of Christ.
- **Prophets Confirm:** The apostle will “break the revelation,” the prophet will “confirm the revelation” and the teacher will “explain the revelation.”

2 Corinthians 13:1 NKJV “By the mouth of two or three witnesses every word shall be established.”

- Church history records numerous leaders like Martin Luther who trumpeted a fresh word from God for the whole body of Christ to receive and grow thereby. These great apostolic leaders gave birth to our major Protestant denominations that all have a main truth that their particular movement espouses. If we take each of the truths revealed by these apostles that developed into the movements they led, and incorporate them into our lives, we will become the mature Church that Jesus is building.

Psalms 46:4-5 KJV “There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the most High. God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved”

- God never intended the truth to divide the Church into all of the different groups we see today.

Colossians 3:16 KJV “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another...”

- Jesus, as the “apostle” in His earthly ministry, blessed the food and gave it to His disciples to distribute to the crowd.

John 6:5-11 KJV “When Jesus then lifted up his eyes, and saw a great company come unto him, he saith unto Philip, Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat? And this he said to prove him: for he himself knew what he would do. Philip answered him, Two hundred pennyworth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may take a little. One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, saith unto him, There is a lad here, which hath five barley loaves, and two small fishes: but what are they among so many? And Jesus said, Make the men sit down. Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down, in number about five thousand. And Jesus took the loaves; and when he had given thanks, he distributed to the disciples, and the disciples to them that were set down; and likewise of the fishes as much as they would.”

- As the apostles receive the fresh manna, and the prophet confirms it, the other gifts then receive it for mass distribution to the whole body of Christ. This also shows the importance of recognizing and receiving from apostles today, or we could find ourselves becoming an “old wineskin” just living from yesterday’s revelation.

Function 2: Ordination

Acts 14:23 KJV “And when they had ordained them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed.”

- As Paul and Barnabas traveled together to strengthen the churches, they trained and ordained leaders for each congregation they either started or found already in existence. The leaders were called “elders” (presbuteros meaning “not a novice”) because they represented what a “mature believer” in Christ should exemplify to other Christians.

- Becoming an elder in a local church is not a matter of having a “gift” or “anointing” only, but of having the Christ-like character that will inspire other believers to grow accordingly.

1 Peter 5:1-4 NKJV The elders who are among you I exhort, I who am a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that will be revealed: 2 Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly; 3 nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock; 4 and when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away.

- When one who is in leadership at this level fails to “role model” the qualities listed as requirements for eldership in 1 Timothy 3:1-8 and Titus 1:5-8, they should be relieved of their leadership responsibilities until such time as they make the necessary changes to re-qualify as an elder again.
- This is why the New Testament teaches a message of discipleship, the “apostles” were first “disciples” of Jesus where they learned not just how he “ministered” but how he “lived.”

Luke 6:40 NKJV “A disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone who is perfectly trained will be like his teacher.”

1 Timothy 5:22 NKJV Do not lay hands on anyone hastily, nor share in other people’s sins; keep yourself pure.

- There are six steps that Jesus walked his “students of ministry” through that we must all follow before being “released” into a leadership role in God’s Church. Ordination being the last step.
 1. **SELECTION:** Matthew 4:19, Jesus called certain individuals to come into a training relationship with Himself. He will call every “believer” to become His “disciple.”
 2. **INSTRUCTION:** Matthew 5-7, Jesus took them up on the mountain and taught them the Word of God. The “Beatitudes” were the character qualities of Christ.

3. **OBSERVATION:** Matthew 8-9, Jesus took them into the place of ministry with Him where they saw Him at work. “He turned to His disciples who were with Him.” Matthew 8:10
 4. **DELEGATION:** Matthew 10, Jesus called the disciples together and gave them power and authority for a special assignment for which He held them accountable. Mark 6:30
 5. **CORRECTION:** Matthew 17, Jesus corrected them when they could not do what He had told them to do because of “unbelief.”
 6. **ORDINATION:** Matthew 28, After His resurrection, Jesus gave them authority and commissioned (ordained) them to carry on in His place. They now were publicly recognized as the leaders of the New Testament Church.
- Apostles are responsible in today’s church, as in the early church to make sure that the highest standards of leadership are maintained. Apostles themselves are to be the supreme example of the highest standards for others to follow, as Paul reminded the believers of Thessalonica.

1 Thessalonians 2:10-12 NKJV You are witnesses, and God also, how devoutly and justly and blamelessly we behaved ourselves among you who believe; as you know how we exhorted, and comforted, and charged every one of you, as a father does his own children that you would walk worthy of God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory.

- Apostolic strategy of Paul for raising up strong Christians.
 1. The EXAMPLE of APOSTOLIC MINISTRY - v10 devoutly, justly, blamelessly
 2. The FUNCTION of APOSTOLIC MINISTRY - v11 exhorted, comforted, charged
 3. The RESULT of APOSTOLIC MINISTRY - v12 Walking Worthy of God in Kingdom glory
- The purpose of “ordination” is to insure that the proper examples of leadership in Christian ministry are maintained. Authority, responsibility and accountability cannot be separated. Authority in ministry doesn’t come from the “anointing,” which is the “ability” to minister. Authority comes from “appointment” or

“ordination” which should guarantee that the gifted person is also a mature and exemplary person.

1 Corinthians 14:40 KJV “Let all things be done decently and in order.”

- **A Warning:** Those who claim to be mature, and have sat under correct teaching on these matters, but still refuse to submit themselves to godly authority, are to be avoided as “maverick sheep” who will lead others into a rebellious lifestyle of division in the church.

Hebrews 13:17 NKJV “Obey those who rule (lead) over you, and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give account. Let them do so with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you.”

Function 3: Foundation

1 Corinthians 3:10 NKJV “According to the grace of God which was given to me, as a wise master builder I have laid the foundation, and another builds on it. But let each one take heed how he builds on it.”

Paul describes an aspect of his apostolic ministry as “laying foundation” for others to build upon. Principles that apply to building the Church “universal,” also apply to building the Church “local,” and to the individual Christian who is also the “temple of the Holy Spirit.”

Pastors may be pressured to build for “success,” rather than a New Testament model of a believer in Christ. Being in a hurry for growth can lead to overlooking the principles that will insure the local church will be around for the “long haul,” still converting and discipling people for more than one generation.

1. Doctrinal Foundation

Hebrews 6:1-2 KJV “Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, Of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment.”

- Paul emphasized the “first principles” of Christ, or the things Christians should be learning first after conversion to the faith. Every church should have a regular

class for new believers that cover these essentials of the Christian faith, before moving on to the more mature messages.

- Understanding what I call “Big Bible Words”. A “Big Bible Word” is a word often used in scripture like Faith, Grace, Righteousness, Love, Prayer, Holy, Wisdom, or Peace. When God talks a lot about a subject, we should also.
- Believers should also understand key “theological terms” such as Justification, Regeneration, Sanctification, Glorification, Revelation and Retribution. Paul warns of the necessity of establishing believers in “sound doctrine”.

2 Timothy 4:3-4 NKJV “For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables.”

2. Prayer Foundation

- Apostles are people of prayer above all things.

Colossians 1:9 KJV “For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you”

1 Thessalonians 3:10 KJV “Night and day praying exceedingly that we might see your face, and might perfect that which is lacking in your faith?”

Acts 2:42 KJV “And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.”

- A prayer foundation includes an understanding of all different kinds of prayer so that the church is skilled in the art of prayer.
 1. **Intercessory Prayer** - this includes praying the purposes of God for individuals, organizations, cities, states and nations, and may be done in a known language or in other tongues. 1 Corinthians 14:14-15
 2. **Petition Prayer** - this includes making a request known to God based upon the revealed will of God in scripture or from the Holy Spirit to an individual. 1 John 5:14-15

3. **Prayer of Committal** - this involves committing something or someone to God for the working out of His Divine plan. Proverbs 3:5-6
4. **Prayer in the Spirit** - this is praying in tongues to build up your inner man and become more sensitive to Holy Spirit within. This is a powerful tool for obtaining guidance from the Lord, and revelation of the Word.
5. **Prayer of Faith** - this is the prayer to be used in praying for the sick, and for any personal desire. (James 5:14-16; Mark 11:24)

3. Financial Foundation

Philippians 4:15 NKJV "Now you Philippians know also that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church shared with me concerning giving and receiving but you only."

- Teaching proper financial stewardship is the basis for all Divine supply in a ministry or the life of a believer.

1. First fruits

Deuteronomy 18:4 NKJV "The firstfruits of your grain and your new wine and your oil, and the first of the fleece of your sheep, you shall give him."

Proverbs 3:9-10 NIV "Honor the Lord with your wealth, with the first fruits of all your crops; then your barns will be filled to overflowing, and your vats will brim with new wine."

Any time you receive increase in your life, the first "taste" belongs to God. For example, if you received a raise on your job resulting in \$50 additional per week, and you were paid twice monthly, your first check would have \$100 increase in it. This \$100 is the "first fruits" and belongs to God.

2. Tithe: one tenth

Leviticus 27:30 KJV "And all the tithe of the land, whether of the seed of the land, or of the fruit of the tree, is the Lord's: it is holy unto the Lord."

It is designated by God just like the amount is designated by God and cannot be "negotiated" by circumstances, it "belongs to the Lord."

Malachi 3:8-12 NKJV “Will a man rob God? Yet you have robbed Me! But you say, ‘In what way have we robbed You?’ In tithes and offerings. You are cursed with a curse, For you have robbed Me, Even this whole nation. Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, That there may be food in My house, And try Me now in this,” Says the Lord of hosts, “If I will not open for you the windows of heaven And pour out for you such blessing That there will not be room enough to receive it. “And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, So that he will not destroy the fruit of your ground, Nor shall the vine fail to bear fruit for you in the field,” Says the Lord of hosts; “And all nations will call you blessed, For you will be a delightful land,” Says the Lord of hosts.”

- A. **Amount of the tithe** - one tenth. Should we pay God before we pay Caesar? Tithing from the “gross income” means the “gross is blessed.”
- B. **Place of the tithe** - the storehouse. Represents the place food was stored for the priests. We are the holy priesthood of the Lord now as born again people, our food is stored in the local church where the ministry gifts are anointed to “feed the flock.”
- C. **Purpose of the tithe** - “that there may be food in my house.” The ministry of the Word of God is provided for thru the tithe.

Blessing of the tithe - is threefold.

- 1. **Precipitation** - the windows of heaven open and rain falls on your life. Nothing grows without water.
 - 2. **Protection** - the devourer is rebuked.
 - 3. **Productivity** - you shall be a delightful land.
2. **Alms** - “generosity towards the poor motivated by compassion.”

Proverbs 19:17 KJV “He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the Lord; and that which he hath given will he pay him again.”

The Lord promises to reimburse you for the alms you have given to the poor.

- 3. **Offering** - “seed sowing” because the offering is returned in multiplied amount.

Luke 6:38 KJV "Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again."

1 Corinthians 4:2 KJV "Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful."

- Ministry leaders should seek to have a "financial council" and not just be the "final word" on the finances of the ministry.
- Those handling the ministry income should be trained in bookkeeping and Non Profit Tax Laws.
- When the ministry is small and getting started, it may be necessary to seek help from larger ministries whom they are in relationship with for coaching people who work in the financial department.
- A budget should be implemented immediately to insure that finances flow into the vision of the ministry with percentages based upon the priority of each item in the budget.
- Eventually, when the ministry begins to grow and resources increase, regular audits should be professionally completed yearly. Following these basic protocols for finances will insure that integrity is maintained and that no one is "going to jail."

4. Leadership Foundation

A ministry that is built wisely upon apostolic foundations will have a training program for future leaders. Wisdom dictates that "quality demands qualifications," that is why the New Testament gives qualifications for leadership in the local church including Deacon, Elders and Bishops. Every ministry should include what is called a "ladder of leadership" so that those who have the "desire to aspire" can climb higher in responsibility and influence within the ministry they serve.

The senior leader of a local church should be trained in a threefold job description that includes:

- **FEEDING THE FLOCK** - making sure that the proper spiritual diet is met and that a preaching calendar is planned for the church based upon the perceived needs of people, doctrinal teaching and discipleship.
- **MANAGING THE FLOCK** - making use of the human resources that God has provided by placing people in positions based upon their gifts, passion and personality.
- **LEADING THE FLOCK** - having a clear vision from God, purpose and mission statement. Leadership is the ability to cast vision and incorporate people into the vision. A successful leader must be able to change as changes in culture occur around us, not changing the “content” of the message but the methods of communicating it.

5. Worship Foundation

Foundational to a thriving spiritual life and culture is learning to cultivate an atmosphere that welcomes the manifest Presence of God.

Psalm 98:4-6 KJV “Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all the earth: make a loud noise, and rejoice, and sing praise. Sing unto the Lord with the harp; with the harp, and the voice of a psalm. With trumpets and sound of cornet make a joyful noise before the Lord, the King.”

Regardless of the gifts and talents of people involved in the worship ministry, the most important thing is not the “preparation of the music,” but the “preparation of the worshipper.”

The worship ministry can become too “theatrical” empty of God’s glory unless those involved on the stage are “true worshippers” themselves.

Function 4: Inspection

Colossians 2:5 KJV “For though I be absent in the flesh, yet am I with you in the spirit, joying and beholding your order, and the steadfastness of your faith in Christ.”

- As the founder of this church, Paul performed regular inspections of their spiritual life and the flow of ministry among them.

Acts 20:28 KJV "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood."

- Apostles that have founded churches have the responsibility to provide oversight to the congregations as their “spiritual fathers” and are referred to as “vertical apostles” because they are “over them in the Lord.” The following scripture give a picture of Paul’s paternal care of the Corinthians.

1 Corinthians 4:14-17 KJV "I write not these things to shame you, but as my beloved sons I warn you. For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel. Wherefore I beseech you, be ye followers of me. For this cause have I sent unto you Timotheus, who is my beloved son, and faithful in the Lord, who shall bring you into remembrance of my ways which be in Christ, as I teach every where in every church."

- Apostles may give oversight upon request to a ministry they have not personally founded, not as an “overseer” to them, but more of a consulting figure. These types of apostolic relationships may be referred to as “horizontal apostles” who serve in an “apostolic helps” to churches and ministries, but are not looked upon as the “father” of the ministry. A more modern term is “coaching” or “mentoring.”
- We see an example of our Chief Apostle, the Lord Jesus Christ, as he performs an “apostolic inspection” on the Seven Churches of Asia found in Revelation 3-4. Here the Lord, corrects, affirms, reproves and instructs all seven churches as needed.
- Allowing for godly and seasoned leadership to inspect our lives and ministries is the characteristic of a “sincere heart” before the Lord.
- Jesus not only performed apostolic inspections on churches as noted above, but on individuals as well. In the story of the Rich Young Ruler, Jesus reveals to this young man the “one thing” that is keeping him from obtaining his desire.

Mark 10:17-21 KJV "And when he was gone forth into the way, there came one running, and kneeled to him, and asked him, Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life? And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God. Thou knowest the commandments, Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Defraud not,

Honour thy father and mother. And he answered and said unto him, Master, all these have I observed from my youth. Then Jesus beholding him loved him, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow me."

Notice the progression of spirit led ministry thru Jesus to this potential disciple.

- "Then Jesus, LOOKING at him.." (verse 21a) Jesus saw into this man's heart.
- "...LOVED him," (verse 21a) Real love will always do what is best for the other person.
- "and SAID to him.." (verse 21a) Jesus LAID IT OUT for him in plain terms exactly what his problem was, and how he could solve it.

Function 5: Expansion

Acts 1:8 KJV "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."

A great man of God once said, "The light that shines the farthest, shines the brightest at home." Jesus said, "Jerusalem first," this would be the site of the Holy Spirit explosion that would shake the world to the core. But it didn't stop there, it spread like a concentric circle in ever widening circumference to take in the whole known world.

Acts 17:6b KJV "These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also;"

The Great Commission: As an Apostle Himself, Jesus left us with the vision of world expansion and the instructions on how to accomplish the goal.

Mark 16:15-18 NKJV "And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned. And these signs will follow those who believe: In

My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues; they will take up serpents; and if they drink anything deadly, it will by no means hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover.”

Matthew 28:18-20 KJV *“And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.*

Two aspects of the Great Commission is that “preaching is announcing the facts of the gospel” and “teaching is explaining the facts of the gospel.” Paul followed this strategy closely in his apostolic ministry of expansion as recorded in the following verse.

Colossians 1:28-29 KJV *“Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus: Whereunto I also labour, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily.”*

When apostles are in leadership of the Church, the Church will have the right vision, and understand their purpose in the world.

Function 6: Correction

Dealing with difficult people and situations is something every apostle is equipped to do, even though it may never become a function that one is fully comfortable performing. The Epistles give us several types of difficult people and scenarios that needed addressed with apostolic wisdom. Not the least of which was the case of “incest” found among the Corinthian believers.

1 Corinthians 5:3-5 NJKV *“For I indeed, as absent in body but present in spirit, have already judged (as though I were present) him who has so done this deed. In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when you are gathered together, along with my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.”*

What stands out most about this immoral situation is the length of time it was known about, but not dealt with by the eldership present. In an exciting atmosphere like they were having in Corinth, it could be easy to allow certain behavior to exist and allow people to remain in a carnal state regarding spiritual growth.

Apostles will not neglect to confront issues that have potential to destroy the individual and the church corporately.

Some of the difficult people we find mentioned in the New Testament that we are given instruction on dealing with are listed below:

- Evil men and seducers - 2 Thessalonians 3:1-2 “He requested prayer for deliverance from these men.”
- Unthankful - Luke 6:35 “Be kind to the unthankful.”
- Divisive - Romans 16:17 “Avoid and mark them.”
- Offensive - Matthew 18:15 “Confront them.”
- Unruly - 1 Thessalonians 5:14 “Warn them.”
- Disobedient - 1 Peter 3:1 “Show them.”
- Opposers of themselves - 2 Timothy 2:24-26 “Instruct them.”
- Homosexuals - Romans 1:29-32 “Knowing the judgment of God.”

Confronting problems and problem people is often avoided as people seek to “keep everyone happy” so that no one leaves the church and takes their money with them. However, to allow the spread of evil in our midst will ultimately result in greater loss and problems. Paul told Timothy to prepare for times of stress in ministry and develop the endurance necessary to walk in the apostolic calling. Paul uses three strong words to prepare his “son” Timothy for dealing with the challenges an apostle must face.

2 Timothy 4:2 KJV “Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long suffering and doctrine.”

2 Timothy 4:5 KJV “But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry.”

- “reprove” - meaning to “convict, convince, tell a fault.” (call it what it is, sin is sin).
- “rebuke” - meaning to censure or admonish; by implication, forbid.
- “exhort” - to call near, to invite.

James 4:8 NKJV “Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded.”

Apostles are as strong on sanctification and they are on justification, regeneration and glorification.

Function 7: Distribution

Apostles are people who become “money masters,” “money magnets” and “money movers.” We can see the role of apostles in terms of handling the resources of the early church in the Book of Acts.

Acts 4:34-35 KJV “Neither was there any among them that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, And laid them down at the apostles' feet: and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need.”

Apostles have a “great care” for the needy among God’s people as well.

1 Corinthians 16:1-3 KJV “Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come. And when I come, whomsoever ye shall approve by your letters, them will I send to bring your liberality unto Jerusalem.”

Since apostles have roles of rulership and governance within the church, they manifest a “kingly anointing” that attracts finances.

Matthew 2:11 KJV “And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense and myrrh.”

When Jesus began his ministry, finances began to flow to him, enabling him to take 12 men and their families under his care for all their needs.

Luke 8:2-3 KJV “And certain women, which had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities, Mary called Magdalene, out of whom went seven devils, and Joanna the wife of Chuza Herod’s steward, and Susanna, and MANY OTHERS, which ministered unto him of their substance (property and possessions).”

Jesus had quite a large “partner base” of support and needed Judas to serve as his “treasurer.” Obviously, Jesus had some earthly treasure since he needed a “treasurer.”

Apostles are to be “distributors” of the resources God provides according to God’s will.

Apostles often manifest a “Joseph Anointing,” who was himself prepared to steward the riches of Egypt in order to provide for God’s people in times of need.

Psalms 105:17-22 KJV “He sent a man before them, even Joseph, who was sold for a servant: Whose feet they hurt with fetters: he was laid in iron: Until the time that his word came: the word of the Lord tried him. The king sent and loosed him; even the ruler of the people, and let him go free. He made him lord of his house, and ruler of all his substance: To bind his princes at his pleasure; and teach his senators wisdom.”

The apostolic ministry of the End Time Church will manifest an “apothecary” of anointing that has been deposited in them thru God ordained relationships and time spent in the “winepress” of preparation. This “mixture of anointing” includes “Elijah Anointing,” “Kingly Anointing” and “Joseph Anointing” to fulfill God’s purposes.

Function 8: Manifestation

An aspect of the apostolic ministry in evidence in the New Testament was the “manifestation” of miraculous power to heal and deliver people as Jesus Himself had done.

John 14:12 KJV “Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father.”

The “greater works” Jesus referred to are works He had not done Himself during his earthly ministry. He told them that they would “do the works He did,” and “greater

works." I believe He is referring to the greater work of "regeneration" and "filling with the Spirit." Jesus' ministry was limited to the realm of physical healing, deliverance from demons and miracles that involved defying the natural laws; walking on water, multiplying food supply, changing water to wine, etc. No one was "born again" and "filled with the Spirit with evidence of speaking in tongues" until after the resurrection of Christ. These are the "greater works" because they affect the "eternal and greater part of man," his spirit being.

Remember what Jesus said about John the Baptist,

Matthew 11:11 KJV "Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist: notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he."

Some would say that the "greater works" are more important now and that we just need to "get people saved" and if God wills, He can heal and deliver those who need it but that is not an important ministry of the Church today. But Jesus said that his followers would do both, "the works He did" and "greater works." Salvation is for the whole man, spirit, soul and body. In fact, it is doing the "works of Jesus" that will open the doors for "greater works." When we manifest the miraculous power to heal and deliver, people will respond with the desire to be saved and filled with the Spirit.

It was the manifestation of power that drew multitudes to Christ then, and the same is needed today to convince people that Jesus Christ is truly risen and glorified.

Acts 5:12-14 KJV "And by the hands of the apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the people; (and they were all with one accord in Solomon's porch. And of the rest durst no man join himself to them: but the people magnified them. And believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women.)"

Notice the three stages to increase in this passage:

- Manifestation - verse 12 "And by the hands of the apostles were many signs and wonders."
- Magnification - verse 13 "but the people magnified them."
- Multiplication - verse 14 "multitudes of men and women."

As the apostles manifested the power of God, the believers “magnified them,” they went and told everybody what was happening, and multitudes came and got saved. This is divine pattern for apostolic ministry until Jesus returns.

Function 9: Generation

Apostles are “generational” in their thinking. When Paul was speaking to his spiritual son, Timothy, he referred to “four generations” of potential disciples of Jesus Christ.

***2 Timothy 2:2 NKJV** “And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.”*

Four generations of learners:

- 1st generation - “Paul”
- 2nd generation - “Timothy”
- 3rd generation - “faithful men”
- 4th generation - “others”

Apostles are “multi-generational” thinkers because they are “spiritual fathers” who are seeking to raise a “spiritual family” of sons and daughters to carry on the vision of ministry from one generation to another. God is a “family God,” He is a “Father” who created mankind to have a family to shed His Love upon. The greatest expression of our God is His “Father’s Heart,” which Jesus revealed during his earth walk.

***John 1:18 NKJV** “No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him. John 1:18 NKJV*

***John 14:9 NKJV** “He who has seen me has seen the Father.”*

God promised that the “spirit of Elijah” would come to prepare the church for the final harvest and return of Jesus Christ.

***Malachi 4:5-6 NKJV** “Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord. And he will turn the hearts of the fathers*

to the children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers, lest I come and strike the earth with a curse.”

Apostle Paul speaks of God’s End Time Family to the Ephesians and enumerates the qualities that will be revealed in it.

Ephesians 3:14-21 KJV “For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God. Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.”

One cannot have a “fathers heart” who has not themselves been a “son or daughter” to someone who fulfilled a “paternal role” in their life. We develop the heart of a father by being “fathered.”

Those who go out in ministry based solely upon “gifting” and “anointing,” but have not enjoyed a relationship with a spiritual father, will usually “use people” to build their church, rather than using their church to build people.

When we have allowed the kind of intimacy in relationship that allows others to “see into me” and reveal the issues of heart that we are often blind too within ourselves, we will become the kind of leader that can build a family (not just a ministry) and leave a legacy for generations.

1 Corinthians 4:14-16 NKJV “I do not write these things to shame you, but as my beloved children I warn you. For though you might have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet you do not have many fathers; for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel. Therefore I urge you, imitate me.

1 Thessalonians 2:11 NKJV “as you know how we exhorted, and comforted, and charged every one of you, as a father does his own children,”

Paul uses Timothy as the supreme example from his own ministry, of how a “servant” became a “son” to him in Christ.

Philippians 2:19-23 KJV “But I trust in the Lord Jesus to send Timotheus shortly unto you, that I also may be of good comfort, when I know your state. For I have no man likeminded, who will naturally care for your state. For all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's. But ye know the proof of him, that, as a son with the father, he hath served with me in the gospel. Him therefore I hope to send presently, so soon as I shall see how it will go with me.”

Timothy had served Paul, than as a “son” he could “re-present” Paul’s same sincere interest in the Philippians. He had become “like” his spiritual father in the spiritual qualities of his life, and Paul felt safe in sending him, know that Timothy would deal with these Christians exactly as he himself would do. No surprises from an “independent spirit” that likes to “do their own thing” when given an assignment. Timothy had truly “proven himself” as spiritual son and was trusted by Paul.

The Release Of Apostles

1. Recognize Them

Ephesians 4:11 NKJV “And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers.”

1 Corinthians 12:29 KJV “Are all apostles? are all prophets? are all teachers? are all workers of miracles?”

John 17:18 NKJV “As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world.”

Apostles are the same in terms of being Ambassadors, Generals and Patriarchs of the faith, but they may differ in the sphere of ministry, they are sent to by the Lord.

- As **AMBASSADORS**, apostles are fully authorized to represent the one who sent them.

Matthew 10:1 NKJV “And when He had called His twelve disciples to Him, He gave them power over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease.”

The Greek word “exousia,” translated “power” in this verse actually means “full authority,” “the right to command.”

- As **GENERALS**, apostles are leaders in spiritual warfare, military strategists who train the warriors for battle.

2 Corinthians 10:3-5 KJV “For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;”

- As **PATRIARCHS**, apostles are spiritual fathers raising up generations of spiritual sons and daughters to carry the vision of ministry. They are Abraham's with great spiritual families that have come from their spiritual loins.

Being an apostle does not give one the right to “overstep” into another’s field, or automatically give one authority in every church or ministry. Paul would not have claimed jurisdiction over a church under the care of Apostle Peter, for example.

2 Corinthians 10:13 NKJV “We, however, will not boast beyond measure, but within the limits of the sphere which God appointed us—a sphere which especially includes you.”

Some apostles are graced to operate in all three areas. Each one should know the limits of their God ordained sphere.

C. Peter Wagner originated the terms, “horizontal apostle” and “vertical apostle” which refer to those apostles who have “oversight of ministries” and act as a “covering” (Paul was vertical), and apostles who are horizontal (Barnabas) and serve as “big brothers” and “apostolic helps” to churches and ministries without being a covering to them.

2. Commission Them

The word, “commission” means to “order or authorize (a person or organization) to do or produce something.” Apostles are to be “commissioned” after having given evidence of their “ambassadorial, generalship and patriarchal” abilities.

We see an example of this developmental process in King David, who first learned to “tend sheep” before becoming a ruler of God’s people.

2 Samuel 7:8 NKJV “Now therefore, thus shall you say to My servant David, ‘Thus says the Lord of hosts: “I took you from the sheepfold, from following the sheep, to be ruler over My people, over Israel.”’

David demonstrated the qualities necessary to be “ruler” of God’s people, even while he was serving in his father’s house as a shepherd boy. All Israel bore witness to David’s capabilities and affirmed his calling from God to be King.

Apostolic Commissioning should be conducted by seasoned apostles who recognize the preparedness of an individual that God is raising up.

Ordination Vs Commissioning: All “fivefold” ministry gifts that seek a “vocation” of ministry should be ordained by local church authority, however, ordination and commissioning are not one and the same.

- As we explained earlier in this writing, “ordination” of church leadership gives one the authorization to function within the church as examples, feeders and leaders of the flock in official capacity as elders, deacons and bishops.
- With regards to apostles, commissioning follows ordination as a church official and affirms the work that has been done, the character that has been developed and the anointing that has been manifested. With this in mind, a person generally doesn’t begin ministry as an “apostle,” even if prophecy was given to that effect. Beginning as pastor, teacher or evangelist will provide the necessary experience, wisdom and character to be recognized as an apostle.

Someone with the calling of apostle upon their life will “emerge” into the fullness of that ministry. For those called to lead churches and networks, the ministry will usually grow and the need for more leaders to be trained with it. The emerging apostle will no longer be able to “tend sheep,” but will need to train the leaders, open new doors of ministry and travel away from the local church more frequently. The congregation will need to release the apostle for the functions that come with a growing ministry, and understand that others can do pastoral work and care for the sheep in their absence. Peter Wagner describes this transition as going from a “Shepherd” to a “Rancher” who has many pastures with shepherds tending each one.

Releasing apostles into the fullness of their calling involves recognition of the gift, ordination to ministry and commissioning in the right season. We are living in exciting times of restoration of all gifts and ministries of the Holy Spirit. Presently the gift of Apostle is being emphasized by the Holy Spirit and accepted by the Body of Christ, let us receive all of God's gifts and ministries for the edifying and equipping of His Church for a great final harvest.