



STUART GRAMENZ

END TIME
APOSTLES
GENUINE & FALSE

I LAID A FOUNDATION AS AN EXPERT BUILDER
AND SOMEONE ELSE IS BUILDING ON IT.
BUT EACH ONE SHOULD BE CAREFUL HOW HE BUILDS.
1 COR. 3:10

PUBLISHED BY SPIRIT LED NETWORK INC.

P.O. BOX 180
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QLD 4123,
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TRANSLATIONS USED

There has been much discussion on which of the many Bible translations have most effectively interpreted God's truths. For the purpose of study, our preference is the original King James or New King James version. However all translations from the original Greek were done by men and therefore all can have strengths and weaknesses. When seeking the most appropriate translation, our evaluation is based on catching the Spirit of the writer. Translations, other than the KJV can at times provide a greater insight into a truth and we have used these on such occasions.

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*Chapter 1***APOSTOLIC D.N.A**

In recent years, there has been a focus on the restoration of the apostolic ministry. In one sense, there has been excitement about this re-emergence

If God is restoring end time apostles to the body, one could safely assume that, with it, He would restore all the truths of the original apostolic anointing. After all, it's not simply about the name. It's the function and what practical benefits that function will achieve in restoring the body of Christ; *measuring up to the full and complete standard of Christ. Eph. 4:13 NLT*

Our considerations are not a criticism of any particular ministry. They are a candid reflection on the foundational Biblical standards of apostles needed to bring the church to full maturity in these end times.

However, we should remember the story of Abraham who was given the promise of a son. His wife could not produce the child at that time, therefore, out of frustration Abraham resolved the problem by producing a son, Ishmael, through their maidservant Hagar.

Eventually his wife did conceive and produced the promised son, Isaac.

Our point is that when God gives us a promise, like Abraham, we can attempt to give birth to that promise by trying to produce by our own efforts.

Those who attempt to operate in this prior to His timing are attempting to birth something out of season and it will reveal itself as an "Ishmael" and not an "Isaac".

Therefore, it is vital that we can identify the genuine "Isaac" apostles so we are not led into deception.

APOSTOLIC D.N.A.

It's obvious that the role of an apostle is not simply having a title, you will know them by their identifiable fruit. Other five-fold ministries such as teachers, pastors and evangelists have core unchangeable values which define their ministry. The same applies to the apostolic role.

Defining an apostle surely goes beyond the traits of being spiritual fathers. - e.g. a prophet, teacher or pastor can be a father in the faith.

It also exceeds taking on administrative roles; there are many teachers with an administrative gift. Exhibiting Godly character is a fundamental core value of any five-fold ministries and obviously this applies to apostles.

As we are aware, we can have apostles with varying gift mixes depending on the need at the time. The apostle Paul said, "... *to which I was appointed a preacher, an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles.*" *2 Tim 1:11*. In his early ministry, Paul was profusely evangelistic and travelled. When error came into the church some years later, he taught through his epistles. In the latter part of his ministry he stayed at home where he preached and taught the disciples who came to him. *Acts 28:30*.

However, in all apostles there is deposited a foundational apostolic DNA. God is restoring truth in these end times and we believe that this restoration will bring with it a total reclamation of the apostolic ministry at least equal to or possibly greater in power and authority than that of the first apostles. More importantly, we will explore the restoration truth and resulting impact to the church that will accompany that anointing.

Therefore we are looking at that early church as our minimum criterion as proof of an apostolic anointing. Realistically, we have to look at what the Bible standard is, substantiate the original DNA and establish our definition from there.

PROOF 1: PREACH WITH SIGNS AND WONDERS

As stated, being an apostle is more than a title, they have a particular function. The word "apostle" is *apostolos* in the Greek, meaning "an ambassador; one who is sent; a delegated authority. The Greek word for "apostleship", *apostole* means "a sending, a mission," Acts 1:25; Rom. 1:5; 1 Cor. 9:2; Gal. 2:8.

Why are they sent and what is their mission?

One of the Biblical foundations of the kingdom for which apostles are responsible is the fulfillment of their original assignment given by Jesus ... the Great Commission; *And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. ... And these signs will follow those who believe: In My name they will cast out demons ... they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover."* Mark 16:15, 17,18

Apostles are special messengers sent with a special message of the gospel of the kingdom. Their message is confirmed by signs and wonders. *And these signs will follow those who believe:*

The final prima-facie evidence of a true apostle was an abundance of signs, wonders & miracles.

When I was with you, I certainly gave you proof that I am an apostle. For I patiently did many signs and wonders and miracles among you. 2 Cor. 12:12 NLT

Paul was very emphatic about the proof of an apostle, "*many signs and wonders and miracles*. He didn't say it was the proof of some apostles.

And through the hands of the apostles many signs and wonders were done among the people. Acts 5:12

This is a "biblical standard"... not a biased Pentecostal or charismatic view.

Despite this clear-cut, black and white dividing line, this Scripture seems to be lacking in many of the attempts to define a fundamental role of every apostle.

There may be some who correctly point out that evangelists also preach the gospel with signs and wonders following. Signs and wonders are only the first proof of an apostle. The basic difference between the two lies in their equipping capabilities and giftedness.

The apostle Paul also said, *as a wise master builder I have laid the foundation. 1 Cor. 3:10*

That foundation was the equipping of believers enabling them to actually imitate the works of Jesus (John 14:12). This brings us to our second apostolic proof.

PROOF 2: EQUIPS DISCIPLES TO IMITATE JESUS

Every ministry would agree that we need to make disciples. However, what standard of disciple? The apostles were told to make disciples who could demonstrate every command that Jesus had required of them ... including the Great Commission.

Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you. Matt. 28:19-20

This meant operating in the same level of love and power that Jesus did.

"I tell you the truth, anyone who believes in me will do the same works I have done, and even greater works..." John 14:12 NLT

Their responsibility is to equip God's people to do his work and build up the church, the body of Christ. This will continue until we all come to such unity in our faith and knowledge of God's Son that we will be mature in the Lord, measuring up to the full and complete standard of Christ. Eph. 4:13 NLT

Apostles demonstrate as role models and equip believers to be Jesus imitators.

The apostle Paul obviously raised disciples to the Great Commission standard and this provided authentication of his anointing.

Isn't it because of my work that you belong to the Lord? Even if others think I am not an apostle, I certainly am to you. You yourselves are proof that I am the Lord's apostle.

1 Cor. 9:1-2NLT

Would Paul have made this bold declaration if he had raised a bunch of pew warmers or backsliders? They obviously weren't perfect; nevertheless he was notably impressed with their level of maturity.

We could safely claim that this standard at least, applied to the new and up-and-coming apostles whom Paul raised, thus ensuring the apostolic D.N.A. continued.

Each apostle who is truly ministering in that role will be able to develop fruitful disciples thereby certifying their apostleship.

We need to note that the command was to make disciples, not plant churches. When Paul said he planted (1 Cor. 3:6), our belief is that he was referring to the seeds of truth he planted.

The goal was fruitful Christ-like disciples, not masses attending a meeting. While this may appear to be splitting hairs in defining an apostle, there is a mile of difference between a ministry that gathers a crowd and one whose goal is to make Biblical disciples. Well trained disciples will be the church who demonstrate their love for one another.

JUST FOR THE TWELVE?

Jesus' Commission was to go into **all the world** and preach to **every** creature. Obviously going to every part of the planet and preaching to every single person would have been an impossible task for the original twelve. The obvious implication is that the commission is for all of those apostles mentioned in the New Testament along with those today who have an apostolic calling.

Therefore, we believe that the Great Commission is an across-the-board command for everyone who is an anointed apostle. This commission has not been annulled, rescinded or invalidated.

Apostles are the pioneers, initiators and demonstrating role models to equip believers to fulfill this decree. Therefore, there is no Biblical reason for potential apostles to miss out on this exciting aspect of their ministry.

IDEALISTIC OR REALISTIC?

The early apostles raised an army of believers who no longer brought the unsaved to the apostles to hear the message. Christians preached it themselves.

...and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles.

Therefore those who were scattered went everywhere preaching the word. Acts 8:1,4

They became known as those "... who have turned the world upside down Acts 17:6.

These disciples were the proof of the apostolic role modeling and equipping they had received.

In the impending end time move of God, we will see a similar, if not greater, outpouring.

While some might see a restoration of this magnitude as idealistic, leaders are commanded to bring the church to perfection (full maturity) *Eph. 4:13*. If it is not going to happen in this, the end of the end times, when will it happen?

For he (Jesus) must remain in heaven until the time for the final restoration of all things, as God promised long ago through his holy prophets. Acts 3:20-22

YES ... BUT!

As stated previously we believe, in broad terms, the apostolic core value would be to fulfill the Great Commission, by (1) preaching the gospel with signs and wonders following and (2) equipping disciples to do the same. This commission has never been invalidated.

The Bible only mentions two proofs that distinguish an apostle and Paul did not change his mind in regard to them. If these two proofs are not in evidence, surely we are left with a title but no apostolic function.

If a leader is not an apostle but instead, one of the five-fold ministries, they would fall into the category of a prophet, teacher, shepherd or evangelist and we need those vital gifts. However, let's call them what they are and not try to fit a square peg into a round hole.

NO APOSTLES AT PRESENT?

Are we implying that there are no genuine apostles presently in the church? Of course not! However, the title of this book refers to the upcoming end time apostles. We simply need to recognize that more apostolic truths are still being restored for the end time move. Therefore, there are some apostles who are still coming into the understanding and revelation of what their gift incorporates.

END TIME REVELATION

Many would agree with our previous comments and yet in general, with all our Bible knowledge, we are still not producing disciples who are turning the world upside down.

We sense that something is missing but can't quite put our finger on the answer to the problem.

*If people can't see what God is doing, they stumble all over themselves;
But when they attend to what he reveals, they are most blessed. Prov. 29:18 MSG*

We need to have the Lord reveal to us His next step in the restoration of the church.

Since the dark ages the Lord has been drip feeding us restoration truths. Why so slow? The church has shown that it is sluggish at accepting and then implementing any new revelation. How long has it taken for the baptism with the Holy Spirit to be accepted?

Nevertheless, in these end of the end times, can we expect that further revelation is to be given that will take the church into a new level of power and love.

With the restoration of end time apostles, is there also a restored ministry that will accompany them? We believe there is a mystery that needs greater revelation provided by His end time apostles and prophets.

... how that by revelation He made known to me the mystery ... as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to His holy apostles and prophets: Eph 3:3-6

THE FOUNDATION

Most of us are aware of the leaning tower of Pisa. Why the slant? There is nothing wrong with the actual pieces from which the building is constructed. They are strong stones of marble and yet it continues to lean. The problem of course is obvious ... the foundation needs re-establishing.



The Lord describes the church as a temple both individually and as whole. 1 Cor. 6:19; 2 Cor. 6:16

We have had many ‘marble’ous blocks of truths restored to the church; Saved by faith not works; water baptism, baptism with the Holy Spirit, healing, worship etc. etc. Yet even with all these structural teachings we seem to be off-line and unable to produce Christ like believers to the standard mentioned in Eph. 4:13.

To straighten up the tower of Pisa, you could possibly use a gigantic crane but if that is all you did, as soon as the crane is removed, the building will return to its former position.

Many leaders have seen that the church needs adjustment and correction to ensure restoration heads in the right direction. We have had many “crane” ministries (including my own) that have attempted to assist with various leadership seminars, evangelistic programs, discipleship methods or more recently, structural changes e.g. cell/home churches.

However, after implementing a particular program, method or structure, the majority of believers usually give up on trying to transform themselves and return to their former state.

It doesn’t mean that the programs are necessarily wrong; it’s just that there is a greater foundational problem that has to be dealt with first.

Skyscraper ... an Impossibility

We are not sure as to the original intended height of the Tower of Pisa. However, it would have been impossible for it to be a skyscraper.

The angle of the building would have prevented it from rising to great heights as any new extensions would simply collapse and fall to the ground.

The church and individual believers have been told they have a ministry, which can achieve incredible heights. In recent years, we have been given great blocks of truth, which needed to be cemented in by faith to achieve these new levels.

- *I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. Phil. 4:13*
- *If you ask anything I will do it. John 14:14*
- *I tell you the truth, anyone who believes in me will do the same works I have done, and even greater works... John 14:12 NLT*
- *And above all things have fervent love for one another... 1 Peter 4:8*
- *... we will be mature in the Lord, measuring up to the full and complete standard of Christ. Eph. 4:13 NLT*

However, when we have attempted to add these to our present structure, in the majority of cases, the faith needed to pull the pieces together has fallen in a heap. Is it just possible that if the foundation were true and solid in the first place, adding these extra truths would be made possible? This foundation is what the Lord is restoring and it is the message and ministry of the end time apostles and prophets.

Traditional Weak Foundations

The apostle Paul said, *as a wise master builder I have laid the foundation. 1 Cor. 3:10*

Obviously, the foundation is the most important part of the building because it determines the size, shape, and strength of the entire structure.

He goes on to say;

For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

1 Cor. 3:10-12

Some, who have attempted to explain Jesus Christ as the foundation, appear to have only succeeded in describing it in mystical, theological terminology, not in practical, easy to apply terms.

What does 'Jesus Christ is the foundation' actually mean? Traditionally many would say that our foundation is to ask Jesus to come into our hearts. He is our foundation. That's true, but why does He come into our hearts? What does the Bible mean when it says, *Christ in you, the hope of glory? Col. 1:27*

Does He just sit there twiddling His thumbs or alternatively hibernate? Is His presence merely a 'tick the box' proof that we are going to heaven?

When Philip the evangelist preached the gospel in Samaria the converts were water baptized, nevertheless he didn't pray for them to be baptized with the Spirit.

Now when the apostles who were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them, who, when they had come down, prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit. Acts 8:14-15

Laying hands on new converts to receive the Holy Spirit is not rocket science and doesn't take a lot of time. Yet, the apostles travelled all the way up from Jerusalem to Samaria to undertake this particular ministry. Why? It involved more than the laying on of hands to receive and going back home the next day. We know they taught more than this; *So when they had testified and preached the word of the Lord, they returned to Jerusalem, preaching the gospel in many villages of the Samaritans. Acts 8:25*

What was the word of the Lord that they preached? They didn't teach from the book of Romans or Ephesians, Paul's epistles hadn't been written. It had to be the foundation, revealing the mystery, the whole purpose of having Christ in us. The apostle Paul said, *I became a minister according to the stewardship from God which was given to me for you, to fulfill the word of God, the mystery which has been hidden from ages and from generations, but now has been revealed to His saints. To them God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. Him we preach, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus. Col. 1:25-28*

The equipping of the saints by the apostles gave them the foundation to enable them to come to full maturity or perfection.

If we are going to raise wise end-time master-builders, knowledge of these foundational truths is essential and indispensable. Therefore, in our next chapter we have listed what we believe to be the building blocks of the original foundation, modeled, taught and cemented in by the early apostles.

Please do not reject these proposals on the basis that they are not operating in the lives of many current apostles. Adjudicate them on the basis that they are genuine characteristics that need to be restored if the world is to be turned upside down once again. With the revelation of the truth, faith will rise in the hearts of many present apostles to move into them.

Summary Chapter 1

1. Defining an apostle surely goes beyond the traits of being spiritual fathers. - e.g. a prophet, teacher or pastor can be a father in the faith. It also exceeds taking on administrative roles; there are many teachers with an administrative gift. Exhibiting Godly character is a fundamental core value of any five-fold ministries and obviously, this applies to apostles.
2. The Greek word for “apostleship”, *apostole* means "a sending, a mission. Why are they sent and what is their mission? One of the Biblical foundations of the kingdom for which apostles are responsible is the fulfillment of their original assignment given by Jesus ... the Great Commission
3. Apostles are special messengers sent with a special message of the gospel of the kingdom. Their message is confirmed by signs and wonders. The final prima-facie evidence of a true apostle was an abundance of signs, wonders & miracles. *When I was with you, I certainly gave you proof that I am an apostle. For I patiently did many signs and wonders and miracles among you. 2 Cor. 12:12 NLT*
4. The apostle Paul also said, *as a wise master builder I have laid the foundation. 1 Cor. 3:10* That equipping foundation enabled believers to imitate the works of Jesus. (John 14:12)
5. The apostle Paul obviously raised disciples to the Great Commission standard and this provided authentication of his anointing.
Isn't it because of my work that you belong to the Lord? Even if others think I am not an apostle, I certainly am to you. You yourselves are proof that I am the Lord's apostle.
1 Cor. 9:1-2
6. In broad terms, the apostolic core value would be to fulfill the Great Commission, by (1) preaching the gospel with signs and wonders following and (2) equipping disciples to do the same. This commission has never been invalidated.
7. The Bible only mentions two proofs that distinguish an apostle and Paul did not change his mind in regard to them. If these two proofs are not in evidence, we are left with a title but no apostolic function.
8. *For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.* What does ‘Jesus Christ is the foundation’ actually mean? Traditionally many would say that our foundation is to ask Jesus to come into our hearts. He is our foundation. That’s true, but why does He come into our hearts?
9. What does the Bible mean when it says, *Christ in you, the hope of glory? Col. 1:27* Does He just sit there twiddling His thumbs or alternatively hibernate? Is His presence merely a ‘tick the box’ proof that we are going to heaven?
10. The equipping of the saints by the apostles gave them the foundation to enable them to come to full maturity or perfection. If we are going to raise wise end time master builders, knowledge of these foundational truths is essential and indispensable.

Chapter 2

FOUNDATIONAL BUILDING BLOCKS

To fully achieve the fulfillment of the Great Commission, we have listed spiritual building blocks which when cemented together provide vital aspects of the foundation to bring restoration to the apostolic ministry. The early church apostolic ministry revealed some non-negotiable blocks of truth.

INTIMACY HIS GOAL

Jesus was the first apostle and is the role model for all apostles. He had such an intimate relationship with His father and as a result, Jesus could hear clearly from Him, they were as one ... the same mind, heart and goals. He prayed for the apostles and all believers;

... that they may be one just as We are one. John 17:22

For the Father loves the Son, and shows Him all things that He Himself does. John 5:20

As a result of this understanding, the apostle Paul's major foundational goal was not preaching, Biblical revelation, miracles or church planting; it was a personal relationship with the Lord.

Yes, everything else is worthless when compared with the infinite value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have discarded everything else, counting it all as garbage, so that I could gain Christ and become one with him. Phil. 3:7-9 NLT

His core values were; *knowing Christ, gaining Christ and becoming one with Him.* He had the revelation (as did Jesus) that the success of his entire ministry depended on this relationship.

As a result, perfecting this was the one thing he focused on.

Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me.

Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus... Phil. 3:12-13

Becoming one with the Lord was Paul's foundation and obviously he taught others to imitate him as a fundamental truth. *Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ.* 1 Cor. 11:1

100% SPIRIT LED

What is the result of this intimacy? Jesus, our apostolic role model expects and commands all believers to be able to imitate His works and even greater things. He told His apostles;

"I tell you the truth, anyone who believes in me will do the same works I have done, and even greater works..." John 14:12 NLT

If He wants us to do this apparently impossible task, He is responsible for revealing how this is achievable. He doesn't leave us in the dark and explains it clearly.

"For I did not speak of my own accord, but the Father who sent me commanded me what to say and how to say it. I know that his command leads to eternal life. So whatever I say is just what the Father has told me to say." John 12:49-50 NIV John 5:19-20

As a result of His intimate relationship with the Father, Jesus was able to receive guidance.

He wasn't just Spirit filled ... He was Spirit led. Every aspect of Jesus ministry was personally directed by the Spirit of the Lord.

Paul advocates the same thinking as he saw Christ as His role model.

... 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; *Eph.4:13-14*

Perfection is achieved by being Spirit led 100% of the time, just as Jesus was.

Achieving this level of intimacy and subsequent obedience is one of our greatest end time challenges.

TEACH THE WORD & BEING SPIRIT LED

Apostles teach that the Holy Spirit has a two-fold job description regarding the leading and instruction of the Lord.

But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you. *John 14:26*

1. Bring to our remembrance of general Biblical commands
(Therefore we need to know the Word)
2. Teach us other (*all*) things

We need also to understand other aspects of the Holy Spirit's work in leading, guiding and speaking to us.

But the anointing which you have received from Him abides in you, and you do not need that anyone teach you; but as the same anointing teaches you concerning all things, and is true, and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you will abide in Him. *1 John 2:27*

He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come. *John 16:13*

For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. *Rom. 8:14*

This means that *all things*, *all truth* and *all the things that are yet to come* are not in our Bibles and we need the Holy Spirit to tell us. Furthermore, if the Bible were to be our only guide, *sons of God* would not need to be led by the Spirit of God. This goes far beyond the general Pentecostal and Charismatic message that the Holy Spirit is there simply to empower believers to speak in tongues, heal the sick and operate in the gifts.

Jesus was only able to accomplish what He did through a Spirit led life. Therefore, to be able to achieve John 14:12 believers also must be equipped to be led by the Spirit.

FOUNDATION = RELATIONSHIP & OBEDIENCE TO CHRIST

The previous blocks of truth all work together to form part of the initial foundation. The early church that turned the world upside down only had the teaching of the gospels and the disciples' role modeling found in the book of Acts. At that stage, the epistles weren't written.

Jesus said; *My sheep hear My voice...* *John 10:27*

I will show you what he is like who comes to me and hears my words and puts them into practice. He is like a man building a house, who dug down deep and laid the foundation on the rock. *Luke 6:46 NIV*

The foundation taught was;

1. Coming to Him - an intimate relationship with the Lord
2. Hearing His voice
3. Being obedient to it.

Hearing His words is more than trying to obey the Bible. It's speaking of personal instruction.

You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me. But you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life.

John 5:39-40

HEAVEN IS NOT THE GOAL

The basic traditional evangelistic message is: "Receive Jesus and you will go to heaven." However, this is not the apostolic message. The goal of the gospel is not getting people to heaven. Eternal life is not heaven;

And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.

John 17:3

Therefore our translation of John 3:16 is;

For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have a relationship with the Lord that goes on forever;

This relationship in turn allows us to receive daily personal instructions just as Jesus did and is the essential key for us to go onto perfection. Heb.6:1. The foundation is that Christ's death and resurrection has enabled us to have the intimate relationship with the Lord. We enter into this by repentance and faith.

Apostles acted as role models, taught and maintained the same foundation. Paul's later letters encouraged believers to return to this fundamental truth.

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

... having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone.

Eph. 2:20

PRAYER – REVELATION OF RELATIONSHIP

An apostle's prayer reveals their foundational goals.

I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better.

Eph. 1:17 NIV

"I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me. And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one:

John 17:20-22

My little children, for whom I labor in birth again until Christ is formed in you ... Gal. 4:19

REVELATION OF THE MYSTERY OF THE GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM

Apostles receive revelation of the mystery of the gospel of the kingdom.

... how that by revelation He made known to me the mystery ... as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to His holy apostles and prophets:

Eph 3:3-6

The apostles and prophets are sent with a special message of the mystery of the gospel of the kingdom. The previous building block truths are all included in that gospel. Many teach on the kingdom, but pay little attention to one vital aspect.

"The kingdom of God does not come with observation; nor will they say, 'See here!' or 'See there!' For indeed, the kingdom of God is within you." Luke 17:20-21

Jesus revealed this truth of His hidden Kingdom (His government being in us). It was the potential of having His internal rule, not simply an external rule.

The apostle Jesus taught this to unbelievers as an example to us.

Apostles present the full gospel of the kingdom message and reveal the mystery; being led internally by the Spirit of God, just as Jesus was.

... this mystery among the Gentiles: which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. Col. 1:27

Many apostles still appear to be unaware of their special message and limit the truth to be Spirit filled not Spirit led. Preaching the revelation of the mystery is a basic apostolic role. This part of the mystery provides the foundation for the other parts of the mystery yet to be fulfilled. Eph. 1:9-10; 3:2-11

Without the proper foundation, many "churches" are formed without a biblical pattern. Those starting them may have been sincere, but based on a sincerely wrong foundation of getting people to heaven. Others may have begun on a foundation of ambition, competition, ignorance or division.

This section has been adapted from our book "The Spirit Led Life", Chapter 3, "A Missing Foundational Truth". For those who would like a greater in-depth study, this chapter is available in the Appendix.

A FULL GOSPEL PRESENTATION

The proof of this internal rule was provided through the miraculous.

"Don't you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me? The words I say to you are not just my own, Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work. Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; or at least believe on the evidence of the miracles themselves." John 14:10-11 NIV

Miracles were the Biblical evidence that Christ in us can lead us and provide the power to change our own and others' lives. It is the apostolic way of fully presenting the gospel and cementing in the foundation.

They were convinced by the power of miraculous signs and wonders and by the power of God's Spirit. In this way, I have fully presented the Good News of Christ... Rom. 15:19 NLT

In Biblical terms, without miracles, signs and wonders, the gospel is not fully presented.

THE MESSAGE BRINGS DERISION

The message brought with it derision, sarcasm and being ostracized by the religious establishment. Why? It set believers free from controlling and insecure leaders.

For I think that God has displayed us, the apostles, last, as men condemned to death; for we have been made a spectacle to the world, both to angels and to men. We are fools for Christ's sake, but you are wise in Christ! We are weak, but you are strong! You are distinguished, but we are dishonored! To the present hour we both hunger and thirst, and we are poorly clothed, and beaten, and homeless. And we labor, working with our own hands. Being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we endure; being defamed, we entreat. We have been made as the filth of the world, the offscouring of all things until now. 1 Cor. 4:9-13

Similarly today, the message of the Spirit led life will be scoffed at and opposed by many who feel threatened by releasing the believers they are overseeing.

This is not a role for those who seek worldly popularity or fame.

PIONEERS ... WITH HIS OWN CHILDREN

As a father in the faith, an apostle's goal was not to climb up the denominational leadership ladder nor gather other churches to join their organization. They were not appointed by man to take charge of existing churches.

We are clearly told that Jesus Himself appointed "apostles" and they were led by the Spirit to make disciples. Through birthing and relationship, they became their spiritual fathers.

And so I have made it my aim to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build on another man's foundation...

Rom. 15:20-21

Then we will be able to go and preach the Good News in other places far beyond you, where no one else is working. Then there will be no question of our boasting about work done in someone else's territory.

2 Cor. 10:16-17 NLT

We are not saying that an apostle cannot be a father to others or adopt fatherless churches or individuals. However, it is not their primary motivation or goal.

When apostles move on to pioneer new territory they can leave the churches in the hands of other five-fold ministries e.g. teaching/administrative and pastoral gifts.

Any new apostles raised by them would eventually have the apostolic urge to pioneer new works.

Today's New Territory

As God is restoring the foundation, there are many churches where this full gospel mystery has not been preached. Therefore, this is new territory where no apostles have previously planted this message. In these cases, end time apostles will not be building on another apostle's foundation as the original foundation was never laid by an anointed master builder.

This rebuilding will be carried out by apostles and prophets across the entire Body of Christ. As a result, many present leaders will see the kingdom in a totally new perspective.

Through personal relationship, many of these leaders then will re-align themselves with these fathers.

GOVERN OR SERVE?

Some would claim that apostles need to govern the church.

The Bible does talk about those who govern; nevertheless it's the manner in which they do this that's vital.

"... he who is greatest among you, let him be as the younger and he who governs as he who serves."

Luke 22:26

Jesus said; "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them and their great men

exercise authority over them. "Yet it shall not be so among you!"

Matt. 20:25

Jesus condemns leaders who dominate and control believers.

Others would claim that apostles have pre-eminence;

And God has appointed these in the church: first apostles ...

1 Cor. 12:28

Does being "first" imply that the apostle is necessarily the boss of a church organization who gives orders, hires, fires and has a huge staff?

... but whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant. And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave — just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."

Matt. 20:25-28

Great leaders become servants. However, to be *first*, the greatest of the great become slaves. Genuine apostles do not seek positions of worldly authority, influence or recognition. They choose to be love slaves and equip the believers who will eventually fulfill these roles.

Further confusion arises when we see apparent contradictions in Scripture such as;
 “Obey those who rule over you...” *Heb. 13:17*

The words “obey” and “rule” are poorly translated in the KJV Bible.

The original Greek word for “rule” is “*hegeomai*” which means to lead, guide or go before. The Greek word for “obey” is “*peitho*” of which W.E.Vine says;
 “The obedience suggested is not by submission to authority, but resulting from persuasion”.

Therefore, Heb. 13:17 should more correctly read; Be teachable and be persuaded by those who lead and guide you.

PERSUADED HOW?

Let’s now see how the apostles are to govern and yet be love slaves.

When Moses built the Tabernacle (God’s dwelling place), he built it according to God’s pattern or plan; Ex. 25:8,9.

In order for a house to be built there needs to be a master builder who can firstly read the blue print and secondly play their part in the construction.

They also need to oversight the carpenters, bricklayers, plumbers and laborers etc. to ensure the building meets its owner’s specifications.

As the temples of the Holy Spirit, believers need to be built up *to the measure of the stature of the fullness Christ*. Paul called himself a master builder.

Apostles, our master builders are given the understanding of God’s mystery blue print for the building up of the church. Eph. 1:9-10 : 3:2-11 They are to lay the foundation along with the prophets. Co-workers such as teachers, shepherds and fellow laborers are to continue the building program.

The early apostles were first, in that they founded churches, but they then moved on and seemed not to have been involved with the daily administration of church affairs.

Paul was involved in the local church when he was appealed to, or was compelled by a bad situation. In those instances, he gave the Word of the Lord. Because of his devotion and care, he’d earned the right and respect to respond as their father.

Paul saw his role in terms of responsibility rather than in terms of authority

Being responsible for the oversight, the early apostles returned as led, or sent other peer ministries to appoint elders and put things in order. They also provided ongoing communication and sent direction, correction and encouragement through letters; Col. 4:7, 17; Rom. 16: 1-24. This ensured the foundations remain solid and that the building continued to follow God’s specifications.

Over-sighting the growth of believers is an apostles’ first or prime governmental responsibility.

MY MINISTRY OR THEIR MINISTRY?

What is the difference between a leader who is served and one who serves?

One who is served expects believers are there for the purpose of promoting **his ministry**.

A servant is there to equip believers to fulfill **their ministry**. Eph. 4: 11,12

The former preach Christ from selfish ambition ...but the latter out of love. *Phil. 1:16-17*

Slave apostles pour their lives into those they are equipping, expecting nothing in return.

Slave apostles prefer to equip believers to climb the mountains of society rather than being prominent themselves.

When believers witness both the power and humility of a genuine apostle, they willingly submit to their authority, as they realize that it's being used purely to benefit them.

For even if I should boast somewhat more about our authority, which the Lord gave us for edification and not for your destruction ...
2 Cor. 10:8

GOD APPOINTED

Apostles are not self-appointed nor are they appointed by other men. As with the entire five-fold ministry, they are a gift to the Body and appointed by God. 1 Cor. 12:28. However, they can be recognized by man and can be set apart and sent out as apostles, (Acts 13:2-4) How can they be recognized? By exhibiting the fruits of the two proofs previously mentioned.

In the following chapter, we will discuss the suggestion by some that there are apostles who do not fit into this category.

WEAK FOUNDATIONS

Why is it that these foundations have not been given to many baby believers?

For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat.
Heb. 5:12 KJV

It would seem firstly that many of today's believers have never been fully taught the first principles or secondly they need to be reminded or re-educated.

Traditionally, in the majority of cases, teachers have endeavored to impart "the foundation", not apostles. In some cases, this has been achieved by briefly going through a short-list of subjects mentioned in Hebrews.

Therefore, leaving the discussion of the elementary principles of Christ, let us go on to perfection, not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, of the doctrine of baptisms, of laying on of hands, of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment.
Heb. 6:1-2

However, these principles are basic ingredients, when combined; make the total foundation achievable;

I will show you what he is like who comes to me and hears my words and puts them into practice. He is like a man building a house, who dug down deep and laid the foundation on the rock.
Luke 6:46 NIV

The person "who comes to me and hears my words and puts them into practice" has laid the foundation.

Because these Hebrew 6 truths are considered so basic (*elementary principles*) by some teachers, they spend little time on them.

They are apparently unaware that these principles should lead to believers coming to the Lord and hearing personally from Him. In some cases, new believers are simply given a small brochure with a brief explanation of each of the principles. Some teachers want to move quickly to the next stage; *let us go on to perfection*. They have a God given bias towards teaching and they wrongly assume that going on to perfection means perfect knowledge of the Bible.

Teachers will quite often refer to it as "meat".

What is Jesus' description of "meat".

Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work.

John 4:34 KJV

In contrast, an apostle imparts to believers they are saved by grace. There is a mile of difference between teaching on faith and imparting it. The faith revelation removes guilt and condemnation, enables them to have a relationship with the Lord and to be able to hear from Him. After receiving that foundation, they would be able to go on to perfection ... imitating the meat-works of Jesus; Eph. 4:11-13

POWERS OF THE AGE TO COME

Once we grasp the truth of the rule of Christ being internal and not external, it brings a whole new level of understanding for the time that Christ returns and establishes the new kingdom. Have you ever imagined what it will be like when this new age of God's government begins?

Some have pictured believers simply standing before the Lord and singing to Him just as they would in a huge church service. They then could perhaps imagine Him teaching or commanding all of us what to do.

I have no doubt there will be times of the gathering of the Family. The first one will be a huge party, a feast, to celebrate His return. Rev. 19:9. However, we will not be permanently standing in the throne room singing throughout eternity. We will be governing and serving in different locations under heaven.

Then the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people, the saints of the Most High. Dan. 7:27; Ps. 8:4-6; Luke 19:11-24

How is He going to maintain relationship and guide millions or possibly billions of Family members? It's the same way He wants to do it now ... internal leading, not external laws.

The elementary equipping of apostles will provide new converts with this ability ... *for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted the heavenly gift, and have become partakers of the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come* *Heb. 6:4-5*

There are many well taught believers who are hungering, but as yet haven't been enlightened and as a result haven't tasted the power of the ages to come.

TEACH OTHERS

We mentioned earlier that the foundation is the most important part of the building, because it determines the size, shape, and strength of the entire structure. Without solid foundational equipping, like the leaning Tower of Pisa, the temple ends up tilting with believers leaning towards information instead of transformation.

This is the job description of the end time apostles and prophets. After restoring this foundational truth, others can then impart to or remind believers of these same principles.

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. *2 Tim. 2:2-3*

In a later chapter, we discuss the different job descriptions of the five-fold ministry and the role each plays.

Summary Chapter 2

1. Intimacy the Goal: The apostle Paul's major foundational goal was not preaching, Biblical revelation, miracles or church planting; it was a personal relationship with the Lord. His core values were; *knowing Christ, gaining Christ and becoming one with Him.*

2. As a result of His intimate relationship with the Father, Jesus was able to receive guidance. He wasn't just Spirit filled ... He was Spirit led. Every aspect of Jesus' ministry was personally directed by the Spirit of the Lord. If we are going to imitate Jesus, this is the only way. Perfection is achieved by being Spirit led 100% of the time, just as Jesus was.

3. Apostles teach that the Holy Spirit has a two-fold job description regarding the leading and instruction of the Lord.

- Bring to our remembrance of general Biblical commands (Therefore we need to know the Word)
- Teach us; *all things, all truth and all the things that are yet to come*

4. The foundation taught was; Coming to Him - an intimate relationship with the Lord ... Hearing His voice ... Being obedient to it. Hearing His words is more than trying to obey the Bible. It's speaking of personal instruction.

5. Heaven is not the goal: Eternal life is a relationship not a place. Our translation of John 3:16 is; *For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have a relationship with the Lord that goes on forever;*

6. Apostles receive revelation of the mystery of the gospel of the kingdom. They present the full gospel of the kingdom message and reveal the mystery; being led internally by the Spirit of God, just as Jesus was.

7. Miracles were the Biblical evidence that 'Christ in us' can lead us and provide the power to change our own and others' lives. It is the apostolic way of fully presenting the gospel and cementing in the foundation.

In Biblical terms, without miracles, signs and wonders, the gospel is not fully presented.

8. Similarly today, the message of the Spirit led life will be scoffed at and opposed by many who feel threatened by releasing the believers they are overseeing.

This is not a role for those who seek worldly popularity or fame.

9. Great leaders become servants. However, to be *first*, the greatest of the great become slaves. Genuine apostles do not seek positions of worldly authority, influence or recognition. They choose to be love slaves and equip the believers who will eventually fulfill these roles.

10. One who is served expects believers are there for the purpose of promoting **his ministry**.

A servant is there to equip believers to fulfill **their ministry**. Eph. 4: 11,12

11. On His return, how is Jesus going to maintain relationship with all of His Family members? Internal leading ... not external laws.

The elementary equipping of apostles will enlighten new converts with *the powers of the age to come*, enabling them to learn how to hear from the Lord now.

Chapter 3**DIFFERENT TYPES OF APOSTLES?**

Some may concede that the traits we discussed were part and parcel of the original apostolic DNA. However, they would still claim that there were other kinds of apostles with a different gifting. They see a particular ministry, recognize them as an apostle and then tag them with a ministry sub-title. Obviously, there needs to be Biblical proof to substantiate this claim.

JAMES - AN ADMINISTRATIVE APOSTLE?

James, the brother of Jesus is used as an example of what some may term an “administrative” apostle. He was a recognized apostle Gal. 1:19, but why the extra title?

An “administrative” apostle is apparently considered by some to be a person who is in charge of an organization or network. (e.g. CEO) The evidence of their apostolic calling is their governmental or managerial ability.

This administrative gift is mentioned in I Cor. 12:28, but is it an indication of or a core value of an apostolic gift?

Can we consider the following? Was there in fact even a need for an administrative apostle in the early church?

In James’ era, the church was not meeting regularly in large numbers in the Temple or elsewhere. They met in homes scattered around the city. Therefore, there was no large weekly congregational meeting. The organization that normally goes into conducting a large meeting was not required. There was no need to build sanctuaries or office blocks so, as a result, no mortgages, financial meetings etc, etc. This simple structure delegated responsibility and eliminated one of the greatest administrative loads that the modern church faces.

Overseeing the flock was focused on discipleship, ensuring that believers were being equipped for the work of their ministry and keeping the church on track theologically.

Obviously, the original deacons did not serve in large church services. Instead, they took on more practical administrative roles.

Jesus’ disciples had apostolic priorities which gave others the opportunity for managerial tasks such as organizing the feeding of orphans & widows. (Acts 6:2-4) As important as this ministry was, they had other apostolic duties which took precedence.

Therefore, brethren, seek out from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business; but we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word. Acts 6:3-4

- They didn’t appoint one of the twelve to administrate the workers.
- They didn’t appoint a new administrative apostle (e.g. James) to even choose the workers to look after the business.
- They gave ‘the brethren’ full responsibility for selecting the men.
- The apostles simply confirmed their selection
- The apostles’ priority was *prayer and the ministry of the word*

Their administration involved quick and decisive delegation to the church. “You decide ... you do it”

Deacons or Apostles?

The feeding of the widows and orphans would have been no small task and a network of support would have been needed. If organized in modern times it may have attracted a name such as Jerusalem Community Care (J.C.C.).

Today, the head of J.C.C. may also have been given the title of an administrative apostle.

Not so with the early church ... at best they were known as deacons.

Unfortunately, in many cases tradition has relegated the role and function of a deacon to a helper in a church service.

This name and role needs to be restored and given the former honor it deserves. Let's review the qualifications; *Men of good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit (Spirit led?) and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. Acts 6:3*

Perhaps then, the name 'deacon', would be more biblically appropriate for many of those over sighting church business rather than the title "administrative" apostle.

James' Apostolic Ministry

One might expect that this efficient foundational pattern of releasing deacons or others to administrate would have continued after the initial apostles finally moved on to pioneer other works. If this was the case, what are possible alternatives for the majority of James' apostolic ministry?

Was every person in Jerusalem saved? Obviously not! Wouldn't there have remained a ministry for preaching? As an apostle, there would have been an inward God-given compulsion to teach and preach the gospel.

Secondly, were all the believers in Jerusalem mature and Spirit led?

Wouldn't the baby and less mature believers need their foundation laid?

He was obviously teaching ... the book of James is attributed to him. Also Acts 15:13-18

How did he get this revelation? It would have been through intimate relationship with the Lord. An apostle equips the saints for the work of their ministry. One may surmise that he would equip others to hear from God as well.

There would have been much to do in regard to seeing the gospel preached to every creature throughout Jerusalem and raising mature believers.

Signs & Wonders?

Some would claim that James didn't necessarily operate in signs and wonders because there is no biblical record of it. Therefore, in their minds, the miraculous comes under the heading of ministry that only some apostles may do. Herein lies the heart of the present challenge of defining an apostle. Surely, we can't eliminate core values of an apostle based on what is not recorded in some cases. All of Jesus' miracles were not mentioned in Scripture. John 20:30. We can't emphatically say that James didn't operate in the miraculous just because it's not in the Bible. Otherwise you could then postulate that he didn't move in the gifts, speak in tongues or have a loving relationship with the Lord etc., etc.

Finally, the apostle Paul also gave us proof of this aspect of the ministry of James and any other recognized apostle..

When I was with you, I certainly gave you proof that I am an apostle.

For I patiently did many signs and wonders and miracles among you. 2 Cor. 12:12 NLT

Paul wrote 2nd Corinthians in about 56 AD. At that time, the miraculous was still considered proof of an apostle.

James and the other apostles would have had to be moving in signs and wonders otherwise, based on Paul's assessment; they wouldn't have been classed as an apostle in the first place.

We can't find where Paul changed his evaluation.

Creating a whole new job description of an apostle based on what wasn't recorded can surely only lead to confusion and error.

As previously stated we believe that the Great Commission is an across-the-board command for everyone who is an anointed apostle. This commission has not been rescinded.

Convening Meetings

The first apostles preached and taught in homes, Acts 5:42. Nevertheless, it was necessary for apostles to gather larger leaders meetings on occasion for encouraging or discussion.

Therefore, we are not inferring that James couldn't have had some administration duties. He presided over a leaders' meeting (Jerusalem Council Acts 15:6-29). However, it didn't mean necessarily that he spent the majority of his time organizing such events. One would also expect that he had others with gifts of administration or deacons around him managing this work.

In our mind, there is a huge difference between the concept of an "administrative" apostle and an apostle who exhibits core "Great Commission" values and convenes occasional meetings.

If we want to have an educated evaluation at what his main ministry was, there is a far greater evidence of him teaching, preaching and ministering daily as the apostles did, rather than the depiction of him sitting in an office, paper shuffling and directing or organizing believers. He was more likely to have the same apostolic core values and pattern;

*"but we will give ourselves **continually** to prayer and to the ministry of the word."*

Their foundation was based on;

1. Their relationship with the Lord, both talking to and hearing from Him (prayer).
2. The preaching and the teaching of the gospel of the kingdom (ministry of the word.)
3. If prayer and ministry of the word were done *continually*, they were the priorities, obviously, administration was not.

There may be some apostles doing the work of a deacon, however, looking after church business does not stand up biblically as being a core value of an apostle.

If we do have genuine apostles in the position of having to run endless meetings with staff, board meetings, doing up reports or organizing seminars, perhaps they need to re-evaluate and prioritize their ministry in line with their original Biblical calling.

... but we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word.

Acts 6:4

Further Problems

If we are to call administrators 'apostles' without the other two proofs, this opens the door to further problems.

Society at the moment is under attack from over-administration through government legislation resulting in more and more laws. The supposed "public servants" become bureaucratic. Thomas Jefferson said, "My reading of history convinces me that most bad government results from too much government."

The church potentially has the same problem. The nature of an administrator is to have everything decent and in order ... no mistakes. The easiest way to achieve this is not by education, but by new rules.

In the natural children learning to walk will fall over. Mistakes are inevitable and a necessary part of the learning curve. Baby believers are going to put a foot wrong on occasion in learning to walk in the Spirit.

For example, they will not always hear from God and may not prophesy with 100% accuracy. However, they learn from their mistakes.

Those with administrator mindsets find this hard to handle and will want to bring in rules to stop any mistakes and avoid any possible embarrassment.

For example, gifts of the Spirit may be discouraged in meetings. Believers may not be encouraged to seek the Lord for their own vision; this is replaced by 'safe' programs organized by the administrator. Home churches (if allowed) will have strict guidelines which negate the leading of the Holy Spirit.

Fear of making a mistake replaces encouragement to step out in faith. Believers must be given the opportunity to fail and learn from their blunders. Giving an administrator the title of apostle gives them a *carte blanche* opportunity to over-administrate, wrapping believers up in cotton wool and therefore minimizing their release. We are not saying they are appalling people; it's just the nature of the gifting ... and the gift is needed. Nevertheless, by being in total control, they are simply a round peg in a square hole.

In I Cor. 12:28 Paul lists gifting beginning with, *first apostles*. The gift of administration is listed number seven and should come under the oversight of a master builder, the apostle. With the entire five-fold ministry involved in equipping, the balance of wisdom, caution and faith can be outworked.

APOLLOS – ONLY A WATER BOY?

The same inference of a "one ministry" apostle could be made in reference to Apollos. Paul referred to Apollos in a manner which suggests his apostleship; 1 Cor.4: 1-9. However, when we read, *I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase. 1 Cor. 3:6*, some immediately want to put Apollos in the "watering only" category as preaching and signs and wonders aren't mentioned.

If Apollos only watered and did not reveal the mystery of the kingdom of God, let's designate him as a teacher, not one sent on a mission. However, mentioning that he watered in one particular case does put him exclusively in a teaching box. If you only took that one Scripture, you could surmise that Paul only planted and never watered.

The apostles worked as teams, shared the load and, on occasions, swapped roles. Titus 1:5

However, if Apollos is, as Paul intimates, an apostle, he would have been obedient to the Great Commission. In the beginning of his ministry Apollos was described as *fervent in spirit and preached boldly in the synagogue Acts 18:25, 26*. Paul said they were *stewards of the mysteries of God. 1 Cor. 4:1*. That meant they both were responsible for sharing the mystery of the kingdom.

Apollos had other missions apart from ministering in tandem with Paul.

We have only chosen two of the many apostles mentioned where there are at least some pieces of evidence to show they cannot be automatically tagged as another class of apostle.

There is insufficient Biblical evidence to do this with every one of the twenty plus apostles mentioned in the New Testament.

As previously stated, we can't eliminate the core values of an apostle based on what is not recorded in some cases. Therefore, to cover every situation we need to go back to our original definition of an *apostolos*.

We believe in broad terms the apostolic core value would be to fulfill the Great Commission, by (1) preaching the mystery of the gospel with signs and wonders following and (2) equipping disciples to do the same.

This commission has never been invalidated. The Bible only mentions two proofs of an apostle. If they are called apostles in the Bible, then they would have exhibited these proofs, otherwise the Word contradicts itself.

These verifications are to be remembered when we move onto our next segment on teachers who claim to be apostles.

TEACHING APOSTLES

The apostle Paul was, of course, a great teacher and this is revealed in his epistles. As a result, there are some who would claim an apostle's ministry can be based solely on their teaching ability. In the absence of the genuine foundational equipping of apostles and prophets, in the main, teachers have assumed this role. Therefore, many would consider what they teach is foundational, thus qualifying them as "master builders". Nevertheless, if teaching the Word (watering) is their sole ministry and continual signs and wonders are not evidenced, then, based on our previous biblical proofs, they do not qualify as end time apostles.

Where then does the teacher and teaching of the entire word of God fit into the equipping of the saints?

Bible commentators tell us that the apostle Paul was converted around 35AD. When he planted churches such as in Galatia, he stayed only a matter of months before moving on. He didn't even appoint elders (this was done about a year later).

What do you think he may have taught them that would enable them to stand alone and mature over that short period? The teaching of Paul's epistles for example, would be considered essential by many teachers to cement a solid foundation.

Nevertheless, he hadn't written his epistles at this stage.

We have already noted that Paul imitated Christ by preaching the mystery of the gospel of the kingdom. He preached the full gospel and modeled the inward guidance of the Spirit. Rom. 15:19

Paul placed in new converts a strong and sure foundation of coming to the Lord, hearing His voice and obeying that instruction. This simple apostolic message of the mystery of the kingdom enabled believers to turn the country upside down.

New believers didn't require knowledge of such books as Romans, Corinthians, Philipppians and Colossians etc. to create an evangelistic explosion. The majority of his letters were written around AD56-AD61 approximately five to ten years after they became converts.

Obviously, there was no need for his epistles at this elementary stage. Why? They were only required when the particular churches began to stray from the original apostolic foundation. There was certainly greater revelation in his letters, but the underlying message was to bring them back to the foundation of relationship with the Lord and the Spirit-led life.

We believe this type of correction, reminding believers of their foundation and expanding of Bible knowledge is the fundamental gifting of a teacher.

... that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine...

Eph. 4:14

The teacher is to provide a well of Bible knowledge which is to be drawn upon by the Holy Spirit, to provide personal guidance, where and when it is needed.

Specific Instruction

Even when the apostle Paul brought correction through his letters, it was specific to the particular need of each church. To one it was the warning of not going back under legalism, to another the lusts of the flesh and to others the error of particular false teaching etc.

Apparently, he didn't send a copy of his correction of one church to all the others.

In many cases today, all of Paul's epistles are given as "the meat", a substitute for basic foundations rather than as a correction where and when it is actually needed.

Why is this so important? It's of little use for teaching a little child all the dangers of crossing the road ... unless they can first of all walk.

Similarly, teachers will inevitably bring instruction on all of the Biblical "Don't do's".

However, we are told God's answer to overcoming sin is to be taught how to walk in the Spirit.

I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. Gal. 5:16

How can believers possibly be expected to overcome the "Don't do's" of sin unless we first learn how to walk in the Spirit?

"...for without Me you can do nothing."

John 15:5

I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.

Phil. 4:13

Teaching to overcome error is needed but it should come in the order that God requires it; *And God has appointed these in the church: first apostles, second prophets, third teachers...*

1 Cor 12:28

The foundational equipping of the apostles and prophets is to come prior to the teaching gift. Teaching without the equipping of achieving everything through Christ who strengthens them, can quickly become a work of the flesh. Believers will try to become better Christians through their own ability and continually fail, therefore ;

Stage 1. Apostles/prophets equip believers to have a foundation of relationship with the Lord and leading of His Spirit.

Stage 2. Teachers/pastors detect any deterrents to this relationship and correct it.

When churches are predominantly trained by a teacher, the end result can be that knowledge of the word can become the priority, in contrast to providing the practical 'hands on' equipping enabling them to live their lives through Christ.

Are we against teachers? Of course not! These genuine teaching gifts to the Body have a great depth of understanding of God's word in both the Old and New Testaments and provide incredible insights to instil Godly character. I love hearing expository teachers and have been inspired and encouraged many times by this incredible gift. Some teachers have had the Godly insight to equip believers with keys to be able to effectively study and research the Bible themselves ... a vital and essential skill.

We are simply being candid about the content and order in which the Bible instruction is given and the obvious need for five-fold ministry teams to be restored. Eph. 4:11. If everyone knows what part they are to play, it will mean that ministry teams will work in harmony.

WORKPLACE APOSTLES

God is not limited to present church structure and this opens up the possibility of workplace apostles; those who operate apostolically on a daily basis in the market place. The apostle Paul provided an example of this through his tent making.

I worked as a prison chaplain for over four years. In that time we recognized at least four inmates who operated apostolically in jail (one has a life sentence). Two of them, who have since been released, continued their ministry and one of them is now an elder in our church.

To help broaden boundaries and simplify our bottom line description, can we consider that there are some “full time” apostles and others who are not “fulltime” ... but they are simply all apostles.

This will also assist in providing basic across-the-board guidelines for recognition.

For the most part, workplace or extended church apostles will be expected to exhibit the same qualifications and move in the same activities as “fulltime” apostles.

Nevertheless, what are those qualifications? It is imperative that an end time Bible based standard be recognized, not simply looking at today’s leaders and their present standards. We need to ensure God’s standard is honored and we do not open ourselves up to recognizing non- biblical apostles.

There are some who would claim that a money making ability or worldly position can be an indicator of an apostolic anointing. An ability to make money as a businessman or become the CEO of an organization does not appear to be one of the biblical proofs of an apostle.

For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called. But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty; and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are, that no flesh should glory in His presence.
1 Cor. 1:26-29

Obviously, God can and does use men of worldly influence to be apostles and prophets. The apostle Paul was one of them. However, the question is, “Are we using a Biblical or worldly standard for their adjudication?”

The apostle Paul faced a problem with leaders (presuming to be apostles) who had become full of pride. Nevertheless, they could not confirm what they taught with the miraculous.

But I will come to you shortly, if the Lord wills, and I will know, not the word of those who are puffed up, but the power. For the kingdom of God is not in word but in power.

1 Cor. 4:19-20

Those who merit apostolic recognition will need to reveal the kingdom through power and equipping Jesus imitators. Genuine apostles receive their authority, influence and respect by revealing these ministry aspects, not from corporate success or managerial abilities.

Other Options

If these “workplace” believers are not exhibiting the two proofs mentioned, what is their calling?

1. They may be emerging apostles who have not come into the fullness of their calling. Paul and Barnabus were ministering before they were separated for their apostolic work; Acts 13:2-3. However, if they are potential workplace apostles, then at least some of those traits would be in operation. e.g. pioneering “home churches” and winning souls/discipling in the workplace.
2. They may be great and committed believers, but could simply be exhibiting God-given managerial skills, e.g. gifts of administration, gifts of helps, or perhaps deacons. They may be reaching out to the unsaved, but let’s call them ambassadors ... not apostles.

We agree their gift needs to be recognized. However, if their gift is not apostolic, let’s not placate them with a false title.

Don't cherish exaggerated ideas of yourself or your importance, but try to have a sane estimate of your capabilities by the light of the faith that God has given you.

Rom.12:3 J.B. Phillips

If they do not have a genuine anointing but have recognition, they are open to receiving false revelation and then influencing others.

Once recognized these "apostles" will have the power to recognize other peer ministries. As a result, are we going to end up being flooded with gifts of helps, administrations and deacons all claiming to be apostles?

WOMEN APOSTLES

There has been great debate about whether women can be appointed apostles.

However, is there any Biblical evidence of this? In the following scripture, two apostles are given recognition.

Greet Andronicus and Junia, my countrymen and my fellow prisoners, who are of note among the apostles, who also were in Christ before me. Rom. 16:7

Traditionally, many have assumed that the name Junia was referring to a man. Some Bible commentators claim that the original text referred to a woman and was first changed by scholars in the fourth century. The reasons for this are not clear, but could possibly be attributed to male bias.

The following quote is a portion of a paper by Dennis J. Preato, Master of Divinity

Junia was a female apostle. This is the preferred view. The evidence is authoritative, compelling, diverse, and objective. Junia has been demonstrated to be a woman based on the testimony of early manuscripts, recorded statements of various church leaders through the 12th century, and research performed by many other scholars attesting to the name Junia or Julia existing in ancient times. The evidence for a male reading was based on later manuscripts subject to the interpretations of scribes who thought *Iouinian* was a male and to the statement by one early church leader who was also mistaken as to the correct gender of Prisca. Computer-generated searches could find no example of a male Junias in ancient times nor is there any evidence proving that Junias was ever a contracted form of a longer name.

Junia and Andronicus were apostles. Numerous contemporary and past scholarship, lexical definitions, grammatical construction, and scriptural examples all provide the strongest support that *episemoi en tois apostolois*, naturally meant they were "outstanding among the apostles," just as Chrysostom so elegantly declared.

For the full discussion paper and arguments for and against;

www.godstowomen.org/juniapreato.htm

My personal opinion is that if anyone (male or female) is fulfilling the core values of an apostle, then that is proof of their calling.

In the Philippines where we have worked, there are women successfully filling this function and have done so for many years. These women have simply operated in that anointing without a need for a title or recognition. They appear to consider themselves as pastors.

Summary Chapter 3

1. Administrative apostles: Jesus' disciples had apostolic priorities which gave others the opportunity for managerial tasks such as organizing the feeding of orphans & widows. As important as this ministry was, they had other apostolic duties which took precedence; *but we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word.*
2. Believers must be given the opportunity to fail and learn from their blunders. Giving an administrator the title of apostle gives them a carte blanche opportunity to over-administrate, wrapping believers up in cotton wool and therefore minimizing their release.
3. We can't eliminate the core values of an apostle based on what is not recorded in some cases. Therefore, to cover every situation we need to go back to our original definition of an *apostolos*. (1) preaching the mystery of the gospel with signs and wonders following and (2) equipping disciples to do the same.
4. Teaching apostles: If Apollos only watered and did not reveal the mystery of the kingdom of God, let's designate him as a teacher, not one sent on a mission. Mentioning that he watered in one particular case does put him exclusively in a teaching box. If you only took that one Scripture, you could surmise that Paul only planted and never watered.
5. The foundational equipping of the apostles and prophets is to come prior to the teaching gift. Teaching without the equipping of achieving everything through Christ who strengthens them, can quickly become a work of the flesh. Believers will try to become better Christians through their own ability and continually fail.
6. New believers didn't require knowledge of such books as Romans, Corinthians, Philippians and Colossians etc. to create an evangelistic explosion. The majority of his letters were written around AD56-AD61 approximately five to ten years after they became converts.
7. Obviously there was no need for his epistles at this elementary stage. They were only required when the particular churches began to stray from the original apostolic foundation. The underlying message Paul gave through his letters was to bring them back to the foundation of relationship with the Lord and the Spirit-led life.
8. Stage 1. Apostles/prophets equip believers to have a foundation of relationship with the Lord and leading of His Spirit.
Stage 2. Teachers/pastors detect any deterrents to this relationship and correct it.
9. Workplace apostles: For the most part, workplace or extended church apostles will be expected to exhibit the same qualifications and move in the same activities as "fulltime" apostles. An ability to make money as a businessman or become the CEO of an organization does not appear to be one of the biblical proofs of an apostle.
10. Women apostles: If anyone (male or female) is fulfilling the core values of an apostle, then that is proof of their calling.

Chapter 4

FALSE APOSTLES

We have left discussing false apostles until now, as it is vital we first know the qualities of a genuine apostle before attempting to identify a counterfeit.

Each of us has been wired by God to have an intimate relationship with Him. Without it, we will sense there is something missing in our lives. If a person does not have a genuine personal relationship with the Lord, they will not have received the love and encouragement that this intimacy provides. Therefore, they are not fulfilled and will seek the recognition, acceptance and love from others. This is the foundational problem of a false apostle.

This lack of relationship can have two sources: First of all the false apostle may never have had the relationship in the first place.

Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!' Matt. 7:22-23

Secondly, they may have begun their Christian walk in that relationship, but other things became their priority.

Nevertheless I have this against you, that you have left your first love. Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place — unless you repent. Rev. 2:4-5

My friend Ralph Neighbour Jnr. shared with me that he saw many young leaders begin their ministry with pure motives and a love for Christ. As their ministry grew and flourished, there was a change in their hearts and they became ambitious for recognition.

These young leaders had "*left their first love*" from which they did not repent, resulting in the Lord removing their effective ministry Matt. 7:21-23.

In both of these cases seeking respect, approval and acknowledgement from believers and peer ministries instead of from Him, leaves them open to deception and being a tool for the devil. We are warned;

For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ. And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness, 2 Cor. 11:13-15

Therefore they will look and sound like the genuine article. What's the difference? In the simplest of terms, it comes back to the intent of their hearts.

GENUINE APOSTLES - CHRIST CENTRED

Genuine apostles will continually centre their message and role modelling on Christ.

1. A true apostle ensures that the gospel they preach lays the foundation ... a relationship with Christ.

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. For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. 1 Cor. 3:10-12

2. A genuine apostle will then equip believers to hear from the Lord and obedience to His personal and His written word.

I will show you what he is like who comes to me and hears my words and puts them into practice. He is like a man building a house, who dug down deep and laid the foundation on the rock.

Luke 6:46 NIV

3. A true apostle will continually remind believers to return to abiding in Him (living their life through His guidance). Throughout his epistles, Paul's underlying message was to come back to the foundation.

These things I have written to you concerning those who try to deceive you. But the anointing which you have received from Him abides in you, and you do not need that anyone teach you; but as the same anointing teaches you concerning all things, and is true, and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you will abide in Him.

1 John 2:26-27

He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.

John 15:5

I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.

Phil. 4:13

FALSE APOSTLES – NOT CHRIST CENTRED

What are indicators of a false apostle?

1. The devil knows the importance of this intimate relationship with Him Who *teaches you concerning all things*. If he can sidetrack sincere believers from abiding in Him, they won't be able to reach their full potential and ability to *do all things*.
2. Not having their own personal relationship with the Lord leaves false apostles with no ability to equip others in this foundation. They may be able to mention it, refer to it in Scripture, but will not be able to impart it.
3. Consequently, a false apostle will distract believers from that relationship. Christ will be mentioned, giving an appearance of righteous teaching, but He is not their focus.
4. False apostles eventually draw believers to themselves, their church meetings and their vision. Their ministry and their vision can all be Bible based but their teaching foundation is faulty.
5. Their vision should be to equip believers to have a relationship with Christ. By sidetracking them, it cripples their ability to be led by Him.

Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ. For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; and you are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power.

Col. 2:8-10

MODUS OPERANDI

There are many ways that we can be deceived and have our attention turned away from our relationship with the Lord. However, we must be aware that false apostles will appear to be *ministers of righteousness*. Therefore, what they teach will contain truth.

Let's look at just three of these to reveal how easy it can be to keep believers distracted from the great foundational truth by sidetracking them with other teaching.

1. Teaching on Blessing

2. Teaching on Holiness
3. Bible Knowledge or Equipping?

TEACHING ON BLESSING

We have some leaders who place a major emphasis on God's blessing and personal prosperity. Does God want to bless us? Of course he does!

It's a basic truth that is given to believers while they are babies in the faith. In the natural, little is expected of a toddler, it cries out and its needs are met. One of the detrimental aspects of a little child is that it only thinks of its own well being. However, a baby is expected eventually to learn how to walk, talk, hear and obey its parents' instructions.

They grow up to become useful members of the household, doing things for others. Similarly, little is expected of spiritual babies. They receive blessing when they cry out to their heavenly Father. The detrimental aspect of a spiritual child is its selfishness; "What about me?" However, spiritual little children are expected to grow up and learn to hear and obey their Fathers voice, walk in the Spirit and become useful workers in His household.

Nevertheless, some believers want to remain spiritual little children.

For a time is coming when people will no longer listen to sound and wholesome teaching. They will follow their own desires and will look for teachers who will tell them whatever their itching ears want to hear. They will reject the truth and chase after myths. 2 Tim. 4:3-4 NLT

What is it that childish believers are itching to hear?

- They want to hear Jesus died for them ... but not about dying daily for others.
- They want to be financially independent ... not total dependence on God
- They want to hear God is their servant ... they are not His servants.
- They want to hear they are to be blessed ... not being a blessing
- They want to hear attendance of a church meeting is more important than meeting needs or meeting with Him.
- They want to be entertained ... not equipped
- They want recognition and worldly success ... not to be love slaves
- They want their leader to tell them what to do rather than spending time in prayer asking what the Lord wants them to do.
- Any financial giving is based on a motive of, "How much can I get back?"

The false apostle is seeking recognition through (either) attracting large numbers to the church and/or monetary gain. They gladly accommodate the selfishness of devotees and tickle their fancy with child-level messages to ensure regular attendance, dependence on the organization and of course, their financial support.

A Mirage

The first problem is that because their motives are not Godly, the riches they are expecting are simply a mirage.

Yet you don't have what you want because you don't ask God for it. And even when you ask, you don't get it because your motives are all wrong—you want only what will give you pleasure. You adulterers! Don't you realize that friendship with the world makes you an enemy of God?
James 4:2-4 NLT

There are a couple of scenarios if God doesn't come through with the blessings in the time frame they've allotted Him. Firstly, they will either be disillusioned or go into guilt/condemnation mode, believing that some sin is hindering the blessing.

The apostle Paul gave us a greater perspective;

... for I have learned how to be content with whatever I have. I know how to live on almost nothing or with everything. I have learned the secret of living in every situation, whether it is with a full stomach or empty, with plenty or little. For I can do everything through Christ, who gives me strength.
Phil. 4:11-14 NLT

Secondly, they will remain little children unable to hear from the Lord and as a result they will remain unfulfilled and their hope of true peace and joy will be elusive.

Many will eventually feel dissatisfied and to the applause of the devil walk away either feeling ripped off by the church and/or angry with God.

An Oasis

A genuine apostle provides the answer for those who are feeling dry. *"If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink.*
John 7:37

They give sound teaching ... there is a cost for ongoing blessing.
But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.
Matt. 6:33

The real peace and joy we are seeking is found through the leading and encouragement of the Holy Spirit.

Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit
Rom. 15:13

... for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.
Rom. 14:17

Can we see that teaching a truth of blessing without the foundation of relationship can be destructive?

But I fear that somehow your pure and undivided devotion to Christ will be corrupted, just as Eve was deceived by the cunning ways of the serpent. You happily put up with whatever anyone tells you, even if they preach a different Jesus than the one we preach, or a different kind of Spirit than the one you received, or a different kind of gospel than the one you believed.
2 Cor. 11:3-4 NLT

2. TEACHING ON HOLINESS

On the other hand, some false apostles preach legalistic "holiness" messages that keep believers trying to achieve holiness in their own strength. When they inevitably fail, they become full of fear, guilt and shame. They become totally dependent on religious activity for their deliverance.

This results in an endless cycle of worldly counseling, fasting or altar calls etc ... but little alters. Believers' shame and guilt make them feel unworthy to talk to God or even consider He would want to talk to them.

Therefore, if you died with Christ from the basic principles of the world, why, as though living in the world, do you subject yourselves to regulations — "Do not touch, do not taste, do not handle," which all concern things which perish with the using — according to the commandments and doctrines of men? These things indeed have an appearance of wisdom in self-imposed religion, false humility, and neglect of the body, but are of no value against the indulgence of the flesh.
Col. 2:20-23

Can we see that even though they are being fed a truth of repenting of sin, they are not given God's answer to achieve it?

Genuine apostles teach that overcoming the flesh is achieved through a Spirit led life and not through legalism. Jesus' main job was to set people free.

And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." John 8:31

Believers are set free from the power of sin through forgiveness and the Spirit led life.
I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. Gal. 5:16

Other Distractions

There are many areas of truth e.g. end times, political, social issues, pet subjects or themes which can distract believers from their intimate relationship with the Lord.

The deception occurs because "the Word" is being taught.

Signs and wonders can also be used as a distraction. Matt.7:21-23; 12-24:24

However, emphasizing on any particular truth without the foundation will keep believers occupied but still hungry for the only thing that will truly satisfy and release them.

To add to the confusion, a false message on the Spirit-led life will inevitably arise and this can take various forms. The first will be an unbalanced message, which contains the leading of the Spirit without an emphasis on knowledge of the Word. The second will be theological acknowledgement of walking in the Spirit but will be devoid of equipping to achieve it. We deal with this further in our next section.

3. BIBLE KNOWLEDGE OR EQUIPPING?

We are warned of deception in the end times.

Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits. 1 Tim. 4:1

Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many. Matt. 24:11

Although the Bible says that "many" will be deceived, the majority of Christians would believe that this Scripture would only apply to other insincere believers ... but not to them. Why this confidence? Many believe that their Bible knowledge will spare them from coming under the influence of false doctrine.

One of the greatest obstacles we have faced conveying the Spirit led message comes from an unexpected source; well taught Christians ... including Bible scholars and teachers.

They believe they are Spirit-led simply because they have knowledge of the written word of God and try to be obedient to it. Therefore, when we teach; "*For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God,*" they immediately go into knowledge mode and say, "We already know that!"

They have been taught facts about the Spirit-led life but have not been equipped to actually hear from Him. We have already shown that being Spirit-led is more than just Bible knowledge. 1 John 2:27; John 14:26; 16:13

Without hearing from the Spirit, the New Testament can become a book of law.

Why don't you choose to be led by the Spirit and so escape the erratic compulsions of a law-dominated existence? Gal. 5:18 MSG

What does the Bible say about those who have Bible knowledge without actually doing it?

But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. James 1:22-23

Those who know the word about a Spirit-led life and are not doing it are deceiving themselves. In other words, they are already in self-deception.

We believe that this is the greatest deception the enemy has planted in the church.

1 Cor. 8:1 says “*knowledge puffs up*”. The NLT says; “*knowledge makes us feel important*”.

Are we saying that knowledge of the written word is not important? Of course not ... it’s vital! Without knowledge of the written word, there is nothing for the Holy Spirit to draw on and bring to your remembrance.

But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you. John 14:26

However, knowledge about the Lord without a personal relationship with Him is perilous. Let’s ensure we remember why Jesus’ ministry was so powerful; He only did what the Father told Him to do. He commanded His apostles to imitate Him.

“I tell you the truth, anyone who believes in me will do the same works I have done, and even greater works...” John 14:12 NLT

Information not Transformation

Teaching believers about walking in the Spirit without equipping them to do so is negligent and irresponsible. Simply believing the need for a Spirit-led life without actually spending the time to develop a personal relationship with the Lord reveals that a believer is deluded.

They are unprepared for the discernment needed both now ... and for end time events that lie ahead.

For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect. Matt. 24:24

The end time counterfeits will be totally convincing and capable of deceiving the elect. This is already happening to some degree with many supposed mature leaders being hoodwinked. Other leaders sit on the fence unsure as to whether some ministries are genuine or false. As these increase and *great* signs and wonders appear, discernment from the Lord will be an absolutely basic requirement.

SELF DECEPTION TEST

Those already in self-deception by relying solely on “Bible knowledge” will want to ignore this warning and simply dismiss what we’ve said as being unrealistic or too radical. However, if you sincerely want to self-evaluate, simply ask yourself; “What was the last thing the Lord said to me personally?”

If you have to think long and hard about it, it may indicate that you are not hearing from Him on a daily basis. Like any growing relationship, we need to work at our ability to hear from Him ... *exercise yourself towards godliness.* 1 Tim. 4:7

COMMON GROUND

These three areas of distraction previously mentioned all contain truth. If they didn’t, then they would not qualify as a counterfeit. What do they have in common? The concentration on some truth, without the foundation, causes imbalance, just like the Tower of Pisa. The end result is that the very thing for which believers were saved (relationship with Him; John 17:3) may be occasionally mentioned but perceived as not all that important or discarded.

The problem is not what they’ve been taught ... it’s what they haven’t been taught.

False apostles and prophets will keep believers in knowledge mode, thus maintaining a righteous appearance, but depriving them of their Biblical foundation. The enemy has always tried to substitute the knowledge of good and evil for life.

Genuine apostles don't just teach about a subject, they demonstrate and equip believers to be able to do it. For instance, they don't merely teach what faith is ... they impart it. There is an old saying that things of the Spirit are more caught than taught.

How did Peter have the faith to walk on water? Jesus didn't give him a sermon on faith. His command of, "Come!" created a heart belief to move into the miraculous. Under anointed instruction believers will receive similar heart changing words enabling them to imitate Jesus' ministry.

LAW VERSES SPIRIT

Some time ago, as I was reading about the cruel treatment of Jesus just prior to His crucifixion, tears started streaming down my face. As I had read this many times before without this level of emotion, I realized the Lord wanted to reveal something more than His suffering.

He then said to me, "Jesus is a type (example) of the end time church." He went on to explain that Jesus, through His incredible teaching and display of the miraculous, was the toast of the town and adored by the multitudes.

However, there was a ground swell against Him and He ended up rated as public enemy No.1. When they could not refute the miracles they became spin doctors and cast doubt on His character.

Then one was brought to Him who was demon-possessed, blind and mute; and He healed him, so that the blind and mute man both spoke and saw. And all the multitudes were amazed and said, "Could this be the Son of David?" Now when the Pharisees heard it they said, "This fellow does not cast out demons except by Beelzebub, the ruler of the demons."

Matt. 12:22-24 John 8:48-50

His enemies were not the Romans. It was the Jewish leaders who stirred up public opinion against Him. Matt. 27:20-25.

Therefore, it was the 'people of God' who instigated His death and yet these were people who knew their Bible backwards.

Why? As they saw it, Jesus' ministry kept exceeding the boundaries of the written word of God and it threatened the leaders' position and authority. Mark 3:1-6.

It was law verses Spirit.

If Jesus is our example, then there will be a great end time outpouring of the Spirit through believers who will imitate the love and power of Jesus ...and greater things. John 14:12

If end time church leaders fail to make the transition to the Spirit-led move, many believers will begin to leave some traditional and even some Pentecostal/charismatic churches. Through (either) a sense of losing control, reputation or pure jealousy, there will be a backlash against this move of the Spirit.

Remember the word that I said to you, 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you.

John 15:20

As it was with Jesus, it will be law (legalism) verses Spirit.

Why don't you choose to be led by the Spirit and so escape the erratic compulsions of a law-dominated existence?

Gal. 5:18 MSG

CAUTION

Let's be aware that we are only discussing those who are false apostles. The majority of pastors and teachers have genuine ministries and are imparting the aspects of truth that the Holy Spirit requires of them. However, they can only provide one part of the total ministry the church requires.

They need to be aware of the need for genuine apostolic/prophetic ministries to play their part if the flock is to reach full maturity.

MISGUIDED MINISTERS

With the restoration of the apostolic and prophetic ministries, it has become fashionable for some ministers to have an "upgrade" (in their mind) in status. As a result, there are some genuine pastors and teachers who have the misguided belief that they have the call of the apostle or prophet on their lives. How does this eventuate?

With the restoration, there inevitably comes a share of false prophets. Some of these are travelling ministries and rely on their financial support from local churches. Instead of restoring the foundations of the church (which may cause some disruption), they prefer to "prophesy" ear tickling words which will bring favor.

In other cases, they hear from familiar spirits, which reveal the fleshly desires of the one being ministered to. Therefore there are some cases where pastors and teachers have received "a word" that they are in fact apostles.

Others see that the gift is missing from the Body and have simply appointed themselves into the role to fill the gap; *transforming themselves into apostles of Christ*.

We do need our teachers and pastors to fulfill their specific and vital role. They need to continue to minister in the sphere of their particular anointing.

Those who consider themselves (either) apostles or prophets should evaluate themselves on whether they have the revelation of the mystery of the gospel and if they are realistically equipping and producing disciples to operate in it.

If they are not modeling and equipping believers with the foundation of a Spirit-led life, they are also in self-deception.

Don't cherish exaggerated ideas of yourself or your importance, but try to have a sane estimate of your capabilities by the light of the faith that God has given you.

Rom.12:3 J.B. Phillips

JUST A NAME?

On one hand, leaders giving themselves a false title would have to be considered an amusing non-event. It's just a name.

On the other hand, there is a more serious side. I could call myself a surgeon, but you wouldn't want to have me operate on your tumor.

Similarly, apart from the fraudulent title of apostle, the more disturbing deception is the fact that the minister is incapable of operating as an apostle, therefore the flock is not receiving genuine apostolic foundational equipping.

Knowing the detrimental effect it would have on the growth of the church may be the reason that the early church tested apostles.

And you have tested those who say they are apostles and are not, and have found them liars;

Rev. 2:2-3

Genuine leaders who realize they've been deceived into thinking they are apostles should first consider the health of the flock. Out of love for them, they should be seeking out authentic apostolic and prophetic ministries who can perform the necessary surgery to restore a new level of life to the Body.

At the end of the day, the motive of leaders will be revealed.

The former preach Christ from selfish ambition ...but the latter out of love. Phil. 1:16-17

Genuine apostles' major concern will be the love of the saints and not about the title or whether they are recognized as such.

As a result, they will continue to build a foundation in the believers and work towards "the temple" continuing to grow according to the Lord's master plan.

We see a young man, Timothy, released as an apostle, not just because of his age or theological knowledge. Paul said of him:

"For I have no one like-minded, who will sincerely care for your state. For all seek their own, not the things which are of Christ Jesus". Phil. 2:20, 21

Summary Chapter 4

1. If a person does not have a genuine personal relationship with the Lord, they will not have received the love and encouragement that this intimacy provides. Therefore, they are not fulfilled and will seek the recognition, acceptance and love from others. This is the foundational problem of a false apostle.
2. Genuine apostles will continually centre their message and role modelling on Christ.
 - the gospel they preach lays the foundation ... a relationship with Christ.
 - equip believers to be obedient to His personal and His written word.
 - will continually remind believers to return to abiding in Him.
3. What are indicators of a false apostle?
 - Sidetracks believers from a relationship with Him, crippling their ability to *do all things*.
 - Not having their own personal relationship with the Lord leaves false apostles with no ability to equip others in this foundation. They may be able to mention it, refer to it in Scripture, but will not be able to impart it.
 - False apostles eventually draw believers to themselves, their church meetings and their vision. Their ministry and their vision can all be Bible based but their teaching foundation is faulty.
 - The false apostle is seeking recognition through (either) attracting large numbers to the church and/or monetary gain. They gladly accommodate the selfishness of devotees and tickle their fancy with child-level messages to ensure regular attendance, dependence on the organization and of course, their financial support.
4. The end time counterfeits will be capable of deceiving the elect. This is already happening to some degree with many supposed mature leaders being hoodwinked. Other leaders sit on the fence unsure as to whether some ministries are genuine or false. As these increase and *great* signs and wonders appear, discernment from the Lord will be an absolute basic requirement.
5. False apostles and prophets will keep believers in knowledge mode, thus maintaining a righteous appearance, but depriving them of their Biblical foundation. The enemy has always tried to substitute the knowledge of good and evil for life.
6. Genuine apostles don't merely teach what faith is ... they impart it. Things of the Spirit are more caught than taught. How did Peter have the faith to walk on water? Jesus didn't give him a sermon on faith. His command of, "Come!" created a heart belief to move into the miraculous. Under anointed instruction, believers will receive similar heart changing equipping words enabling them to imitate Jesus' ministry.
7. Those who consider themselves (either) apostles or prophets should evaluate themselves on whether they have the revelation of the mystery of the gospel and if they are realistically equipping and producing disciples to operate in it.
8. Apart from the fraudulent title of apostle, the more disturbing deception is the fact that the minister is incapable of operating as an apostle, therefore the flock is not receiving genuine apostolic foundational equippi

Chapter 5**THE MASTER BUILDER AND THE TEAM**

In this chapter, we are going to see how the apostolic master builder and the rest of the five-fold ministry team can work together to complete the temple ... and the ensuing challenges.

ONLY ONE CHURCH IN TOWN?

While travelling, I usually like to provoke thought among the local “pastors”. I quite often ask (particularly in smaller cities) “How many churches are there in the town?” Naturally, we receive various answers, e.g. “Twenty”, “Seventy”, “Two hundred”. Of course, in Biblical terms the answer is that the Lord sees the believers as one church. The majority of local leaders would acknowledge this. As a result of efforts to bring about “oneness”, there have been many attempts to show unity with “pastor’s fellowships” and trans-denominational prayer meetings.

However, for the church to come to full maturity, we will need to move to another level: Leaders will need to humble themselves and work together and equipping believers as one church. This will mean realistically knowing their God-given equipping strengths whilst allowing others to bolster their shortfalls.

Don't cherish exaggerated ideas of yourself or your importance, but try to have a sane estimate of your capabilities by the light of the faith that God has given you.

Rom.12:3 J.B. Phillips

EQUIPPERS' BIAS

In any sporting team, the key to success lies in each person knowing their job description and not exceeding those boundaries as well as respecting the roles of the rest of the team.

This unity is achieved through the guidance of a captain/coach.

In the church, each equipper would have spiritual bias toward their particular gifting.

The evangelist, for instance, would see the unsaved as the main thrust of the church and obviously, the major part of finances and resources should, in their view, be directed for outreach.

The teaching heart would want to see the knowledge of the Word as the priority and would direct resources toward a Bible School and appropriate facilities.

The pastoral heart would want to see the care and welfare of the needy as a priority.

Each would see "the church vision" from a different aspect. It's easy to see where disagreements might arise as to priorities. To achieve a Godly balance, a person with kingdom apostolic overview is needed.

Due to the dark ages in the church, we inherited a dictatorial model with an elected man at the head of it. The knee-jerk reaction (in many cases) was to have the autonomous local church which answered to no-one, or an autonomous local church which joined a denomination.

As God restores the church, more trusted apostolic fathers are rising. A genuine apostle's goal won't be to gain control of a local church or group of churches, but see the local elders as sons and be love slaves to them. They will bring a unity of the faith, and see restoration of the true local church, with the five-fold ministry working together to equip and release the saints for the work of the ministry. They will be true kingdom men, not trying to build just their own local church. The apostle Paul implored believers to have this unified mindset.

Now I plead with you brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. 1 Cor. 1:10

MINISTRY DEFINITION

In natural school, we have subject masters e.g. in English, Mathematics and History who teach and help you qualify to enter your job or profession.

In spiritual school, we have apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers who help equip believers for their spiritual ministry and destiny.

... till we all come to the unity of the faith, and the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; Eph. 4:11-13

Note that this equipping is not just for those who want to go into “full time” ministry, it’s for every believer.

If “all” are to come to the fullness of Christ, then “all” should be given the opportunity. This should be seen as mandatory ... not an option.

Some would say there’s a five-fold ministry while others would say four, claiming the pastor and teacher are a description of only one person. As we have already pointed out; there are, quite often, gift mixes. Whatever your conviction, we’re going to describe the effect of each gifting rather than debate the point. The gift, or function, will make room for itself.

We don’t desire to go into a full description, so briefly, in the area of equipping:

- Evangelist’s equipping ministry –Traditionally, many evangelists considered their ministry was restricted to conducting crusades or street preaching. However, they are to also equip believers by demonstrating how to share their faith with others, one-on-one.
- Teacher’s ministry – equips believers with truth so they won’t be tossed around with every wind of doctrine. Helps the saints to be able to root out weeds of untruth and reminds them of foundational teaching.
- Pastor’s ministry – exhibits the mother heart of God; Like a mother hen who protects her chicks. (Matt. 23:37) They counsel, act as role models and bring out the caring and protecting qualities in believers.
- Prophet’s ministry – equips believers to be a prophetic people who can be God’s mouthpiece, speaking His will and purpose. Gives vision as well as spiritual encouragement. Restores foundational truths centering on abiding in Christ. Confirms gifting. Prepares the church for future tests.
- Apostle’s ministry - exhibits the father-heart of God. They cement a solid foundation and keep the church in Godly order. They are a releasing agent, like Moses, the cry of his heart declares, “Let my people go!” They are like a “jack of all trades” and can act as a model for the other four callings. They model spiritual initiative and the miraculous and they establish and appoint elders.

Each one of these ministries will help bring out the many facets of Christ-likeness in the saints, by modeling and equipping. This doesn't mean we all end up as clones. Some of us may be 60% pastoral whilst another may be 50% evangelist, with a various mix of the others.

However, to be brought to maturity, believers need to have every aspect of their spiritual education fulfilled. The important thing is; we will all be led by the Spirit to win souls and play our part in making them disciples. We will all do this according to our own individuality, giftedness, and the opportunities opened up by the Lord.

ONE MAN TRADITION

Tradition usually has us calling all these different equippers by one name. Depending on our background, it would be minister, priest or pastor. Tradition, as we've said, has made us think that just one person could fully equip us.

For example, in the natural family, both mother and father are God's ideal in order to instruct, model and care for the most effective growth in a child. Removing one removes essential input. God's children need five kinds of parental impartation for effective growth, not just two.

With only one or two of these inputs, we run into the danger of developing a spiritual child who doesn't mature as it should. The child becomes spiritually dysfunctional.

For instance, someone who is solely ministered to by a pastor will find they're very well cared for but possibly overprotected, therefore never released. Having a teacher will only give a great knowledge of the word but very little ability to minister in a practical sense e.g. personal evangelism. Obviously, an evangelist shouldn't be teaching church doctrine.

Having an occasional visiting ministry over the weekend does not provide the depth of equipping required to bring about permanent change.

Traditionally, many churches have (either) pastors or teachers as their prime equipper and so we are, in the main, going to direct our attention to them.

Although each equipper is different and can have mixtures of gifting, there are certain God-given traits common to each calling. In the following examples, we're not trying to make a blanket statement about pastors and teachers, but showing the weaknesses that can come when we're equipped, in the main, by one person. As we've already said, some would say the pastor and teacher is talking about one person rather than two. In any event, it's the effect of having a one-man equipper that's under consideration here.

PASTORAL GIFT

First of all, let's look at the pastoral heart.

Many years ago, I was part of a ministry team in a local church which was headed up by a great and dedicated pastor. My heart's desire was to release the saints and I began training home church leaders during the week and equipping the majority of the church on Sunday nights. While the pastor believed idealistically in releasing the church, it was soon obvious for some reason he wasn't all that enthusiastic.

I began praying for him to catch the revelation of what we were trying to achieve but he only became more concerned. When I asked the Lord why he wasn't changing He said to me, "I can't change him!"

"You are capable of doing anything." I argued. "You transformed the mind of Pharaoh to release Israel from captivity. Surely You can change the mind of a devoted pastor"

"I can't change him because I made him like that!" He explained.

I was totally confused and I asked for more clarification.

He revealed to me that the Godhead is Spirit with both masculine and feminine spiritual characteristics.

*Then God said, "Let Us make man (mankind) in Our image, according to Our likeness;
Gen. 1:26*

If the Godhead made mankind (man and woman) in “Our image” and “Our likeness”, then part of that likeness must have feminine attributes.

Therefore, part of the nature of God is a loving, caring, protective and nurturing aspect. He reveals this feminine nature to us;

How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, Luke 13:34

In the same way that a mother hen wants to protect her chicks, pastors by nature have a stronger caring or “mother” heart, which is more powerful than that given to other five-fold ministries.

However, this grace can be over-protective if not balanced by the father apostolic heart and a pastor’s greatest strength can become their weakness. Believers tend not to be fully released because of the “mother hen” heart. The following parable may give a greater understanding;

Parable of the Single Mum

An 18 year old who comes to his single mum and says, “Mum, I’m leaving home and going to rent and live with my friends.”

“Oh son, you don’t realize the troubles you’ll have out there. You can’t cook or iron and it will cost a fortune!”

A few years later, he tries again.

“Mum, I’m 21; I really want to live with some friends of mine.”

“Darling, it’s even worse than the last time you asked, there are so many home invasions. Just the other day there was a young man killed in his house by drug addicts. Please don’t go, realize I’m just trying to protect you.”

Finally, many years later!

“Mum, I’m 45. Is it okay yet? ”

If she had a husband, the first scenario might be changed as mum and dad discussed it with each other.

“John, our little Stevie wants to leave home and he’s only eighteen.”

“Let him go!” says the dad.

“What about the costs of living, and the dangers?” she replies.

“We’ve put enough into Stevie for him to make it. We’re here for him. If he runs into trouble we’re only a phone call away.”

Both the mother and father heart are needed in raising children, but in the end there has to be a time of release.

Genuine pastors know in their hearts that there has to be a time to release their sons and daughters, however, because of the pastor’s nurturing nature, believers can find themselves in protective custody. The input of apostolic fathers is needed to balance any potential excesses.

Other Pastoral Qualities

Many pastors are not great “pulpit preachers” and as a result do not draw large crowds. Nevertheless, they can equip extremely effectively in small numbers, just as Jesus did. God has given them an incredible care and love for the people and it’s these attributes that draws the saints to them. Typically, under the care of a pastor, the church will probably grow to around 30-80.

However, because many are told in denominational conferences that their goal should be a church of hundreds, many can be despondent or see themselves as failures.

They're "called" to care for the flock and often work long hours visiting and counseling and usually are not great in administration. They end up doing the majority of the work because they feel this is their job description and therefore won't delegate.

Hungry believers looking for spiritual growth will usually stay for a few years but eventually move on, leaving the pastor feeling decimated.

TEACHING GIFT

The teacher has a God given ability to study the Bible and provide good spiritual food for the church. Because of their ability to expound the Word of God, they draw people, not so much on their pastoral care but on their teaching gift. Many, who also have an administrative ability, can initiate programs and, as the church grows numerically, they can bring in pastors, heads of departments, secretaries, etc. and see hundreds or even thousands attending their meetings.

The strength of the teacher is to keep everyone on track so they won't be blown away by every wind of doctrine.

While a pastoral heart can restrict the release of the saints because of the "mother hen" love, the teacher's heart can also restrict because of their desire for people not to go off-track.

They can readily see the faults and weaknesses in the saints and can feel this can be overcome by more (and more and more) teaching. Also, being administrative by nature, their desire is to have everything in order, so that anything attempted outside the guidelines of their church vision can make them feel insecure or uncomfortable.

Like the pastor, their ministry will not totally satisfy those who are spiritually thirsty and they will eventually leave for "greener pastures".

LET THEM GO!

Some pastors and teachers need to grasp the principle of teaching and releasing. Jesus taught, modeled and then let them try for themselves.

Then the seventy returned with joy, saying, "Lord, even the demons are subject to us in Your name."

Luke 10:17

They also need to grasp the natural example of a child learning to walk. Part of the learning curve is for the parents to let go of the child's hand and let it fall. Falling over is part of the learning curve. Jesus was able to release His disciples into ministry, even though they weren't up to speed. All He wanted, on the night before His death, was for them to wait for Him whilst he prayed. We know, of course, they fell asleep.

"What? Could you not watch with Me one hour?"

Matt. 26:40

However, the disappointment of their failing a simple task didn't stop Him from releasing them.

There wouldn't be one equipper who could say that, in their time of ministry, they haven't made any mistakes. Every one of them would agree they learnt through their own mishaps and failings ... and Jesus allowed it to happen to them! Let's treat our disciples as Jesus treats us. Let's train, equip, direct, encourage and model but, at the end of the day, allow the saints to learn to walk in the Spirit knowing that they will occasionally fall over. Good fathers will also be there for them to help get them back on their feet again just like the prodigal son's dad.

THEY LEAVE ANYWAY

Whether it's because of the too much mothering or the rigidity of endless teaching, believers sense there is a spiritual void and leave the church anyway.

As a result, we have a continual stream of believers moving from church to church, trying to fill that void. After years of seeing nomadic Christians, isn't it time we looked at the root of the problem instead of trying to hold them through a better environment, entertainment or coercion?

In these end times, the five-fold ministry needs to see that none of them can equip believers by themselves and instead be open to be part of an apostolic team. This also applies to the house church move.

It starts with prayer, believing that the Lord will connect them with genuine apostolic fathers; ... *until we're all moving rhythmically and easily with each other, efficient and graceful in response to God's Son ...*
Eph. 4:13 MSG

EMERGING APOSTLES, PROPHETS, AND EVANGELISTS

As with any family, each child is unique and has its own personality talents and gifts. No functional parent would expect their child to grow up exactly like them. They wouldn't be prejudiced if the child was totally different to them in many aspects.

From an environment of mothering and structured schooling provided by pastors/teachers, those with apostolic, prophetic and evangelistic callings will arise. They certainly need the care, love and foundational teaching given. However, with their God-given gifting, they usually don't fit into a black and white controlled environment.

Also, because of the gifting of many pastors and teachers to love, care and keep believers on track, their major concern can be with the local church and its growth. The major part of financial income will be spent on providing weekly services e.g. rent/build, sound equipment, musical instruments etc and in larger churches administrators and worship leaders. In proportion, a small amount of finance will be spent on the great commission in other parts of the country or particularly internationally. In some cases, "great commission" finance will be spent on sending the pastor/teacher overseas. As a result, the mission will frequently be restricted to teaching in established churches, not for evangelism and church planting. Usually very little is dedicated to supporting overseas apostolic ministries.

The emerging apostles and prophets receive revelation insights and will be able to see the problems and restrictions. The emerging evangelists just want to "go for it" and turn the world upside down. Sometimes, because of their youthful over-zealousness, there can be little grace exhibited toward their spiritual father and conflict can arise. The teacher heart, wanting to keep their departments, programs and church in order, cannot understand why these apparent "rebels" don't conform to their church vision. Both teachers and pastors can come under threat, because of the changes these ministries desire to bring.

Basically, they are given three possible options:

Firstly, they "submit" and sit until they learn true servant-hood, in other words, conform to the local church vision. In some cases, the 'sitting' time is a life sentence.

Secondly, they are advised to go to a Bible College, where they come under the guidance of, for the most part, more teachers. In some cases, they come out with all their fire extinguished.

Thirdly, they are begrudgingly "released" (sink or swim) without any church support to do their ministry. Evangelists particularly, with no financial support, are forced to be away from home, family, and mentors. As a result, many have sadly fallen away.

Their failure can be considered a proof that they were, in fact, rebellious.

A more gracious attitude needs to arise, realizing that most go-getter potential leaders may be strong willed. Perhaps they may consider conferring with mature apostles and prophets as to the future of those who may be considered rebellious or contentious. In this way, five-fold ministry teams have an opportunity to harmoniously emerge.

HOME BASE AND MOBILE MINISTRIES

Apostles, in the vast majority of cases were mobile ministries. However, they did have a hometown base where they were recognized as local elders. The apostle Peter said:

“The elders who are among you I exhort, I who am a fellow elder ...” 1 Peter 5:1

Today, many of us are so boxed-in with our traditional local church concepts, if someone is called to help start a new church or minister to the body at large; they’ve actually been deemed to have “left the church”. Our tradition of having a one-man equipper now means the former leader is thus replaced by a new ‘senior minister’ who now sees himself as the one in control. The early church suffered a similar problem. The apostle John said:

“I wrote to the church, but Diotrophes, who loves to have the pre-eminence among them does not receive us.”
3 John 1:9

If the new “senior minister” is a pastor/teacher, his heart can be focused on their particular ministry bias. Their focus for the local church will definitely not be as all-encompassing as that of the apostle. This will usually result in finances being directed toward the vision of the new senior minister, rather than the foundational apostolic “bigger picture” of building the temple.

No wonder we have many under-utilized apostles, not planting new works, but staying in charge of local churches where they can retain control to ensure their financial support.

Can we see a future time when apostles can be released to start new churches without the concern of someone who wants pre-eminence, shutting the door behind them?

Instead, they’re seen as part of the eldership, first in areas of total kingdom planning and part of that church, not perceived as leaving it.

APOSTOLIC EQUIPPING - NOT LECTURING

Up and coming apostles will need to review how they intend to equip the saints. Jesus is the apostolic role model. If He could compare our modern equipping methods to His, He would be shaking His head in disbelief.

In the natural, school teachers have the task of taking their students from one level to the next. An exam reveals the degree of advancement. If a school teacher has a majority of students who can’t pass the test, they are considered a failure. Our modern church teaching methods give good information but in general, provide little transformation.

Equipping believers means more than teaching the material. If we do this, we are merely lecturers. Equipping means we’re expecting a change in behavior, not just passing on information each week.

JESUS’ EXAMPLE

Our modern equipping methods rely mainly on one person teaching a large number of believers. Jesus preached to large numbers but when it came to transforming men to imitate Him, He chose only 12. The Lord Himself could only handle a dozen. In line with His example, we should keep our discipling school confined to small numbers. There are many good reasons for this.

1. Discussion and Questions

Discussion and questions are vital. The “itch” of each individual person can be scratched.
And the disciples came and said to Him, “Why do You speak to them in parables?”

Matt. 13:10

Large numbers means the likelihood of this kind of interaction is lost. Can you imagine hundreds of people in a congregation all putting their hands up in the middle of a sermon when they had a question? Traditionally this would be frowned upon.

2. Family or Orphanage?

If a natural parent had fifty to a hundred children, can you imagine how much quality time they could spend with each of them? Central to Jesus' ministry was His relationship with His disciples. Having just twelve allowed Him to spend the time necessary to form genuine loving relationships. If Jesus Himself could handle only this number, how is it possible for today's equippers with huge classes to build the necessary loving relationships He modeled?

Attempting to equip large numbers means, in reality, we are more likely to finish up with a spiritual orphanage rather than a true family. It becomes a family by name, not by nature.

3. "Hands On" Equipping

Some of our teaching is theological and needs discussion to be fully understood. However, there are many aspects of being led by the Spirit which are "hands on", such as personal evangelism, gifts of the Spirit, praying for the sick, etc. Effective equipping in these areas is more difficult and less effective in large numbers.

Our principles for effective equipping;

I doyou watch.

I doyou help.

You doI help.

You doI watch.

4. They Learnt from One Another

In bringing Christians into full maturity, realize that part of God's plan is the sand-papery effect of other believers. When Jesus trained His twelve, much of their change of life was as a result of His modeling. However, they also were impacted by each other; James' desire for recognition, Thomas the cynic, Judas the penny-pincher, and a headstrong Peter. As they interacted, the various character flaws were revealed. They witnessed the blessings of obedience and repentance or, in Judas' case, the end result of disobedience.

We have a saying;

"God blesses or afflicts us with people or situations, according to our own needs".

5. Submission

They were accountable to Him to put into practice what they had learned. He was able to keep an eye on their responses. When they failed, they were able to find out why. For instance, in the case of a demon;

Then the disciples came to Jesus privately and said, "Why could we not cast it out?"

Matt 17:19

Most leaders would theoretically agree with the need for "accountability". Nevertheless, if you ask how the church members are actually accountable, they may have difficulty in explaining its outworking.

Attempting to equip larger numbers makes evaluating the progress and submission of each person an impossibility.

6. Step by Step

Finally, in any natural school, you take students from grade 1, grade 2 etc., up to graduation. You don't teach grade 1 children grade 12 lessons and vice-versa.

For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept, line upon line, line upon line...

Isaiah 28:10

With any congregation, you can have a mixture of spiritual babies, older children and the mature. If you try to equip the babies, the older ones will show disinterest. If the message is aimed at the mature, the new ones won't be able to comprehend it. As a result, many are left to teach in general terms, with middle-of-the-road messages.

7. Keep or Send?

Jesus, the ultimate equipper, trained His disciples personally for a time and then left them to be led by the Holy Spirit. He told them;

"It is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away the Helper will not come to you..."

John 16:7

It was to their advantage not to have a person endlessly telling them what to do but rather to become led from within. We need instructors and equippers for a period but there does come a time when they must decrease so that the leading of the Spirit can increase and our dependence is then on God, rather than man. We need to be weaned from the basic teachings of the word and be hearing from the Lord and developing into sons who are into the meat of doing His will.

Jesus' disciples were scattered to preach and so were the disciples of the apostles. Acts 8:1

Conducting equipping classes means that there will be a point at which those being trained will be "scattered" and not expected to attend teaching classes for the rest of their lives. Jesus disciplined 'to send'. Tradition dictates we continue discipling 'to keep'.

8. A Spirit-Led Role Model

Many who are conducting home church meetings would possibly feel that their groups would meet most of the previous qualifications. However, most importantly, Jesus' group was led by someone who could hear directly from God and be led by Him.

If the Spirit-led life is considered a core value or the ultimate goal of being trained, surely we need mature role models as equippers.

MAJOR FLAWS

This is one of the major reasons for the failure of many of the present cell church/home church meetings. Jesus didn't assemble His group solely for the purpose of fellowship and some Bible study. Many groups start with this as their major goal and then wonder why they flounder. Jesus gathered them with the primary goal of learning to imitate Him.

Summary Chapter 5

1. In the church, each equipper would have spiritual bias toward their particular gifting. Each would see "the church vision" from a different aspect. It's easy to see where disagreements might arise as to priorities. To achieve a Godly balance, a person with kingdom apostolic overview is needed.

2. A genuine apostle's goal won't be to gain control of a local church or group of churches, but see the local elders as sons and be love slaves to them. They will bring a unity of the faith and see restoration of the true local church, with the five-fold ministry working together.

3. In the natural family, both mother and father are God's ideal in order to instruct, model and care for the most effective growth in a child. Removing one removes essential input. God's children need five kinds of parental impartation for effective growth, not just two.

4. Equipping is not just for those who want to go into "full time" ministry, it's for every believer. If "all" are to come to the fullness of Christ, then "all" should be given the opportunity. This should be seen as mandatory ... not an option.

5. From an environment of mothering and structured schooling provided by pastors/teachers, those with apostolic, prophetic and evangelistic callings will arise. They certainly need the care, love and foundational teaching given. However, with their God-given gifting, they usually don't fit into a black and white controlled environment.

6. A more gracious attitude needs to arise, realizing that most go-getter potential leaders may be strong willed. Perhaps they may consider conferring with mature apostles and prophets as to the future of those who may be considered rebellious or contentious. In this way, five-fold ministry teams have an opportunity to harmoniously emerge.

7. Our modern equipping relies mainly on one person teaching a large number of believers. Jesus preached to large numbers but when it came to transforming men to imitate Him, He chose only 12. Why?

- Discussion and questions are vital. The "itch" of each individual person can be scratched.
- Central to Jesus' ministry was His relationship with His disciples. Having just twelve allowed Him to spend the time necessary to form genuine loving relationships.
- As they interacted, the various character flaws were revealed. They witnessed the blessings of obedience and repentance
- They were accountable to Him to put into practice what they had learned.
- With any congregation, you can have a mixture of spiritual babies, older children and the mature. You can't effectively equip them as one group
- Jesus discipled 'to send'. Tradition dictates we continue discipling 'to keep'.
- The discipleship group was led by Jesus (someone who could hear directly from God and be led by Him). Equipping groups need Spirit-led leaders, not novices.

8. Jesus didn't assemble His group solely for the purpose of fellowship and some Bible study. Many groups start with this as their major goal and then wonder why they flounder. Jesus gathered them with the primary goal of learning to imitate Him.

Chapter 6**RAISING END TIME APOSTLES**

We have found that for every major truth that is being restored in these end times, there is inevitably an “Ishmael” before an “Isaac”. Therefore, instead of being discouraged, we should be excited. The counterfeit “Ishmael” apostle is always a sign that the promise of “Isaac” is on its way.

Let’s now look at some of the possibilities of a restored end time apostolic ministry.

And through the hands of the apostles many signs and wonders were done among the people. And believers were increasingly added to the Lord, multitudes of both men and women, so that they brought the sick out into the streets and laid them on beds and couches, that at least the shadow of Peter passing by might fall on some of them. Also a multitude gathered from the surrounding cities to Jerusalem, bringing sick people and those who were tormented by unclean spirits, and they were all healed. Acts 5: 12, 14-16

And as you go, preach, saying, 'The kingdom of heaven is at hand.' Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out demons. Freely you have received, freely give. Matt. 10:7-8

Therefore, we can once again expect an apostolic move of God similar to the early church across the entire world, where the dead are raised and multitudes of cripples and blind healed ... and even *greater things John 14:12.*

They will also provide the springboard to equip believers *measuring up to the full and complete standard of Christ. Eph. 4:13 NLT*

However, how are new apostles going to be raised?

SMALL GROUP OPPORTUNITIES

One of the most effective ways of raising up apostles is through the cell/home church. They receive immediate opportunities to win souls, start new small groups and equip believers. However, alongside of this will come a share of false apostles in what has been termed the “house church” movement. Many of these are ex-pastors/teachers (of some description) who, in their past, have had negative experiences with the church. They are seeking ministry validation and can’t help but think in terms of titles and hierarchical structures. Many see the house church movement as a way for them to become ‘apostles’, nevertheless they will exhibit the same negative traits mentioned in our earlier chapter. How will this outwork? As their goal is to draw believers to themselves, there are a few scenarios:

1. They may teach that the house church movement needs apostles (which is true) but their goal is to rule over a group or a network of groups, not be a slave to ensure the believers are fully equipped. Some groups feel, or have been taught they need “covering” from an apostle for validation and have unfortunately come under the influence of such ‘ministries’.
2. They may use the new move of the house church as “their revelation” but will concentrate on promoting house church structure and condemning all other church structures. This gives the appearance of strong, decisive leadership.

3. They may intimate they are teaching some special truth for which they alone have the revelation. e.g. “End times”. “We are the remnant” (God’s chosen few).
4. They will avoid having any close relationship with other home church leaders and will not allow other leaders to teach or equip the group.
5. As with all other false apostles, what they teach will distract from or replace the foundation of intimacy with the Lord.

Those genuine apostles being raised in house church environments need to ensure that the same foundations of God’s master plan are cemented in.

Let’s now look at the specific dangers in the house/simple church movement if that foundation is not in place.

NEW WINE (OR OLD WINE?) INTO NEW WINESKINS

In many cases meeting in small numbers has been considered **the** new move of God. However, we don’t believe this is entirely true.

And no one puts new wine into old wineskins; or else the new wine will burst the wineskins and be spilled, and the wineskins will be ruined. But new wine must be put into new wineskins, and both are preserved. And no one, having drunk old wine, immediately desires new; for he says, 'The old is better.' Luke 5:37-39

“*And no one puts new wine into old wineskins;*” is a quote we hear quite often these days in regard to the restoration of the house church with the small group being considered the new wineskin. However, we must remember that the wineskin is merely the container for the wine. It’s not the wine.

Many believers have their eyes searching for the new wineskin instead of ensuring we, first of all, have new wine to put in it. In other words, they’ve put the cart before the horse.

Nevertheless, both the horse and cart are needed.

The new wine is the restoration truth of believers being of an intimate relationship with the Lord. This enables them to be led by the Spirit and imitate the works of Jesus. John 14:12

It’s of little value expecting a move of God through home churches unless the new wine of the walking in the Spirit is produced first. Obviously, we must ensure that we are not putting old wine into a new wineskin. Therefore, it’s vital that our potential apostles have their eyes fixed on the foundational goal.

Make Disciples

As important as small groups are, Jesus didn’t say, “Go into all the world and build house churches.” He told us to make disciples.

Meeting in smaller numbers is obviously part of God’s restoration plan and it does provide the potential for deeper personal relationships and also greater participation of all in attendance. We stress the word, “potential” because just having a small group does not automatically guarantee this is going to happen.

It’s relatively easy to convince people that church in the home could be a solution for their frustration and a place where they could be fulfilled.

However, many have excitedly joined small groups and, after the honeymoon period, found they were not all they were cracked up to be. This is usually because we simply take the old wineskin traditions of spectator Christianity from the larger gathering and transfer them into the home.

It becomes a case of “Honey, I shrunk the church!” If we have old wine believers they will not be capable of fitting into a Spirit led life.

As a result, ... *no one, having drunk old wine, immediately desires new; for he says, 'The old is better.'* Old wine believers will continually look back at their traditional spectator roots and thirst after that. They need to have their taste buds rehabilitated.

Let's realize that for years many have been told that going to a meeting will enable their needs to be filled and bring them the joy, peace and satisfaction they are seeking. Expecting that attendance will enable them to be filled with enough of God's life to last them for the next week will eventually leave them disappointed.

River or Drain?

“He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.” But this He spoke concerning the Spirit... John 7:38-39

If they don't come to a meeting with a river of life, they will become dry and will eventually become a drain. They will eventually drain the life out of the leader or anyone else who has a water supply.

It is self evident that all of us have our dry times where we need the love and refreshing of others. However, there is a mile of difference between an occasional dry spell and a drought that goes on for years.

Meetings Aren't the Oasis

We must realize, for those who are spiritually parched, even the overflow of the group cannot provide all the life needed to totally refresh someone.

Believers looking to meetings, large or small, to totally satisfy their thirst will be, at best, temporarily fulfilled, only to find within a day or two they feel dry again. Our meetings can provide a few mouthfuls of living water, not the entire supply.

God obviously wants to provide more than one or two drinks a week, so how does He do it? A few mouthfuls of His blessings and goodness should encourage you to desire more.

However, He doesn't necessarily want believers to go to more and more meetings but rather to meet more frequently with Him. He desires each believer to be directly connected to Him so He can become their perpetual water supply.

He wants to become their spring which will continuously satisfy them, enabling them to water others. Meetings aren't the oasis. He is!

Jesus answered and said to her, "Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again, but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life." John 4:13-14

The greatest thing those in a meeting can do for believers is to equip them to be connected to the thirst quencher and then continually encourage them to draw more and more from Him. *"If anyone thirsts let him come to Me and drink..." John 7:37.*

Can we see that if we maintain the traditional misconception that the meeting is the oasis, it will distract believers from total dependency on Him?

"Find rest O my soul, in God alone, my hope comes from Him." Ps. 62:5 NIV

When believers experience the fullness of God's love, they can set others free from their unjust expectations. They can then appreciate the comparatively precious little others have to offer without expecting or demanding more.

WHAT ABOUT THE BODY?

“Does the Lord operate through His Body?” you may be thinking. “Doesn't He work through us?” Of course He does. However, the issue is “On whom are we depending ... man or God?”

As we relate to Him on a daily basis and share with Him our hopes, dreams and challenges, He will meet our needs. Some of them He will handle directly Himself. Some of them will be resolved as He shows us personally how we can overcome them. Other times He will direct those around us to assist and encourage us, both in meetings and outside of them.

The issue, as we said, is dependence on Him and not on others. As a result, if you start to live a Spirit-led life, releasing your overflow and touching others, then the Lord promises you;

The Lord will guide you continually, and satisfy your soul in drought, and strengthen your bones; You shall be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters do not fail. *Isa. 58:11*

"And he who waters will also be watered."

Prov. 11:25

Therefore, because believers can quickly be released into guidance by Him, the small group is an ideal breeding ground for upcoming apostles and every other member of the Body of Christ.

Future apostles need to ensure they are concentrating on the foundational new wine as the move of God, rather than just the wineskin. Otherwise, just like the Tower of Pisa the small group will be in for lean times.

Those home/simple church leaders who genuinely desire to see the group fully mature, need to be open to receiving authentic apostolic/prophetic ministries who can re-establish the foundation.

EQUIPPING

Having done some apprenticeship work (in small groups or otherwise) potential apostles ideally come directly under the wing of existing apostles. There are two basic ways that God may further equip and release them:

Firstly, Jesus originally selected men to catch his life and character. This team concept was continued by Paul and others. *“From Paphos, Paul and his companions sailed to Perga in Pamphylia, where John left them to return to Jerusalem.* *Acts 13:13*

Therefore, potential apostles may be recognized by existing apostles and invited to be part of their team.

Secondly, budding apostles may seek out existing apostles, make themselves known and see what the response is;

And when Saul had come to Jerusalem, he tried to join the disciples. *Acts 9:26*

However, as God is restoring the role there is a shortfall of genuine apostolic fathers, there may be circumstances where no apostles are available.

If not, then they should seek out other five-fold ministries who recognize their potential and do have a father's heart. They need then to submit to that fatherly influence and guidance.

If this is still not possible, then like Paul, they may have to spend a desert time totally with the Lord and be trained personally by Him. However, this does not mean long term disassociation from others.

As we have just read, Paul was eventually led to have fellowship with the apostles. Acts 9: 26-28

Genuine apostles will not be one man bands. They will desire to relate to peer ministries.

WHY THE SHORTFALL?

Why in many cases do we have such a disparity when comparing the first apostles to the majority of those today?

Firstly, the restoration of the full truths of this end time ministry is in its early days.

Secondly, it will take time. The apostle Paul had the revelation that the success of his entire ministry depended on this intimate relationship. His core values were *gaining Christ and becoming one with Him. Phil. 3:7-9 NLT Also John 17.*

However, he hadn't attained them at that stage; he was speaking in the future tense and these were his anticipated goals. He goes on to say;

I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead. ... Phil. 3:13

It's considered that he wrote this letter around 61AD. Therefore he had been saved at least twenty-five years and was still short of the fullness (perfection) God had for him. He wasn't resting on his laurels and boasting about his accomplishments or his vision for future church plants. He was revealing the shortfall he had in his relationship with the Lord.

What humility!

This is a great encouragement for many of us today who may feel attaining to the early church standard is beyond our reach. One of the apostolic qualifications is humility. Let's pray that, firstly, present apostles see the restored foundation of their ministry as their goal.

Then, like Paul, humbly admit their personal shortfall. Let it be the cry of their hearts in their prayer; Eph. 1:17-19 and they can then reach forward in faith to the things which are ahead.

Future Apostles

Also, one of the roles of the present day apostles is being fathers to fathers; equipping the future crop of apostles *unto perfection, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.*

Can they exhibit the same humility toward them and say, "We are not the Biblical role models as yet; there is another level yet to be attained."

Present apostles have a Godly responsibility to equip and guide this new generation. Therefore these foundations need to be clearly defined to the present and upcoming apostolic ministries; Why?

So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

Rom. 10:17

If they don't know the word they won't have the hope or faith to enter into it. As a result, the fulfilment of the early apostolic power and authority will remain a distant dream.

WHAT NOW?

There may be some who sense they have a genuine call of an apostle on their lives and yet are looking for further levels of release. What are at least some initial signs to help identify them? Firstly, their heart is sold out for the extension of the kingdom, not for some worldly acclamation. The second sign we should see is an insatiable thirst to preach the gospel.

In the beginning of his ministry Apollos was described as *fervent in spirit and preached boldly in the synagogue. Acts 18:25, 26*

After receiving his sight and being filled with the Spirit what happened to the apostle Paul?
... *immediately he began to proclaim Jesus in the synagogues, saying, 'He is the Son of God'.*

Acts 9:20

However, Paul did not begin the apostolic portion ministry instantly; there was a vital part of his training yet to be implemented. Paul said:

But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb and called me through His grace, to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately confer with flesh and blood, nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me; but I went to Arabia, and returned again to Damascus. Gal. 1:15-18

Paul spent three years in Arabia. Why? He didn't want to *confer with flesh and blood*.

This was a time to confer with the Lord to enable him to build a relationship and then; *reveal His Son in me*. This time of relationship building and revelation was the foundation of his ministry. *Eph. 3:3-6*

Finally, to mature into full apostleship requires humility. Because of the revelation and power that is released, there is a propensity for pride to rise up. It's quite easy to forget that the miraculous and revelation are given by grace. Start with a foundation of; *And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave — just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve ...* *Matt. 20:27-28*

SEEN OR BEEN?

Some believe that seeing Jesus was a claim to apostleship. There are some leaders today who make the same assertion after having a personal visitation from Him.

However, in Jesus' day both believers and unbelievers saw Him. Today we have many Muslim covertly who claim to have had a visitation.

Just seeing Him wasn't the qualification. It was the relationship, revealing His life and love. *The Word of life existed from the beginning. We have heard it. We have seen it. We observed and touched it. This life was revealed to us. We have seen it, and we testify about it. We are reporting to you about this*eternal life that was in the presence of the Father and was revealed to us. This is the life we have seen and heard. We are reporting about it to you also so that you, too, can have a relationship with us. Our relationship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ. We are writing this so that we can be completely filled with joy.*

1 John 1:1-4 GW

*Please remember what the *eternal life* mentioned above actually is.

And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent. *John 17:3*

Can we see it's not 'the seeing' as such, it's the intimate relationship? Out of that guidance, the power of the Spirit is released through bold preaching and the miraculous.

Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated and untrained men, they marveled. And they realized that they had been with Jesus. And seeing the man who had been healed standing with them, they could say nothing against it. *Acts 4:13,14*

The hallmark of Paul and the early apostles was this relationship. They had been with Jesus, He had changed them ... and it was obvious. Today's apostles will reveal that they have been with Jesus. Perhaps a review of our section on 'Intimacy with Him' on page nine may assist.

WORK AT IT!

Today there is a great emphasis on our physical appearance and there are many prepared to spend plenty of time keeping themselves in shape. The goal of looking good and a healthy body encourages devotees to commit themselves to the exercise time.

Those aspiring to do the works of Jesus and greater things will need to devote a great deal of time with Him. There are no short cuts; ... *exercise yourself toward godliness. For bodily exercise profits a little, but godliness is profitable for all things ...* 1 Tim. 4:7-8

Daily work-outs talking to Him will ensure disciples are spiritually fit and, as a result, they will see this as a priority, a pleasure and ... no sweat.

Finally, we need to pray. Pray for both the upcoming apostles and for all believers to receive the revelation of the depth of relationship He wants to have with us.

The apostle Paul prayed;

I ask — ask the God of our Master, Jesus Christ, the God of glory — to make you intelligent and discerning in knowing him personally, your eyes focused and clear, so that you can see exactly what it is he is calling you to do, grasp the immensity of this glorious way of life he has for Christians, oh, the utter extravagance of his work in us who trust him — endless energy, boundless strength! Eph. 1:17-19 MSG

For further resource material

1. On the Foundation; “The Spirit Led Life” by Stuart Gramenz
2. On Covering; “Who’s Got You Covered?” by Stuart Gramenz

www.spiritled.com.au
www.spiritledacademy.org

Summary Chapter 6

1. One of the most effective ways of raising up apostles is through the cell/home church. They receive immediate opportunities to win souls, start new small groups and equip believers. However, alongside of this will come a share of false apostles in what has been termed the “house church” movement.
2. “*And no one puts new wine into old wineskins;*” is a quote we hear quite often these days in regard to the restoration of the house church with the small group being considered the new wineskin. However, we must remember that the wineskin is merely the container for the wine. It’s not the wine.
3. The new wine is the restoration truth of believers being of an intimate relationship with the Lord resulting in their love for one another. The wineskin is small groups.
4. Why in many cases do we have such a disparity when comparing the first apostles to the majority of those today? Firstly, the restoration of the full truths of this end time ministry is in its early days.
5. Secondly, it will take time. The apostle Paul had the revelation that the success of his entire ministry depended on this intimate relationship. His core values were *gaining Christ and becoming one with Him. Phil. 3:7-9 NLT Also John 17.*
6. Even though he had been saved around 25 years, he hadn’t attained them at that stage. He was speaking in the future tense and these were his anticipated goals. He goes on to say; *I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead. ... Phil. 3:13*
7. One of the roles of the present day apostles is being fathers to fathers; equipping the future crop of apostles *unto perfection, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.* Can they exhibit the same humility toward them and say, “We are not the Biblical role models as yet; there is another level yet to be attained.”
8. Present apostles have a Godly responsibility to equip this new generation. Therefore these foundations need to be clearly taught to the present and upcoming apostolic ministries; Why? If they don’t know the word they won’t have the hope or faith to enter into it. As a result, the fulfilment of the early apostolic power and authority will remain a distant dream.
9. Some believe that seeing Jesus was a claim to apostleship. There are some leaders today who make the same assertion after having a personal visitation from Him. It’s not ‘the seeing’, it’s the ‘being with’, the intimate relationship. Out of that guidance, the power of the Spirit is released through bold preaching and the miraculous.
10. People realized that Jesus’ disciples and Paul had been with Him ... and it was obvious. Today’s apostles will also reveal that they have been with Jesus.
11. Those aspiring to do the works of Jesus and greater things will need to devote a great deal of time with Him. There are no short cuts. Pray for both the upcoming apostles and for all believers to receive the revelation of the depth of relationship He wants to have with us.

APPENDIX

A MISSING FOUNDATIONAL TRUTH

If imitating Jesus by listening to, and being led by the Spirit is so important, why has this truth not been emphasized by the church? Although many of our previously mentioned Scriptures are regularly quoted, traditionally, some church leaders haven't been able to conceive or believe the possibility of actually being transformed to this "*full and complete standard of Christ*" and "*perfect unity*" themselves, let alone their church members. However, the Scriptures continually confirm the Lord's expectation in this regard.

He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked. 1 John 2:6

If leaders don't live this life, how can it be taught with any reality or conviction?

We believe a major part of foundational truth of the gospel of the kingdom of God has not been totally understood.

WHAT IS "THE GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM"?

We are told to preach the gospel of the kingdom, but we find some Christians are unsure of what it totally encompasses. If I asked you to write down what you think the gospel of the kingdom is ... what would you say?

Many believe it simply means, "Receive Jesus, have your sins forgiven and you will go to heaven". Whilst the statement contains truth, it falls far short of all the Good News the King has for us.

"Kingdom" is made up of two words; "king" & "domain". It means the king's domain or territory over which a king rules. In Biblical terms, it refers to the areas over which the Lord has authority and sovereignty.

For many of us today the term, 'kingdom of God' can sound a little mystical or unclear. To help us grasp this, God has provided a word more familiar to us.

Unto us a Son is given; and the government will be upon His shoulder ... of the increase of His government and peace there will be no end... Isa. 9:6,7

We simply translate the Kingdom of God as "God's Government".

Let's now look at some aspects of His rule or government.

First of all, many of us are already aware that, as we repent and voluntarily commit ourselves to obeying our King, we can inherit the many benefits that His government can provide. Our sins are forgiven, and there is the potential to be healed, spirit, soul and body. Luke 4:18-19. Secondly, we are also aware that, in the not too distant future, He is returning to the earth, only this time He will have total authority over the entire planet.

"The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!" Rev. 11:15

We could now translate this, "*The governments of this world have become the government of our Lord and He shall govern forever and ever*"

In the Lord's prayer we pray, "Thy kingdom come." ("Your government come".)

THE MYSTERY

Nevertheless, we have one vital aspect of the kingdom of God which is not totally understood in many believers' lives. It's described as mysterious.

“To you it has been given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God.” *Mark 4:11*

It is relatively easy to understand that His kingdom or “God’s Government” provides benefits to us, spirit, soul and body and that He will have a future reign ... so what’s the mystery?

To them God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. *Col. 1:27*

The mystery of the kingdom of God was Christ living within or inside believers.

“We already know that!” some of you might be thinking. However, this has a far greater implication than just the simplistically coined phrase of “having Jesus living in our hearts”.

Is “having Jesus in our hearts” exclusively about getting a ticket that gets us to heaven?

Do you really think the Lord wants simply to live in your heart, twiddling His thumbs or hibernating?

LED FROM WITHIN

What is the greater purpose? It’s Christ leading and ruling us from within.

Now when He was asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, He answered them and said, “The kingdom of God does not come with observation; nor will they say, ‘See here!’ or ‘See there!’...”

For indeed, the kingdom of God is within you.” *Luke 17:20-21*

Thinking in terms of an earthly kingdom, this statement is mystifying. You can’t see it! It’s not visible! We have also just realized “the kingdom of God” means “God’s Government”. Therefore it’s actually saying, “God’s Government” is *within you*.

It’s the potential of having the Lord personally lead us and guide us from within.

This new form of government is an internal rule, not an external rule.

This is the job description of the Spirit of God, who is to be our teacher and guide,
But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you. *John 14:26*

A BETTER SYSTEM

While on earth, Jesus directly instructed His disciples on what to do and where to go. Many of us today would be envious of this level of communication.

However, Jesus told them He was going to upgrade the system.

It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; *John 16:7*

Why is it an advantage? No longer was Jesus going to require them to continually coming back and forth to Him to receive their next order. The Holy Spirit (the Helper) was going to lead them from within. What a monumental step forward!

This new way of Godly guidance was so revolutionary, the apostle Paul requested prayer for the courage to be able to reveal this awesome mysterious truth.

.... that utterance may be given to me, that I may open my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel... *Eph. 6:19*

THE MYSTERY REMAINS

Obviously, this is internal and not an external rule, “*the kingdom of God is within you.*” is mystifying to the non-believers. Unfortunately, it also remains a mystery to many believers because the majority of modern day versions mistranslate the original Greek word “entos”, which literally means, “within” or “inside”. They interpret “*the kingdom of God is within you.*” as “*the kingdom of God is ‘among you’ or ‘in your midst’*” (referring to Jesus being among them). We believe this one-sided translation conceals the major truth of the mystery that Jesus was trying to reveal.

Future not Present

This scripture is obviously not limited to Jesus being present with them. He was answering their question about the future. They asked “... *when the kingdom of God would come*”.

He answered in the future tense “... *nor will they say, ‘See here!’ or ‘See there!’*”. He was primarily talking about the impending, soon to come kingdom and was revealing to them the potential of His invisible government being inside them ... and us.

This vital aspect of the kingdom of God within wasn’t available at that stage because Jesus first had to die to appropriate it.

Jesus referred again to this component of the kingdom of God which would take place in the near future.

“Assuredly, I say to you that there are some standing here who will not taste death till they see the kingdom of God present with power.” *Mark 9:1*

Jesus said that they were going to personally witness this phase, the internal rule of the kingdom of God come within their own lifetime.

Why the One-sided Interpretation?

Why would some translators substitute “*the kingdom of God is among you*” for the literal meaning of “*within you*”?

If you attempt to interpret this scripture with natural thinking, it wouldn’t make sense. After all, it is a spiritual mystery.

Is it just possible that a logical academic interpretation would evaluate that Jesus couldn’t have possibly meant, “*the kingdom of God is within you*”? Did they then look for a more rational and tenable explanation rather than discern this mystery in the Spirit?

These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual.

But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. *1 Cor. 2:13,14*

Old Testament Confirmation

This promise was also given in the Old Testament to the New Covenant believers;
And I will give you a new heart, and I will put a new spirit in you. I will take out your stony, stubborn heart and give you a tender, responsive heart. *Ezek. 36:26 NLT*

This part of the mystery provides the foundation for the other parts of the mystery yet to be fulfilled. Eph. 1:9-10; 3:2-11

A SPIRITUAL G.P.S.

How many of us when driving our car, have faced the inconvenience of trying to find a new address? First of all we have to look up a particular location in a large street directory and then continually stop to double check that we’re on track.

One of the latest gadgets that you can buy for your car is a Global Positioning System or G.P.S.

These incredible inventions allow you to receive exact directions via satellite. It also tells you the correct road speed, warns you of cameras on traffic lights and guides you around traffic jams. When you make a mistake, the system is so gracious. A polite voice simply says, "At the next opportunity, please turn around". With the inevitable improvements, can you imagine the even greater assistance they will be in the future?

G.P.S. God's Pilot Spirit

God has given us an incredible spiritual G.P.S. (God's Pilot Spirit) to give us instructions "on the move" and it doesn't simply sit in your car. For convenience sake, it's not an external system, but an internal one, enabling Him to lead and guide us from within, anywhere and anytime.

This system is not an extra optional feature. It is "factory fitted" and comes when you receive Christ and the baptism with the Holy Spirit. Mystery solved!

Just as a G.P.S. in your car can call on all the information about every road in your country; your spiritual G.P.S. can call on all the knowledge, faculties, genius and qualities of Christ. Only He knows exactly what to do in every circumstance. This helps to explain the Scripture, "... *we have the mind of Christ.*" *1 Cor. 2:16*

When we tap into this incredible resource, we can then declare;

I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.

Phil. 4:13

We also realize that nothing of any value can be achieved without this intimate guidance. *He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.*

John 15:5

After the Lord revealed this to me, I made a huge discovery. In the past whenever a great thought or vision came to my mind, I gave myself the credit. In fact, every successful idea or concept came from Him and anything of me came to nothing.

My point is that like me, on occasion we are already tapping into the mind of Christ without even realizing it. We simply need to learn how to identify His voice to enable us to avoid hit and miss results. It also provides us the opportunity to give him thanks for all things.

WHERE DOES THE BIBLE FIT IN?

Are we negating the need for knowledge of Scripture? Of course not! Basic information of the motor-ways and roads are programmed into a natural G.P.S. and the data is drawn upon when required. A G.P.S. which was not pre-programmed would be useless. Similarly, God's roads to success and His high ways are fed into and filed away in our spirit as we learn and understand Scripture. When you need to know what to do in any circumstance, He can show you what to say or what to do and how to respond based on that information.

ALL TRUTH IN OUR BIBLES?

There may be some who have been taught that everything God wanted to tell us is already in our Bible, therefore negating a need for internal guidance. However, the Holy Spirit's job description is to *teach you all things* and *guide you into all truth* and *tell you things to come*.

But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you. *John 14:26*

He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come. *John 16:13*

For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. *Rom. 8:14*

Surely this means that **all things**, **all truth** and **all the things that are yet to come** are not in our Bibles. Furthermore, if the Bible were to be our only guide, *sons of God* would not need to be led by the Spirit of God.

There are many unique aspects of the Christian faith, but none as exceptional as this truth of personal guidance. The good (no), great news is that, potentially, all believers can learn to use this spiritual G.P.S. and be led from within. Therefore, being programmed with Bible knowledge is essential and dovetails perfectly into all of this guidance. As we just read in John 14:26, we will be reminded of the Lord's words ... as and when you need them. Incredible!

As we mentioned earlier let's transform believers from simply being Spirit filled to being Spirit led.

OUR ROLE MODEL

Inner guidance is achieved by personal relationship and intimate fellowship with the Lord. Jesus was a role model for us to imitate.

"Most assuredly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do; for whatever He does, the Son also does in like manner. For the Father loves the Son, and shows Him all things that He Himself does ..." *John 5:19-20*

"For I did not speak of my own accord, but the Father who sent me commanded me what to say and how to say it. I know that his command leads to eternal life. So whatever I say is just what the Father has told me to say." *John 12:49-50 NIV*

"Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? The words that I speak to you I do not speak on My own authority; but the Father who dwells in Me does the works." *John 14:10*

This is sometimes a difficult truth for many believers who have traditional thinking to grasp. Nevertheless, Jesus tells us very plainly, that this is expected of us;

"I tell you the truth, anyone who believes in me will do the same works I have done, and even greater works ..." *John 14:12 NLT*

Not only does He expect you to do it. It's commanded, *"anyone who believes in me will do the same works."*

WHAT IS ETERNAL LIFE?

Why is it that some people have interpreted the gospel of the kingdom to mean "Receive Jesus and you will go to heaven"? Traditionally many have interpreted "eternal life" as meaning "heaven". Therefore, when we read John 3:16, we can assume Jesus came for the sole purpose of getting us to heaven.

"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life." *John 3:16 NIV*

We need to clear our heads of any former traditions and see how the Bible defines “eternal life.”

And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.
John 17:3

Eternal life is not a place. Eternal life is a life ... a life that goes on forever. It comes from a personal relationship with the Lord.

For example, before a person is married, they live an independent lifestyle. After the covenant of marriage their life changes; they have a new life of relationship with a lifetime partner.

Before you received Jesus, you lived independently.

After making a covenant with Him, your new life now changes.

We have a new life of relationship that will last not only “till death do us part”, but it goes on forever or eternally. It's an eternal life.

This is our interpretation of John 3:16.

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have a relationship with the Lord that goes on forever.

This was Jesus’ prayer for our union with Him.

“I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me.”
John 17:20-21

JESUS TOLD UNBELIEVERS

Let’s look at the last line of that previous Scripture as to a reason for this intimate relationship; *“that the world may believe that You sent Me.”*

Jesus was emphatic about this inward guidance when He spoke to unbelievers.

“Don't you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me? The words I say to you are not just my own. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work. Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; or at least believe on the evidence of the miracles themselves.”
John 14:10-11 NIV

“But if I do it, even though you do not believe me, believe the miracles, that you may know and understand that the Father is in me, and I in the Father.”
John 10:38 NIV

I feel I need to repeat myself here ... He told this awesome truth to unbelievers! Is this vital aspect of the gospel of the kingdom preached and emphasized today?

As previously mentioned, this new way of Godly guidance was so revolutionary the apostle Paul requested prayer for the courage to be able to reveal this awesome truth.

.... that utterance may be given to me, that I may open my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel...
Eph. 6:19

Traditionally many people have thought “kingdom” and “eternal life” meant heaven. As a result, we have a watered down version along the lines of, “Ask Jesus to come into your heart and you’ll go to heaven!”

We need more believers with the courage and boldness to preach this mysterious truth.

As we have said, His goal and purpose is not just to get you to heaven but, through an intimate relationship, leading you from within. The miracles are His way of revealing this truth, *“that you may know and understand that the Father is in me”*.

And this gospel of the kingdom (including personal inner guidance /G.P.S.) will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come. Matt. 24:14

PAUL'S TRAINING

The apostle Paul didn't have the advantage of listening to and observing Jesus in the flesh. He didn't own a New Testament Bible (they weren't printed). Therefore, how did he receive his great knowledge? The Lord took him to his own personal School of the Spirit in the desert where he learned to have a relationship with the Lord and to hear directly from Him.

When he planted churches in Galatia, he stayed only a matter of months before moving on. He didn't even appoint elders (this was done about a year later).

What do you think he may have taught them that would enable them to mature over that period? Remember ... he hadn't written his epistles at this stage.

We have already noted that Paul imitated Christ by preaching the mystery of the gospel of the kingdom.

He preached the full gospel of the kingdom and modeled the inward guidance of the Spirit. *They were convinced by the power of miraculous signs and wonders and by the power of God's Spirit. In this way, I have fully presented the Good News of Christ... Rom. 15:19 NLT*

Please note how they were convinced. It was the miraculous and the power of the Holy Spirit being released from within Paul.

As it was with Jesus, this convinced them that the rest of the good news (including personal inner guidance) was real. *John 14:10-11; 10:38*. Please also note he said, *"In this way, I have fully presented the Good News..."* Is Paul indicating that without the evidence of the power of the Spirit the gospel is not being fully presented? We believe so.

MORE KINGDOM TRUTHS

To help us allow this truth to sink deep into our Spirits, let's remind ourselves of Jesus' expanded definition of God's kingdom.

"The kingdom of God does not come with observation; nor will they say, 'See here!' or 'See there!'... For indeed, the kingdom of God is within you."

Please remember this is His definition, not ours. For a deeper revelation, when we use the word "kingdom", we will add the words "personal inner guidance or G.P.S" to help renew our minds.

Some of these following Scriptures may take on a greater depth of meaning as we take in the added concept of having an intimate relationship and His internal rule.

Some Scriptures use the term "kingdom of God" and others "kingdom of Heaven", but remember, there is only one King and, therefore, only one kingdom. Take your time, meditate on them and ask the Lord to open greater revelation to you.

"Assuredly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God (personal inner guidance/ G.P.S) as a little child will by no means enter it." *Luke 18:17*

"Children, how hard it is for those who trust in riches to enter (personal inner guidance/ G.P.S) the kingdom of God!" *Mark 10:24*

But Jesus said to him, "No one, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God. (personal inner guidance /G.P.S.) " *Luke 9:62*

"And do not seek what you should eat or what you should drink, nor have an anxious mind. But seek the kingdom of God, (personal inner guidance /G.P.S) and all these things shall be added to you." Luke 12:29,31

Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, (personal inner guidance /G.P.S) let us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear. Heb. 12:28

Jesus answered, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. (personal inner guidance/ G.P.S) John 3:5-6

"Assuredly, I say to you that there are some standing here who will not taste death till they see the kingdom of God (personal inner guidance G.P.S) present with power." Mark 9:1

SELLING OUT FOR GOD

There are, of course, many other Scriptures that refer to the Kingdom. Some deal specifically with the future rule but many others can be interpreted as the kingdom within. Look out for them whilst reading your Bible and be ready to apply Jesus' interpretation to them. This next one is a good example of this;

"Again, the Kingdom of Heaven is like a merchant on the lookout for choice pearls. When he discovered a pearl of great value (personal inner guidance G.P.S), he sold everything he owned and bought it!" Matt. 13:45-46 NLT

In many cases, the "pearl" has been interpreted as going to heaven. However, let's apply Jesus' definition to it. When we realize that an intimate relationship with the Lord and His guidance from within is a priceless possession then, hopefully we'll be willing to give anything to achieve it.

Paul initially thought that his vast education and pedigree were important but he changed; *I once thought these things were valuable, but now I consider them worthless because of what Christ has done. Yes, everything else is worthless when compared with the infinite value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have discarded everything else, counting it all as garbage, so that I could gain Christ and become one with him.* Phil. 3:7-9 NLT

Paul, in the ensuing verses reveals this was his sole focus. *I don't mean to say that I have already achieved these things or that I have already reached perfection. But I press on to possess that perfection for which Christ Jesus first possessed me. No, dear brothers and sisters, I have not achieved it, but I focus on this one thing: Forgetting the past and looking forward to what lies ahead...* Phil. 3:12-14 NLT

When it finally sinks in that the ultimate in your Christian experience is to achieve a partnership *and become one with Him*, everything else pales into insignificance. If this was Paul's ultimate goal then surely it should be ours as well.

We can then experience the truths of Jesus' words to us; *For apart from me you can do nothing. But if you remain in me and my words remain in you, you may ask for anything you want, and it will be granted!* John 15:5,7 NLT

THY KINGDOM COME

With our new understanding, hopefully we can take the familiar prayer, *"Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven."* to another level.

We are not only praying for the future kingdom to come but also for His kingdom (personal inner guidance) to come into unbelievers. Therefore, we're actually praying for unsaved people to have God come into their hearts and be ruled from within.

If every person received and availed themselves of this personal inner guidance, then the second part of the prayer "*Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.*" would automatically take place.

Perhaps now when we pray the "Lord's Prayer" a new level of faith and expectancy can rise up for the salvation of our loved ones and friends.

FULL OR PARTIAL KINGDOM RULE?

The Lord gives believers the gift of righteousness. Righteousness means you have the right to confidently speak to God without shame or guilt. As you listen to Him and obey Him, righteous actions follow and the immediate rewards are peace and joy.

... for the kingdom of God (personal inner guidance) is ... righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.

Rom. 14:17

Because the Holy Spirit is in us, the potential is available to have Him governing us in everything we do. If we allow Him to totally govern us from within, we will experience the fullness of righteousness, peace and joy. If we don't give Him total rule, we will not have the fullness of His peace and joy. It's your choice.

Jesus said, "How can I describe the Kingdom of God (personal inner guidance)? It is like a mustard seed planted in the ground. It is the smallest of all seeds, but it becomes the largest of all garden plants; it grows long branches, and birds can make nests in its shade."

Mark 4:30-32 NLT

Make a decision that, like any relationship, your friendship with Jesus may be a small seed now, but as you work at it, spending time with Him each day, watering it with His words, it will grow. As you do, your ministry will grow with it, bringing rest and comfort to others.

This is foundational teaching and should be given to believers when they are first born again. Those who don't receive it or those who don't understand it will inevitably have a major hole in their relationship with the Lord. Therefore, also pray "Thy kingdom come." for yourself and other believers to see the fullness of His personal inner guidance.

This teaching has been taken from our book "The Spirit Led Life"

SUMMARY

1. 'Kingdom' is made up of two words, "king's" & "domain". It means the territory or empire over which a king rules, the areas over which the Lord has authority. We simply translate the Kingdom of God as 'God's Government'.
2. Many understand two aspects of His government. Firstly, we can inherit the many benefits that His government can provide spirit, soul and body. Secondly, He is returning to the earth, only this time He will have total authority over the entire planet.
3. Jesus gave another perspective of the mystery God's government being in us. *He answered them and said, "The kingdom of God does not come with observation; nor will they say, 'See here!' or 'See there!'.... For indeed, the kingdom of God is within you."*
- 4 This has far greater implications than just the simplistically coined statement of "having Jesus living in our hearts". It's having the Lord personally lead us and guide us from within. Therefore, this new form of government is an internal and not an external rule.
5. This was the secret of Jesus' phenomenal success. Everything He said and did was done through personal guidance. He expects and commands us to imitate Him; *"I tell you the truth, anyone who believes in me will do the same works I have done, and even greater works ..."*
6. Jesus followed His spiritual G.P.S. (God's Pilot Spirit). God's basic information is fed into it as we learn and understand scripture. When you need to know what to do in any circumstance, He will show you what to say or what to do and how to respond based on that information.
7. Eternal life is not a place. Eternal life is a life. It comes from a personal relationship and inner leading by the Lord. *And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent. John 17:3*
8. This is our interpretation of John 3:16.
For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have a relationship with the Lord that goes on forever.
9. Jesus was emphatic about this inward guidance when He spoke to unbelievers.
"But if I do it, even though you do not believe me, believe the miracles, that you may know and understand that the Father is in me, and I in the Father." John 10:38 NIV
10. The miracles were the proof that He had the Father guiding Him. Paul imitated Jesus to ensure that the gospel was presented in full; *In this way, I have fully presented the Good News of Christ... Rom. 15:19 NLT*
11. Let's ensure that the truth of both the future and present kingdom is *fully presented. And this gospel of the kingdom (personal inner guidance) will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come.*
12. Be totally sold out; *"Again, the Kingdom of Heaven is like a merchant on the lookout for choice pearls. When he discovered a pearl of great value (personal inner guidance), he sold everything he owned and bought it! Matt. 13:45-46 NLT*

