

APOSTLES

TODAY

PAUL GALLIGAN

APOSTLES TODAY
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This teaching manual was released in book form in 2006. Because of the difficulties in printing books and multiplying copies, we now present the teaching of 'Apostles Today' in manual form to enable easier multiplication and distribution.

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DEDICATION

Jesus said “*If they receive you [the apostles] they receive Me, and if they receive Me they receive the One [the Father] who sent Me*” Matt.10:40.

This book is presented to you “*all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in every place, with the overseers and deacons*” (Phil.1:1) and to the apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers whom Christ has given to the church in His ascension (Eph.4:11).

“*Through Christ we have received grace and apostleship for obedience to the faith among all nations*” Rom.1:5.

I dedicate this book to you for your teaching, reproof, correction and instruction in righteousness. Never for a moment do I think my book is equal to Scripture in any way, but I believe that the teaching I am presenting to you is the teaching I have received from the Lord as I have studied the word in the spirit of wisdom and revelation. I have been much aided by many other ministers of Christ whose writings and teachings I have received. I realise that my teaching is incomplete as the word of God continues to unfold.

I echo the Apostle Jude’s words “*exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints*” (v.3).

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PREFACE

It wasn't until September 1997 that I first seriously considered the ministry of the **apostle** as a reality today. At that time, I was serving on the staff of a denominational church, gifted as a **teacher** to the body of Christ. I had been aware of the prophetic movement since the mid-nineteen eighties, when a **prophet** called Paul Cain testified in a John Wimber conference in Australia. One thing that most in the prophetic movement failed to do was to prophesy the restoration of apostles. I personally did not become involved in the prophetic movement and, in fact, saw some '**not good fruit**' coming out of a prophetic school here in Australia. However, I always had a basic belief in the five-fold ministry of **Ephesians 4:11** without a full understanding and with next to no understanding of the ministry of the apostle.

My Ministry Background

Previous to the teaching ministry I was serving in from 1994-97, I had served for six years as a **pastor** and, prior to that, four years as a church and Christian School **administrator**. Overall, I thoroughly enjoyed the work of the pastor, working hard, serving the Lord, being the best minister I could be, but not being satisfied deep within. From 1985-1990 I served as a part-time honorary chaplain at a local university, doing the work of the **evangelist** and seeing some fruit but knowing that I did not have the ministry gift of the evangelist, although I deeply desired to be more effective in winning the lost.

For reasons beyond the scope of this introduction, I left the ministry in late 1990. For two and a half years I wandered in a strange wilderness, serving in a range of jobs from house painting to international consultancy and then returning to full-time university study. All along I knew I was called to be a minister of Jesus Christ but felt disqualified and had no idea how God could bring me back into the ministry, but He did. In mid-1993 I began a teaching seminar in a local church where I was attending. At that time, I applied for a job as administrator with this church. For me I thought this was a way of getting back into ministry as by now I knew God was calling me.

Applicants for the administrator's job were narrowed to two and finally the decision was made against me. However, the senior minister came to inform me of the final decision and why. My qualifications and CV were most suitable and I was judged as worthy as the successful applicant, but the selection committee decided it was not my calling, as I was called '**to preach and teach the word of God**'. Despite having put considerable hope into getting that job, I was not disappointed, but was actually encouraged as I was affirmed in my ministry calling and my gift to preach and teach. Praise the Lord!

A Teacher of the Word

Later in 1993 I was offered a job with that same church as a teacher of the word and with responsibility for community outreach. I entered into an exciting, challenging and fulfilling ministry for the next four years. This included presenting teaching seminars in prayer and in evangelism. I was responsible for writing study manuals for these seminars. This teaching ministry was received by many churches in the body of Christ. By 1996 I was travelling with a team of trainee ministers and the Lord had given us a very strong anointing to teach the word, to apply the word through workshops and to impart the anointing of the Holy Spirit.

By the second half of 1997, the denomination to which the church belonged and in which I was serving, made some very wrong moves in terms of accepting unrepentant homosexuals into membership and not excluding such ones from the ordained ministry. In our local church, the senior minister and many others were resigning and leaving the denomination. This was when God began to speak to me about the ministry of the apostle. I was given some tapes to listen to and, on one tape, the brother spoke about the ministry of the apostle. This activated my heart and the Lord revealed to me that this was my calling. He then led a small group of us to tender our resignation and begin to plan a new ministry. ‘Revival Ministries Australia’ was the result. The Lord revealed the very name and confirmed it and we launched the ministry in January 1998.

I saw the Lord

As the time of the planned launch came close, I personally began to feel the responsibility of leading a ministry and I was timid and afraid about doing this. Up until this time, in fourteen years of fulltime ministry serving in three different church ministries, I was always in the role of the assistant or the one representing someone else. Now I was going to be the leader! I had expressed my fears to no one, but the Lord knew. I awoke at 1 a.m. in the morning to see the Lord Jesus standing at the end of my bed and as I focused on Him, He imparted courage to me, right into my spirit, in a tangible way. This was a most awesome and memorable experience: ‘**I saw the Lord**’ and He ministered to me in a life-changing way, preparing and empowering me for the work of the ministry He was calling me to. Not wanting to lose the powerful reality of seeing the Lord, I rose from my bed and went to my study, switching on the light and reaching for my Bible. While I could no longer see Jesus, I knew He was with me and very clearly He instructed me to open **Joshua 1**. It was as if He read to me the first nine verses, which emphasise **‘being strong and courageous’**.

Commissioned to be an apostle

At the time I was not consciously thinking of the ministry of the apostle but I have known, ever since that day, that this was my commissioning by Jesus to be an apostle. One of the key words in the reading, **Joshua 1:1-9**, is the word “*inheritance*”. While in the context God is telling Joshua that he will divide the land as an inheritance to God’s people, I knew that my role in restoring inheritance to God’s people would be in “*rightly dividing the word of truth*” (**2Tim.2:15**). My strength in ministry at that time was as a teacher and now I am a teaching apostle, and God has enabled me to play a part in restoring the ‘inheritance’ to His people. Little did I know that one day I would write the book, ‘*Walking in our Inheritance*’ [2004].

A School of Tyrannus

Part of the vision that the Lord put in my heart from those early months of planning the ministry and launching Revival Ministries Australia, was to establish, in due time, an apostolic training/teaching centre. We wrote of this and envisioned that one day God would enable us to have a modern version of the “School of Tyrannus” (**Acts 19:9-10**). After a trip into the Union of Myanmar [formerly known as Burma] in early 1999, we established a six-week training school in June/July of that year, using hired facilities. At that time, the ministry was based in various homes. We had experienced a short-term training school in Myanmar and had also been taken to minister in various towns, mainly in house-churches that had been established by disciples trained in that ministry. God was showing me a pattern of the apostolic church in action: short term training schools to train disciples for ministry and the establishment of the church in the

house. At the end of 2000, a businessman, who is part of our ministry group, actually purchased a building in the central business district of our city, for Revival Ministries Australia. Ever since then we have had a permanent base for an apostolic training centre. We have been conducting two-week training schools, twice yearly, since 2001. In April to June 2006, we held a three-month international training school with eighteen international delegates attending from seven different nations. God has enabled us to ‘flesh out’ the original vision He showed us in the Scriptures.

Over the years, beginning in 1998, I have been enabled by the Lord to write a number of teaching/study manuals. I had learnt to write manuals in the previous ministry so I drew on that experience. The manuals that emerged really map our journey in the unfolding apostolic revelation that we walk in today. This book ‘Apostles Today’ is a compilation of sessions from a number of those manuals, drawing together teaching and understanding of apostles today, including an introduction to apostolic doctrine. However, all of the content and material has been edited, expanded and updated in the light of the unfolding revelation and the lessons and practical applications learned by experience.

INTRODUCTION

The Goal is a Perfect Church

Jesus Christ is preparing for Himself “*a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, holy and without blemish*” Eph.5:27. He is preparing this church “*by sanctifying and cleansing her with the washing of the water by the word*” Eph.5:26. This is the church that has grown up into maturity having 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. This is the church that has “*gone on to perfection*”, having properly laid the foundations of “*repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, the doctrine of baptisms and the laying on of hands, the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead and of eternal judgment*” Heb.6:1-2.

*This is the church that Jesus is coming back for:
a glorious church without spot or wrinkle or any
such thing, a holy church without blemish.*

We go on to perfection [maturity] only “*if God permits*” (Heb.6:3) and God will only give that permit when the church has strong foundations. Jesus Christ is that “*foundation*”: “*no other foundation can anyone lay*” (1Cor.3:10-11); Jesus Christ is “*that Rock*” (1Cor.10:4). Each one of us needs to build our life in Christ upon the foundations of repentance and faith, baptism in water and the laying on of hands to receive the Holy Spirit, and to walk in the revelational knowledge and practical reality of the doctrines of the resurrection of the dead and of eternal judgment. As well, the church needs to be built upon the foundation of Christ, apostles and prophets being the foundation ministries (Eph.2:20) that give the church a proper basis to grow and develop and become the **perfect man** of Ephesians 4:13.

The mature church is represented by the five wise virgins in Matthew 25:1-13. This glorious church will be fully anointed with the oil of the Holy Spirit; her lamps will be burning brightly in a dark world given over to the anti-Christ. This church is prepared and ready for the coming of the Lord!

This is the church that understands the mystery of the body of Christ (Eph.3:6) that is made up of Jew and Gentile, together, as joint heirs. Jesus Himself “*has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation so as to create one new man from the two, making peace*” Eph.2:14-16.

This is the church that receives the deeper wisdom of God “*which God ordained before the ages for our glory*” (1Cor.2:6-7). It is this corporate church, walking in maturity, that receives “*the mind of Christ*” (v.16).

There is much teaching in the Scripture on the mature church, the church that is to grow up into perfection because that is God’s goal for us. Paul says that his major work as a minister was to **preach Christ**, “*warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus*” Col.1:28.

Jesus Christ Gave Everything for His Church

Jesus Christ, the Son of God, went through the humiliation of being incarnate as a man, “*making Himself of no reputation*”, and suffering death, “*even death on a cross*” (Phil.2:7-8),

in order to gain for Himself the church. ***“He is the Saviour of the body” Eph.5:23.*** Furthermore, ***“He descended into the lower parts of the earth” Eph.4:8-10*** [into hell itself **1Pet.3:18-19**] and then ascended on high, taking captivity captive. Through His descension and His ascension, Jesus gained an awesome cosmic victory that changed history forever and, as a result of His redemptive work, He was able to deliver to His church the **fivefold ministry gift of apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor and teacher**. Without these gifts the church could not be brought to maturity and perfection. The role of the five-fold ministry gift is manifold in producing the mature body of Christ ***“from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love” Eph.4:16.***

This is the mature body that the LORD is bringing forth in the earth, and He is doing it by releasing the gift of apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor and teacher

God is building the Church

Jesus said in **Matthew16:18 “I will build My church”**. God is building a house [temple]. The temple is made up of living stones; we, the saints, are the living stones. We are being built into a spiritual house for God to indwell (**Eph.2:22**) in which we, as priests, offer up spiritual sacrifices to God (**1 Pet.2:5**).

The building is built upon the foundation of firstly apostles, then prophets (**Eph.2:20**). These are under-girding ministries that hold up the rest of the building, connecting the church to the foundational rock ‘who is Christ’ (**1Cor.3:11**). Without the apostles and prophets the building will not be built according to the scriptural pattern. It is the ‘**apostles’ doctrine**’ that the church is to devote itself to (**Acts 2:42**).

*The apostle lays the foundation,
oversees the building of the church
and brings it to completion.*

Zerubbabel is a type of the Apostle

To understand the ministry of the apostle we need to look at the ministry of Zerubbabel who was the governor of Jerusalem. He was charged with rebuilding the temple of God at the time of restoration after the Babylonian exile.

“The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this temple” Zech. 4:9. Zerubbabel had laid a foundation so he is a type of the apostle; he is building the house of God. The verse goes on to say ***“His hands shall also finish it, then you will know that the LORD of hosts has sent Me to you”***. This is speaking of the ministry of the apostle. When God raises up an apostle, He gives to that apostle the master plan of how to build the church. Paul says of himself that he was a **“master builder”** (**1Cor.3:10**); that he had been given by God the plans to build the church. Paul reveals many of those plans to us in the book of **Ephesians**.

Built by the Spirit’s Power

In **Zechariah 4:6**, the angel gives the interpretation of the vision that the LORD had shown Zechariah, ***“This is the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel; not by might, nor by power but by My Spirit, says the LORD of hosts.”*** This is the word of the LORD to the man who is charged with the job of rebuilding the temple. The work can only be done through the anointing

of the Holy Spirit. The word of the LORD to Zerubbabel is, ‘it is not by human strength or might; it is not by human power or ability; it is by the Holy Spirit, by revelation, by the anointing of God, that this church will be built.’

Built by Grace

Zerubbabel had been charged by God, through the prophet Haggai and the prophet Zechariah, to build the house of God. This is the builder, the apostle who is to lay the foundation, to oversee the building of the walls and to bring forth the capstone with shouts of “**grace, grace to it!**” (v.7). It is built by grace through faith, “it is the gift of God, not of works least any man should boast” (**Eph.2:8-9**). It is “**by grace and apostleship**” (**Rom.1:5**) that the church will be built. God is revealing the master plan of how to build the church in these last days and the grace is given to the apostles to make known the pattern and to oversee the building of the church.

Remember that Paul calls himself a wise master builder (**1Cor.3:10**) and Jesus specifically proclaimed to Peter (**Matt.16:18-19**) that he would be a foundation stone in the church that Jesus was building upon the ‘rock’. As a foundation apostle, he received the keys of the kingdom of heaven. Peter reveals some more of the master plan for the building of the church in his epistle (1Pet.2:4-10). Like Paul, Peter the apostle was a wise master builder.

Built by Faith

“**Who are you, O great mountain? Before Zerubbabel you shall become a plain!**”

Zech.4:7. The word of God says to Zerubbabel that the mountain of opposition will be overcome. This prophecy shows that the apostle has the authority to deal with all opposition to God’s purposes. In **2Corinthians 10:3-6** Paul tells us that “**the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.**” This is how the mountain of religious opposition is dealt with in the apostolic church.

Isaiah 40:4, speaking of the coming ministry of John the Baptist, says “**every valley shall be exalted and every mountain and hill brought low**”, to make straight the way of the LORD. How did John the Baptist ‘bring mountains down’? It was the ministry of the word, declaring the very things God had revealed to him. This is similar to the “**power over nations**” that Jesus promised to overcomers (**Rev. 2:26-27**). He said that the church would receive the same power that He had received from the Father, to “**rule [shepherd] them with a rod of iron**”.

Jesus said “**For assuredly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, ‘Be removed and be cast into the sea,’ and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that those things he says will be done, he will have whatever he says**” Mk.11:23. This is faith in action.

*Have the faith of God and you will move mountains.
That is the faith that will build the church.*

Jesus is the Apostle of God, building the Church

The **hands of the one who laid the foundation of the temple will complete it**. Jesus Christ is the one who has laid the foundation of God’s church! Jesus Christ is the one who is going to finish the work! How is Jesus going to do this? **Through apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers that He has given** (**Eph.4:11**). When the church is

complete everyone will say, ‘truly this is the church of the living God.’ ‘Look at this awesome, worldwide church that has been raised up out of every nation, out of every tribe and tongue, every people group, to show forth the glory of God in Christ.’

The Apostolic Restoration Begins

“For who has despised the day of small things?” Zech. 4:10a. The work has to start with foundations, with small things! The Welsh revival of 1904-5 faltered largely due to the lack of five-fold ministers and especially apostles and prophets, but even true pastors and teachers were very scarce. In the aftermath of the Welsh revival there was an apostolic/prophetic move among some brethren who recognized that both of these ministries were necessary for the building of the church. A movement arose that gave recognition to apostles and prophets and other five-fold ministers. This movement exists in Australia today as a Pentecostal denomination which still gives recognition to all the five-fold ministries. This movement was as a forerunner and only became known to a small number of people.

A more significant birthing of the apostolic and prophetic happened in the Latter Rain movement that began in 1948 with a revival in which the Lord restored much of the deeper wisdom and teaching of the Scriptures. It was through the Latter Rain revival that brethren began to understand the Tabernacle of Moses, the Feasts of Israel, the order of Melchizedek, the laying on of hands for baptism of the Holy Spirit [before this the Pentecostals waited in ‘tarrying’ meetings for the Holy Spirit to come]. Many other truths and ministries were restored at that time. It is interesting to note that the earlier apostolic/prophetic move from the Welsh revival rejected the Latter Rain movement as did the other Pentecostal denominations.

When we began Revival Ministries Australia in 1998, the first teaching manual we were led to write was ‘Foundations of our Faith’ based on the six elementary principles of Christ from **Hebrews 6:1-2**. For the first five years of Revival Ministries Australia, 1998-2002, we were generally working underground, laying foundations and learning the apostolic ministry. We were very aware that this was where God had us and we learnt ‘not to despise the day of small things’.

The Plumb Line is the Word of God

“For these seven rejoice to see the plumb line in the hand of Zerubbabel” Zech.4:10b. The ‘seven’ represent the Holy Spirit. The seven eyes are the seven spirits of God (**Rev.5:6**). Jesus is the anointed one who received the Holy Spirit without measure (Jn.3:34). The Holy Spirit of God rejoices to see the plumb line in the hand of Zerubbabel. A plumb line is used to check the straightness of a wall. It is something to measure up to. We are to measure up to the word of God. **The plumb line is the word of God in the hands of Zerubbabel, a type of the apostle.** The last days church is to measure up to the word of God. When the people of God allow themselves to be judged by the word, and line up with the Scripture, and not fall short of the glory of God any longer through sin, then the Holy Spirit rejoices and the anointing increases. When the people of God allow their church structure and practices to be judged by the word and to line up with Scripture, then the glorious church will emerge.

Ministry of the Prophet

The **Prophet** works alongside the apostle, strengthening the foundations and keeping the church on track. The ministry of the prophet is to guide the church to perfection. The prophet brings revelation of the word of God to the church. When the ministry of the apostle and the

prophet are raised up and working together, as in the case of Paul and Silas (**Acts 15:40**), then the church will have a strong foundation and be able to go on to perfection. It is to the apostles and prophets that God gives the revelation of the mystery by the Spirit (**Eph.3:5**).

The ministries of apostles and prophets are foundational; it is these ministries that bring the church to perfection through the preaching of “*the unsearchable riches of Christ, to make all see what is the fellowship of the mystery*” Eph.3:8-9.

Ministry of the Evangelist

The **Evangelist** goes out into the quarry of the world to dig out some new stones to make suitable building stones for the walls of the church (**1Pet.2:5**). The evangelist is often a very public ministry. For example, the whole city of Samaria gave attention to Philip’s preaching (**Acts 8**). The evangelist digs out stones who become living stones by being born again, and he brings them into the church. The walls of the church are called ‘walls of salvation’ (**Isa.26:1**). The evangelist preaches salvation and souls get saved, and then they become built into the walls of the temple.

Notice that Philip, as an evangelist, baptized! Both Peter and Paul often did the work of the evangelist preaching the gospel in regions where it had not been heard. Both Peter and Paul commanded baptism immediately and also ministered the baptism of the Holy Spirit to the new believers. There needs to be a return to biblical evangelism with scriptural emphasis placed on water baptism as the vital, required response of those who have been convicted by the word.

Ministry of the Pastor

The **Pastor** takes the new stones and begins to shape them, polish them and fit them together. The first important ministry of the pastor is to nurture the new believers by laying the foundations of the faith (**Heb.6:1-2**). New born babes need to be fed the milk of the word so that they can grow in salvation (**1Pet.2:2**). The second important ministry of the pastor is to “*feed My sheep*” (**Jn.21:17**). A pastor must be able to teach the word both to babes in Christ and all believers, ‘making disciples’ (**Matt.28:19-20**). The third important ministry is to pastor/shepherd God’s people which includes overseeing their souls, providing guidance and protection. Paul told the elders at Ephesus “*to shepherd the church of God*” (**Acts 20:28**) and Peter says, “*shepherd the flock of God which is among you serving as overseers*” (**1Pet.5:2**).

The pastor brings restoration to the people of God. The first verses of the shepherd’s psalm illustrate this beautifully: “*The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want*” Ps.23:1. The pastor gives the Christian the provision of God’s word and God’s love. “*He makes me to lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside the still waters*” v.2. The pastor feeds the sheep with fresh food; he provides a safe place for the believers, where they can be nurtured and grow. Their souls are restored!

The Ministry of the Teacher

The **Teacher**’s ministry is to ground all the believers in the word of God; to teach the word “*precept upon precept, line upon line*” (**Is.28:10**). The teacher feeds the word to the nurtured Christian so that the disciple graduates to the solid food and is encouraged to go on to maturity. Up until now, many teachers have only found expression for their ministry in Bible Colleges and schools. However, that is not the scriptural pattern. The Scripture is clear: the teachers are those who have been gifted by Christ with the ascension gift ministry of teaching and who have been well taught by the apostles, having come to know the revelation of the mystery.

At SHILOH, here in Toowoomba, we have seen this reality unfolding. One of our pastors has given himself to the apostles' doctrine, fully embracing the apostolic revelation, and is now functioning powerfully in the teaching ministry. In 2006, we have a Bible School which operates one day per week, with an average of ten disciples attending. These brethren are being trained to teach the word. This is done by teaching the word to them and giving them opportunity to teach the word.

In these days of restoration, teachers are being raised in the local churches and the teaching of the word is growing and multiplying.

The Ministries Working in Order

The apostle and the prophet lay the foundation: a strong foundation in the word of God. On that foundation the evangelist is strengthened to go out into the world and preach salvation and many souls are saved. The evangelist knows he can bring the new converts to a strong, properly founded church, where there is a team of pastor/elders to nurture the new Christians. The new Christians need to be fed the 'milk of the word' and be fully established in the foundational principles of the faith. Then the teacher [often one of the local elders] grounds the believers in the word of God, discipling them through the word of God by teaching the precepts and commandments of the word. The saints are then ready to be trained and equipped by the apostles and prophets so they can be raised up into ministry. Ministry includes being able to teach the word, ministering the gifts of the Holy Spirit and moving in the anointing and power of God in ministry to others. A whole new generation of ministry can be raised up: a new generation of apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers.

As we return to and restore the apostolic pattern clearly shown in the Scriptures, we realize that the elders of the local churches [the local church being the city-wide church] have been appointed by apostles. Therefore the elders [pastors and teachers] have an ongoing relationship with an apostle. When the church is functioning according to the biblical pattern, all of the five-fold ministers find their place and the full expression of ministry that works towards "*the perfecting of the saints*" and "*the building up of the body of Christ until we all come to the unity of the faith, to the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man*" Eph.4:12-13.

Chapter One

A CHANGE OF LEADERSHIP

Leadership and church governance is in the hands
of apostles, overall, and in the hands of elders
in the local towns and cities.

The authority given to apostles is not dependent
upon man but upon Christ Himself who
calls and appoints the apostles.

Eliakim is a type of the apostle, God-raised,
God-appointed and God-anointed and
the leader able to fulfill the calling and
purpose of God.

It is God who calls and raises up the apostles
and the apostolic leadership for His church.
"God has set in the church first apostles"

The New Leader ~ Isaiah 22:21

*"I will clothe him with your robe
and strengthen him with your belt;
I will commit your responsibility into his hand.
He shall be a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem"*

From Shebna to Eliakim – Isaiah 22:15-25

"Thus says the Lord God of Hosts: 'Go, proceed to this steward, to Shebna, who is over the house and say: What have you here, and whom have you here, that you have hewn a sepulchre on high, who carves a tomb for himself in a rock?'

Indeed, the LORD will throw you away violently, O mighty man, and will surely seize you. He will surely turn violently and toss you like a ball into a large country; there you shall die, and there your glorious chariots shall be the shame of your master's house. So I will drive you out of your office and from your position I will pull you down.

Then it shall be in that day, that I will call My servant Eliakim, the son of Hilkiah; I will clothe him with your robe and strengthen him with your belt; I will commit your responsibility into his hand. He shall be a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem and to the house of Judah.

The key of the house of David I will lay on his shoulder; so he shall open, and no one shall shut; and he shall shut and no one shall open. I will fasten him as a peg in a secure place, and he will become a glorious throne to his father's house.

They will hang on him all the glory of his father's house, the offspring and the posterity, all vessels of small quantity, from the cups to all the pitchers.

In that day, says the LORD of hosts, the peg that is fastened in the secure place will be removed and be cut down and fall, and the burden that was on it will be cut off; for the LORD has spoken."

Who Holds the Key of David?

In **Revelation 3:7** our Lord Jesus is introduced as "**He who is Holy, He who is true, He who has the key of David, He who opens and no one shuts, and shuts and no one opens.**" In this letter, Jesus is speaking to the church in Philadelphia and He reveals to the church that He has "**Set before them an open door**". Jesus is identified in **Hebrews 3:1** as "**the Apostle ... of our confession.**" **It is Jesus the Apostle who holds the key of David.** In these days of restoration, the church is once again being called upon to "**consider the Apostle Christ Jesus**"; something the church has not done seriously for maybe 1,800 years. Jesus, as the Apostle, holds the key of David and remember that Jesus gave "**the keys of the kingdom of heaven**" to Peter, having already acknowledged that Peter was a foundation stone in the building of the church of Jesus Christ (**Matt.16:18-19**). Peter had been called by Jesus to be an apostle earlier (Matt.10). Jesus, the Apostle, gave to Peter, an apostle and a representative of all apostles, keys of the kingdom giving the apostles authority to open and shut. Therefore apostles hold the key of David as given by Jesus.

Since the mid 1990's the Lord Jesus has been restoring the ministry of the apostle to His church worldwide. It began in a small and largely unknown way but, by 2006, the word 'apostle' and considerations of the reality and impact of this ministry are having an effect worldwide even if, for some, it is a stance of active rejection. In the midst of this, the Lord is effecting a change of leadership, '**from Shebna to Eliakim**'.

The Old Leadership

The church at large has been led by senior pastors, by bishops, by successful ministers, by some evangelists who have become famous, even by some with healing gifts or miracles. Some of these successful ministers appear to be more like chief executive officers, with business and entrepreneurial skills, than like the apostles of the New Testament. Denominational churches are generally led by far-away administrators and bureaucrats, often with their own personal and political agendas that are opposed to the gospel and the word of God. In Australia, one of the major denominations, in terms of numbers of members, is led by a church career bureaucrat who supports homosexuals for ordination to the ministry. For years, he and others had been skillfully politicking in that denomination to the point where, in 2003, the triennial conference of the denomination officially accepted the ordination of homosexual ministers and now some of their parishes have so-called ministers with their same sex partners in residence. While this is an extreme case, it highlights the tragedy that can result from the church moving away from and denying the ministry of apostles and not receiving the apostles' doctrine.

New Testament Leadership

Most churches do not talk about biblical leadership as set down in the New Testament. Senior leaders take up the office of senior pastor or are ordained as bishops exercising authority over one or many churches. Denominational boards and committees' rule over denominations, claiming to be the legitimate leadership of the church. There is no biblical mandate for such rule.

*In the New Testament -
leadership and church governance is in the
hands of apostles overall, and in the hands of
elders in the local towns and cities.*

In presenting an understanding of the body of Christ, (**1Cor.12:12-30**), Paul clearly states that “***God has appointed these in the church: first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, after that ...***” v28. This is a clear statement of the order of God’s appointment of church leadership. Very soon after the writing period of the New Testament Scriptures, the church that emerged began to see individual bishops raised in rulership over the church of a city and these bishops, usurping the authority of the apostles, began to impose the bishopric as the leadership authority in the church.

Church Colonialism

Imperialistic colonialism has ceased on the world stage. Now there are many independent nation states that were formerly colonies of powerful European nations. However, Christian denominations have continued a form of church colonialism with numerous denominated groups going into the same city or region and planting separate churches. These groups win adherents to their particular doctrine and organized church practice, establishing themselves separately from other church groups who are established in the same city. Generally, the headquarters of these denominated groups are in faraway capital cities. As a result, there are institutionalized divisions in the body of Christ. Many Christians are no longer satisfied with this arrangement and God certainly has never been satisfied. It is time to reform the church in terms of leadership and governance. Only then can true unity become a reality in each city or region.

Restoration of Biblical Leadership & Governance

As the Lord effects the restoration of Biblical leadership and God once again is appointing “***first apostles, second prophets, third teachers***”, the church is being restored to the New Testament pattern.

*The authority given to apostles is not dependent
upon man but upon Christ Himself who
calls and appoints the apostles.*

As apostles are raised by Christ, He gives to them the authority as represented in the ‘key of David’. That authority surpasses, supersedes and transcends the authority of the ‘bishop’ as representing man’s appointment to church leadership.

This change of leadership is a most vital issue in the life of the church today. Without the restoration of biblical leadership and governance, the church will continue to miss its vital calling. It has been called to preach the kingdom of God and the things concerning Jesus (**Acts 8:12**), impacting the world, bringing a mighty harvest of souls to the kingdom of God, preparing the church for the Lord’s return and preparing the saints to rule and reign with Christ in the earth.

God is Initiating a Change of Leadership

In **Isaiah 22:15-25**, there is very instructive teaching concerning the change of leadership from Shebna, the steward, to Eliakim, the man God raised. Shebna is a type of the leader raised by man such as the moderator voted into office, the bishop ordained by men, the senior pastor who assumes leadership etc.

*Eliakim is a type of the apostle,
God-raised, God-appointed and God-anointed,
and thus the leader able to fulfill
the calling and purpose of God*

God is Speaking to Church Leadership

If you are functioning in ministry and church leadership today, do you know the calling and appointment of God, or have you only been placed in ministry and leadership by the choice of man? If the latter is true, it does not mean that you are ‘not called of God’ but it does mean that you have submitted your calling to man’s institutional ways and, as a result, you will never be released into the one-hundred-fold ministry that Christ has ordained for you.

“Thus says the Lord GOD of hosts; ‘Go, proceed to this steward, to Shebna, who is over the house, and say” Isa.22:15. The word of the Lord is coming to the prophet Isaiah and it is addressed to Shebna who is the steward over the house. The house referred to is the house of Judah and the city of Jerusalem. This man was the chief steward in the reign of King Hezekiah. He was man-appointed [by the king] and God was not happy with his leadership or with the fruit of his ministry. What is a ‘steward’ in the context of the church today? The steward is represented by the ‘bishop’, or the administrator, or the ‘pastor’, the man in charge of the local church, the man in charge of churches in the city or in charge of a whole denomination. This steward in the contemporary context has been ordained by men, elected by men or, in some cases, is self-appointed.

God is Judging the Works of Church Leadership

“What have you here, and whom have you here, that you have hewn a sepulcher here, as he who hews himself a sepulcher on high, who carves a tomb for himself in a rock?” Isa.22:16. The Lord is asking two questions, ‘Who are you?’ and ‘What have you been doing?’ The steward is answerable to God for what he has been doing. God is saying to this steward, ‘You have been building something for yourself, making a name for yourself, so you will be remembered after you die.’ Instead of being a steward looking after God’s house, he has been building something for himself. So often we see the successful local church constructing an ornate new worship centre with all sorts of facilities for the comfort of the worshipers; or we see the senior leader growing wealthy and amassing private things unto himself. Meanwhile, the command to preach the gospel to every person (**Mk.16:15-16**), and to go to all nations to make disciples (**Matt.28:19-20**) is ignored.

There are many illustrations of this from the past in Europe. Large cathedrals, built by man, sometimes taking many decades to build and costing men their lives, are simply monuments to man, empty shells, **tombs** [sepulchers]! Many people visit these places but they do not meet with God; they merely admire the architecture and artwork that give glory to man. Such buildings were built by ‘stewards’ [bishops] who were meant to be overseeing and shepherding the house of God, that is, building the lives of people to know and reflect the glory of Christ. But they have stumbled and focused on their own work, their own ‘house’, seeking to make a name for themselves, even a name that will remain after they have gone.

God Judges the Leadership of the Church

“Indeed, the LORD will throw you away violently, O mighty man, and will surely seize you. He will surely turn violently and toss you like a ball into a large country; there you shall die, and there your glorious chariots shall be the shame of your masters house” Isa.22:17-18. God is saying that the ‘things’ that this steward has gathered for himself will be taken from him. The steward will lose his life. The things the steward has built will actually become a thing of shame and will not bring glory to the master. Jesus warned us, “**if we try to save our life we will lose it.**” Paul said that there are vessels [ministers], “**some for honour and some for dishonour**” (**2Tim.2:20**).

This steward made the mistake of trying to build something for himself. God called it a sepulcher, which is a burial tomb. That is what God thinks of our works. Many today are following the example of this steward Shebna. They are serving a master, albeit they assume that God is that master! They are building modern day cathedrals; they are driving luxury cars in third-world countries; Pentecostal bishops are wearing the purple shirts of Roman bishops and one is left wondering: ‘where are the apostles?’ ‘Where is the church that Jesus is building?’

“So I will drive you out of your office, and from your position he will pull you down” Isa.22:19. The Lord is going to remove this steward from his office, because the things that he has been doing are not pleasing to God. It is God who raises up and it is God who casts down.

There is to be a Change of Leadership

“Then it shall be in that day, that I will call My servant Eliakim the son of Hilkiah” Isa.22:20. Eliakim means ‘God of raising’. Hilkiah means ‘portion of Jah [Yahweh/LORD]’. God is raising up a new leadership: God is saying, “I will call”; God says ‘I will raise the one whom I have chosen – My portion.’

*It is God who calls and raises up the apostles
and the apostolic leadership for His church -
“God has set in the church first apostles”.*

A change of leadership is happening. The old style of leadership which has been building a name for itself is being pulled down, put aside. God is raising up those who will lift up His name in the earth. The day is coming, and now is, when God is calling His servants – the ones He is raising to be the leaders of His church.

Saul, the People’s Choice - David, God’s Choice

In **1 Samuel 8-10**, Saul is raised up out of the will of the people to be their king. He is as a steward over God’s nation, Israel. But he proved to be unreliable; he compromised; he refused to obey God’s instructions; he chose to do things his own way. He had a fear of man, which resulted in him making an unlawful sacrifice rather than obeying God (**1Sam.13**). God replaced Saul with the one of His choice, David. The transition from Saul to David is similar to the change of leadership in **Isaiah 22**. God is replacing the ones who will not obey Him with the ones He chooses, who will obey His word and fulfill His will.

The New Leader

“I will clothe him with your robe and strengthen him with your belt; I will commit your responsibility into his hand. He shall be a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem” Isaiah 22:21. There are four things to note from this verse: clothed with the robe, strengthened with a belt, received responsibility into the hand, and to be a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

Clothed with the Robe

The new leader is going to be clothed with the robe. This is the mantle that covers and identifies the chosen leader. Jacob identified his son, Joseph, as one specially chosen by placing upon him **“a tunic of colours”** (**Gen.37:3**). When the ‘lost son’ returned to his father’s house, the father received him as his son and said **“bring out the best robe and put it on him”** (**Lu.15:22**). The robe identifies the son as belonging to, and being one with, the father. It is interesting that bishops, in the development of ‘church’, have generally gone the way of dressing or robing themselves in man-made religious garments that draw attention to their office

externally, but they have not known the anointing of Christ which covers.

There is a **new covering** coming over the church; no longer the covering of the steward/the bishop, no longer the denominational or institutional covering, but the covering is the covering of Christ Himself. This comes through the One that God raised! Jesus is the one whom God raised. Christ is the Head of the church and no other. All of the saints are members of the body and when the church is in apostolic order [led by apostles] then the covering of Christ's anointing is real and effectual.

Eliakim is a type of Christ, but he is also a type of the apostolic leadership that God is raising up in these last days. God is putting this mantle on a new leadership, which will prepare the church for the **covering of glory** that God has promised for "**every dwelling place of Mt Zion and above her assemblies**" Isa.4:5. God has promised that the last days church will be fully covered with His glory "**a cloud and smoke by day and the shining of a flaming fire by night**" Isa.4:6. It is the last days church, set and functioning in apostolic order, that will be **robbed** by God in Christ.

Even as Jesus trained twelve whom He chose to be apostles, and later the Holy Spirit raised a new generation of apostles in the New Testament church beginning with Paul and Barnabas in **Acts 13**, so today God is raising a new generation of apostles to lead the last days church. This is the new leadership!

Strengthened with the Belt

God will **strengthen** this new leader with a belt. This is the belt of truth (**Eph.6:14**). **John 17:17** says "**your word is truth**". Peter tells us to "**gird up the loins of your mind**" (**1Pet.1:13**). Loins are girded with a belt. It is our minds that need to be strengthened with the belt of truth. We do this by having the word of God in us and believing what the word of God says. Apostles come with the covering of the Lord Jesus Christ and authority and freedom to speak the word of truth, not under the control and restrictions put in place by man. Apostles proclaim the "**whole counsel of God**" (**Acts 20:27**). Peter said after the appointment of the first deacons in **Acts 6:4**, that the apostles should "**give themselves continually to prayer and the ministry of the word.**" The result of functioning apostolic leadership, as recorded in **Acts 6**, was "**Then the word of God spread, and the number of disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were obedient to the faith**" v7. It is essential for the belt of truth to be placed on the ones that God is raising so that there will be a full restoration of the word and counsel of God in our day.

Commit Responsibility into the Hand

Responsibility is to be committed into the hand of the new leader. The hand represents authority and also it is by the hand that the work is done, speaking of giftings. God is saying that He is going to take the responsibility out of the hand of the existing leadership and give it into the hand of the ones He raises. In **Exodus 28:41** [NASBible] there are two Hebrew words [SC# 4390 *to fill* and 3027 *the hand*] translated 'ordain' meaning 'to fill the hand'. God will give His authority into the hand of those whom He knows will obey Him. The authority that the steward had [that is, the old leadership] is being given by God to the apostle [the new leadership]. It is God who raises up leadership, commissions them and ordains them by imparting to them His authority and His ability through giftings to do the work.

A Father to the Inhabitants of Jerusalem

The one that God raises will be a '**father**', no longer a steward but a father. There is a

change happening here: church leaders are no longer going to be administrators or overseers [bishops]; they are going to be fathers, apostles, ones chosen by God not the ones chosen by men. Apostle means ‘sent one’. Eliakim means ‘God of raising’.

Apostles are ones that Jesus calls, raises and sends.

The apostle Paul told the Corinthians that though they “***might have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet not many fathers; for in Christ Jesus, I have begotten you through the gospel***” **1Cor.4:15**. Most in the churches today do not have a father. World-wide, the church has been fatherless but, since God has been raising apostles again, He has restored fathers and the church is truly becoming relational as befits a body relating to our head, Jesus Christ.

The Key of David is given to the one God raises

“***The key of the house of David I will lay on his shoulder; so he shall open and no one shall shut; and he shall shut, and no one shall open***” **Isa.22:22**. This is the verse quoted from in **Revelation 3:7**, and it is Jesus who holds the key of David. He is the one who opens and no one shuts and shuts and no one can open.

What is the key of David? It is the key that the steward of the house of Judah held. The steward was the man who represented the king and who oversaw the work of the kingdom. Shebna represented King Hezekiah, having been appointed by him, and he held the key that gave him the king’s authority. The key is to be taken from Shebna, the steward, and given to Eliakim, the one God is raising. The steward is replaced by the apostle.

The key is similar to the signet ring used by kings as the sign of their authority. Pharaoh gave his ring to Joseph and it gave him the authority to open and to shut, to command all of Egypt, her people and economy (**Gen.41:42**). In **Haggai 2:23** the Lord says to Zerubbabel the governor [the church/house of God builder], “***I will ... make you like a signet ring; for I have chosen you.***” God is acknowledging the apostle as the one who wears the ring of authority. The ring of authority is similar to the key of David. When the lost son came home, the father put a ring on his finger also. The father was acknowledging him as his son and saying, ‘you have a full inheritance, and this ring gives you the same authority as me.’

Jesus holds the Key of David

Jesus was the one who was given that authority by God (**Matt.28:18**). He holds the key of David, but He gave keys of the kingdom of heaven to the apostle Peter (**Matt. 16:18-19**) telling him “***whatever you bind [shut] on earth will be bound in heaven and whatever you loose [open] on earth will be loosed in heaven.***” This is the authority that Jesus has given to His apostles. Elijah had this authority to open and shut heaven. He was able to say to King Ahab, “***As the LORD God of Israel lives, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years except at my word***” **1Ki.17:1**. He had the authority to shut up the heavens. This is the same authority that Jesus gives to apostles. On the basis of His authority, Jesus sent the apostles to “***make disciples of all nations***” (**Matt.28:19**).

Peter, the Apostle, was given Keys

Jesus said to Peter, “***You are Peter, [a large stone or a small rock] and on this rock*** [meaning a large rock – speaking of Christ Himself] ***I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.***” Peter is set in place by Jesus as a foundation stone upon which Jesus will build the church. Jesus then gave to the apostle the keys to open and shut and said that nothing would stop His church from being built. Peter is an apostolic leader, appointed

by Jesus, to found the apostolic church. Peter is a foundation stone, as an apostle, set upon the Rock Himself. Remember that Paul later says the church is built upon "***the foundation of apostles and prophets***" (**Eph.2:20**), and Peter himself wrote that we are to come to Jesus "***a living stone***" and "***as living stones***" to be "***built up a spiritual house***" **1Pet.2:4-5**.

Peter was given the keys to see the kingdom of God manifest in the earth through the church, as an apostle appointed and commissioned by Jesus Christ.

Notice that the keys of the kingdom are specifically given to Peter immediately after Jesus has proclaimed that the ***gates of Hades [hell]*** will not prevail against the church. Keys and gates are both speaking of a similar reality. Gates represent the place of authority and keys lock or unlock the gates. At that time, one could say that the kingdom of heaven was still shut but **Peter was being given the keys to open the gates of heaven and every attempt by the devil to stop that happening would be unsuccessful. The church is the vehicle whereby God has ordained for His kingdom to be manifest.** Since the cross and resurrection, Jesus holds "***the keys of Hades and of Death***" (**Rev.1:18**). Jesus was giving Peter the keys of the kingdom of heaven, knowing that He was going to wrest the keys of hell and death from the devil through the cross.

The foundations of the church of Jesus Christ were properly laid by the twelve apostles whom Jesus personally trained and appointed, and by the apostles whom Jesus called and gifted after His ascension (**Eph.4:8-11**). The same keys that Peter received were given to all the apostles and Paul demonstrates in **Acts 19**, and in other places, that he had the keys to manifest the kingdom of God in establishing the church of Jesus Christ properly, according to the Scriptural pattern.

God is raising a new leadership for His church in these days. Shebna, the steward, represents the old leadership that has been in place for decades in the charismatic/Pentecostal churches and for centuries in some of the older denominational churches. Eliakim represents the new leadership that God is raising, a leadership by apostles who will be 'fathers' to His people and who will preach apostolic doctrine and practice sound doctrine.

The Effect of the New Leadership

"I will fasten him as a peg in a secure place, and he will become a glorious throne to his father's house" **Isa22:23**. When apostolic leadership is back in place, it will be like a secure peg which will bring **security** to God's people by providing a proper foundation for faith and practice. Because the apostles are in place, the church will "***become the glorious throne to his father's house.***" The church will begin to be the glorious church it is meant to be, so that the throne of the Lord Jesus Christ, the kingship of Jesus Christ, will be revealed in the earth. Jesus is to be enthroned in the midst of His church. This is how John saw Him "***in the midst of the seven lampstands***" (**Rev.1:12-16**). The seven lampstands represent the completed church [seven-fold].

Through the preaching of the "***unsearchable riches of Christ***", which is the full message of the gospel of the kingdom of God, the Lord Jesus Christ will be exalted. It is through the church knowing "***the fellowship of the mystery***", knowing fully what it means to be "***in Christ***" and who Christ is in us, that the Lordship of Jesus Christ will be made known to the principalities and powers in the heavenly realm, to the people on the earth and to the inhabitants of hell (**Phil.2:9-11**).

It is time to make Jesus King; it is time to set things in order; it is time for the church to receive a new leadership according to God's order – “***first apostles, second prophets, third teachers***” (**1Cor.12:28**). It is time for the church to be sanctified and cleansed so that we can be presented “***a glorious church***” (**Eph.5:26-27**).

The Glory shall be Revealed

“They will hang on him all the glory of his father’s house, the offspring and the posterity, all vessels of small quantity, from the cups to all the pitchers” Isa.22:24. When the apostles are raised up, the ones who represent Christ, then there will be ‘fathers’ in the house, and ‘fathers’ beget ‘sons’. God will remove the ones who have been raised by man as stewards, bishops or administrators. When I say God will remove these ones, this happens in one of two ways: either the person in the office of steward or bishop receives the revelation of the apostolic, receives the adoption into sonship and begins to function and flow in apostolic ministry; or the person refuses to accept the deeper and fuller teaching of the word of God and gives their loyalty to the institution or the system, thus missing out on apprehending the higher call of God and coming into maturity.

We have witnessed a bishop, the overseer of many churches, who after one day, in an apostolic seminar where I was teaching, resign from the man-made office of bishop because he had received an apostolic anointing. This brother experienced a radical change in his life and is now walking in sonship [the maturity brought about by the spirit of adoption] and in apostolic ministry, properly leading the pastors and overseers as a father among all the churches for which he is responsible.

When the church has been set in order and apostles are in place, then all the glory of the Father will be revealed in Jesus, who will be in the midst of His church. Every member from the smallest [least significant] to the greatest will reveal the Father’s glory. Paul teaches us that in the body “***those members of the body which we think to be less honorable, on these we bestow greater honor***” **1Cor.12:23**. Paul also teaches us to build with “***gold, silver and precious stones***” because the fire will test the work (**1Cor.3:12**), and Paul exhorts us to strive to be a vessel of gold or silver (**2Tim.2:20-21**).

Without Apostles the Church is cut off

“In that day, says the LORD of hosts, the peg that is fastened in the secure place will be removed and be cut down and fall, and the burden that was on it will be cut off; for the LORD has spoken” Isa.22:25. If apostolic leadership is not in place, everything falls down. The church will remain broken and divided while it is administrated by stewards rather than led by God-raised apostolic fathers. The church that is in the world today, despite all the good things that have happened by the grace of the Lord and the anointing of the Holy Spirit, does not adequately represent Jesus Christ and is yet to come into His glory, even as a remnant.

God is Adopting His Church to Walk in Sonship

At the beginning of Jesus’ ministry, at His baptism, the voice of the Father spoke and said, “***This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased***” **Matt.3:17**. This was the beginning of Jesus walking in the adoption [placed by the Spirit in that place of maturity to do the Father’s will]. When Jesus was coming to the end of His ministry, He went up on a high mountain with Peter, James and John, and was transfigured before them in glory. The voice of the Father spoke again saying, “***This is My beloved Son. Hear Him!***” **Mk.9:7** Jesus was approved by the Father

to step into sonship at the beginning of His ministry. On the mount of Transfiguration, He was seen in all His glory and the Father gave instructions to the disciples to '***listen to Him***'. Jesus' short time in ministry saw Him complete His walk with God in the earth. He had come to perfection. All the glory of His Father was manifested in Him on the mount of Transfiguration. This did not happen at His baptism even though He received the Spirit of His Father without measure. Even so, the church at the end of the age [or at least a remnant company] is to walk in the fullness of sonship and it is through this remnant that the voice of the Father will be heard.

The Church is to Bear the Glory of Christ

God is raising up a new leadership so that the church can come to the place of maturity, bearing His glory. Who bears the glory? In **Zechariah 6:11-13** the LORD is giving instructions for Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest, to have a crown placed on his head, and then in **verse 13** the LORD says, "***He shall build the temple of the LORD. He shall bear the glory and shall sit and rule on His throne; so He shall be a priest on His throne***". Joshua is a priest being crowned as a king. Jesus fulfilled this prophecy and became the king/priest. Jesus bears the glory of the Father and the church is destined to bear the glory of Jesus which is the glory of the Father. Jesus demonstrated in His own ministry that even as He walked in the power of the Spirit and came to a place where the glory of God could manifest in Him [transfiguration], even so He is preparing a glorious bride church in the earth who will manifest His glory in the earth.

*When apostles are in place
the church is restored*

*Jesus will be enthroned
in the midst of His church*

The church will bear His glory!

Chapter Two

THE FINISHED WORK OF JESUS THE APOSTLE

A key understanding of the apostolic:
it is as we receive the one sent
that we receive the One who sends

Jesus' apostolic work, that the Father gave
Him, was to concentrate on twelve men
in terms of training them and
preparing them to be sent as apostles

The faith was first presented by apostles
and those, who believed the word of
the apostles, were to become one
and to continue in oneness

John 17:

v4 "I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which you have given me to do.

v6 I have manifested Your name to the men whom You have given Me out of the world.

v8 For I have given them the words which You have given Me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came forth from You; and they have believed that You sent Me.

v10 All Mine are Yours, and Yours are Mine, and I am glorified in them.

v11-12 Now I am no longer in the world, but these are in the world and I come to You. Holy Father, keep through Your name those whom You have given Me, that they may be one as We are. While I was with them in the world, I kept them in Your name.

v13 Now I come to You, and these things I speak in the world, that they may have My joy fulfilled in themselves.

v14 I have given them Your word and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world.

v17 Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth.

v18 As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world.

v20-21 I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; that they may all be one, as You Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they may also be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me.

v22-23 And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one: I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me."

Jesus the Apostle

"Therefore holy brethren partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our confession, Christ Jesus" Heb.3:1. This verse draws our attention to two vital aspects of the ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ: He is the Apostle and He is the High Priest. For 1800 years or more the church has been largely unmindful of Jesus the Apostle and the apostolic nature of the church. Despite the fact that the Creeds have said the church is apostolic,

they also said the church was catholic and most people who said the Creeds understood neither words. The Scripture says we are to ‘***consider the Apostle and High Priest of our confession***’. This word ‘confession’ is very important. It is made up of two Greek words: *homo* meaning the same, and *logeo* which comes from *logos* the word; *homologeo* literally means ‘*to speak the same thing*’. We are to know from the word of God that Jesus is the High Priest and we know that, as the High Priest, He offered up the perfect sacrifice of Himself on the cross, and that saves us. He continues forever as the High Priest, interceding for us at the throne of grace. We also need to know from the word that Jesus is the Apostle.

Jesus the Apostle of God is rarely spoken of and most brethren do not have a confession of Jesus the Apostle. What is an apostle?

*An apostle is one who is sent on behalf of another
to represent that one and to do the work
that he has been sent to do*

Jesus was sent from heaven by the Father to represent God and make Him known, and the work He was given to do was to prepare the building of the church, the house of God. The apostle is the master builder (**1Cor.3:10**). It is the apostolic ministry that works to raise up the other ministries and energise them to do the work of the ministry “***perfecting the saints and building up the body of Christ, until we all come ... to a perfect man***” Eph.4:12-13. Both the ministry of Apostle and the ministry of High Priest were completed in the earth by Jesus. This was fulfilling God’s plan.

In **John 19:28-30** Jesus “***knowing that all things were now accomplished***” declared “***It is finished***”, and then He died. What was finished?

*Jesus had completed the work of redemption
as High Priest by offering Himself on the cross.*

However in **John 17:4**, Jesus had made a similar statement and He was not referring to His redemptive work.

The context of **John 17** is of Jesus speaking with His disciples at the Last Supper [Passover meal] on the night He was betrayed. Jesus had been instructing His disciples of many things in regard to His coming death and resurrection. His teaching at the Last Supper began in **John 13** with the washing of the disciples’ feet.

Glorify Your Son

Finally before He leaves for the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus “***lifted up His eyes to heaven***” and spoke these words, “***Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You. As you have given Him authority over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as You have given Him***” Jn.17.1-2. Glory comes from the Father to the Son and, through the Son, it brings eternal life to the ones whom the Father gives. The Son glorifies the Father by bringing the gift of salvation to human beings, which happens at the new birth. When a soul becomes born again and receives Jesus, this brings glory to God. The very life of God has entered the person by the Spirit of God. Adam originally received life as a created being by receiving “***the breath of life***” (Gen.2:7). Now through Jesus having completed His work in the earth, both the High Priestly and the Apostolic work, man is able to receive “***eternal life***”.

“And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent” Jn.17:3. Eternal life is to know God in Jesus Christ. This word ‘know’ is ‘*epignosis*’ and means having a deep conviction, an inner knowing of who God is. We are to know the one who has been ‘sent’. This word sent is the word ‘*apostello*’ in the Greek. Jesus was the one sent by God; He was the apostle of God. It is Jesus the Apostle who is praying this prayer for the ones He has raised up and has prepared to be sent out into the world as apostles. He is saying that the apostles with Him had received eternal life because they had received Him.

A key understanding of the apostolic: it is as we receive the one sent that we receive the One who sends.

I have finished the work

In John 17:4, Jesus says ***“I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do.”*** What is the ‘finished work’ that Jesus is referring to here? It is not referring to His substitutionary work on the cross. We have already seen, in **John 19:30**, Jesus declaring the redemptive work finished. He is not referring to His redemptive work, which is the work of the High Priest, but He is referring to His apostolic work which was to raise the twelve apostles.

It is the apostolic ministry of Jesus that has been neglected in church history. In our day, God is restoring apostles for His church and through them is highlighting, again, Jesus as the Apostle. The major work of the apostle is to build the house of God [the church] and the way that God has chosen to build His house is through the ministry of apostles and then, in due course, through the other ministry gifts that He has given. We note that Jesus did not choose twelve prophets or twelve pastors to be the foundation ministry of His church and to be responsible for the building of the church, finally leading the church in its growth to perfection.

Jesus raised up a new ministry: the ministry of apostles.

Jesus' apostolic ministry was to twelve men

Jesus is saying, in **John 17:6-19**, that the work that He had finished was the training of the twelve to be apostles. The first major thing that Jesus reports to His Father in the training of the twelve is in **verse 6**. ***“I have manifested [revealed] Your name to the men whom you have given Me out of the world. They were Yours, You gave them to Me, and they have kept Your word.”*** The three gospels, Matthew, Mark and Luke, all clearly name the twelve original apostles called and appointed by Jesus. Remember, that the ministry of the apostle is a New Testament ministry introduced by Jesus: He came as the Apostle of God to raise apostles among men for the building of His church. Jesus demonstrates in Himself the full ministry of apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor and teacher, but it is the ministry of the apostle that He specifically came to this earth to institute. This is the key ministry that is required to build the house [church] of God. Jesus is clear: God gave Him a few men, only twelve, and one of them was ***“the son of perdition”***, so in **John 17**, He actually has eleven apostles with Him.

Jesus only did the Father's work

There is a deep lesson for us all to learn: Jesus’ apostolic work that the Father gave Him was to concentrate on twelve men in terms of training them. One of the twelve was a failure and yet Jesus is confidently thanking His Father and asking the Father to release His glory to these men. These men are His ‘crown and glory!’ In coming to the end of His ministry, Jesus does not

remind the Father of all the people who had been healed! He did not remind the Father of all the disciples He had taught! He did not remind the Father of the seventy He had trained and sent out in **Luke 10**! No, Jesus was relating to the Father over the success He had in raising twelve apostles [Judas Iscariot was replaced by Matthias in **Acts 1**]. This was the specific work the Father gave Him. We only need do the work the Father gives us. In the final accounting, it will not be the numbers we have ministered to, the size of the congregation, the buildings we have constructed or even the signs and wonders ministry that we have performed, but it will be: ‘Were we obedient to the Father’s calling to do the Father’s work?’

Jesus made manifest the Father’s name

What does this mean? In the gospels, Jesus refers to God as Father or addresses God as Father over 170 times. Is ‘Father’ the name that Jesus has manifested to His disciples? Is ‘Father’ a name? Normally ‘father’ is the title given to that one who is our father and it is the same with God. Jesus is not telling us that the name of God is Father but, rather, He is introducing us to God as our Father. This was a radical New Testament revelation: **God is our Father**.

So what is the name that He manifested to His disciples? When God called Moses, in **Exodus 3**, and commissioned him to go to Egypt, Moses said “*and they say to me, ‘What is His name?’ what shall I say to them?*” v.13. God answered and said, “*I AM WHO I AM. Thus you shall say to the children of Israel ‘I AM has sent me to you’*” v.14. This revealed name of God is translated ‘Yahweh’ or ‘Jehovah’, [from YHWH] but mostly in the English Bible this difficult to pronounce Hebrew name of God is rendered ‘LORD’ [over 6000 times]. This is the revealed name of God in the Old Testament. Jesus said, “*I have manifested Your name to the men You have given Me*”.

In My Name

So what is the revealed name of God in the New Testament? When the angel announced to Mary that God was bringing forth His Son through her, he said, you “**shall call His name Jesus**” (**Lu.1:31**). Jesus is the shorter form of *Yehoshua* which means ‘Yahweh is Salvation’ or ‘the LORD saves’; from this we get the name ‘Saviour’. Many times in the gospels, Jesus refers to His own name: “**in My name**”. He said prayers will be answered in My name; demons are cast out in My name; the sick are healed in My name. You will all acknowledge that the name that gives you authority over demons or over sickness is the name of Jesus. It is not effective to command a demon to go ‘in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit’ or in the name of God Almighty. God has given us the name of JESUS. Peter declared in **Acts 3:16** that the lame man was made strong “*through faith in His name*”, and in **Acts 4:12** Peter declares that there is “*no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.*” What name? **JESUS**.

The Scripture says that “**God has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven** [referring to principalities and powers - the demonic heaven] **and of those on the earth** [people] **and of those under the earth** [the demons of hell] **and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father**” **Phil.2:9-11**.

Power and authority are in the name of JESUS!

The name in the New Testament is JESUS!

His full name is LORD JESUS CHRIST!

The name in Baptism

In **Matthew 28:18**, Jesus declared to the apostles “*All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.*” Jesus is the sovereign ruler over heaven and earth and when He commanded the apostles “*to go and make disciples of all nations*”, He told them to baptise “*in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit*” **Matt.28:19**. Notice He said ‘name’, singular, not ‘names’. When we realise this, we can then understand why Peter, in **Acts 2:38**, was acting in obedience when he commanded the ones who believed the gospel to be baptised “*in the name of Jesus Christ*”. In fact all of the references to water baptism in the book of **Acts** refer to the name singular. In the case of Paul and the Ethiopian eunuch, the name used in baptism is not mentioned. Paul had an amazing experience in meeting the Lord and asked “*who are you, Lord?*’ *Then the Lord said, ‘I am Jesus’*” (**Acts 9:5**). Paul came to know the Lord Jesus, so we can assume he was baptised in the name of the Lord Jesus. **Acts 8:16** says the new believers at Samaria “*had only been baptised in the name of the Lord Jesus*”; we can assume that Philip baptised the Ethiopian man in that name also. Peter commanded the newly Spirit-filled Gentile believers in the house of Cornelius “*to be baptised in the name of the Lord*” **Acts 10:48**. Paul in **Acts 19:5** baptised “*in the name of the Lord Jesus*”. The first step that we are to take in making disciples is to baptise those who have believed in the Name.

*We are to make manifest to the young disciples
the name of the Lord.*

I have given them the words

The second thing Jesus said to the Father that He had done in training the apostles is in **John 17:8**. “*For I have given to them the words which you have given Me; and they have received them and know surely that I came forth from You; and they have believed that You sent Me.*” The result of the disciples receiving the word was to know who Jesus was and that He had come forth from God. The primary intent of the word of God is to reveal God and to make Him known. This is the ministry of the apostle: Jesus said to the apostles in **Matthew 10:40** “*he who receives you receives Me, and he who receives Me receives Him who sent Me.*” Jesus came forth as the apostle of God and by sharing the word of God with the ones to whom God had sent Him and who had received Him as the Christ, they came to know who He was and in so doing came to know the Father.

Jesus said “*I have given to them the words*”; He taught the disciples the word of God. **This is the teaching ministry.** The second step in making disciples is to “*teach them to observe all things that I have commanded you*” **Matt.28:20**. Jesus taught the apostles and imparted to them the words that God had given Him. This is so awesome! Jesus is simply saying that He successfully discipled the apostles by manifesting God’s name to them and giving them God’s word. Jesus is saying, *‘I have received the men You gave Me; I have revealed Your name to them; I have taught them the word You gave Me for them’*. Jesus was obedient to the Father’s will.

I am glorified in them

The third thing Jesus said about the preparation of the twelve is in **verse 10**. “*And all Mine are Yours, and Yours are Mine, and I am glorified in them.*” Jesus received the twelve that were to be His apostles from the Father. He brought them to a level of maturity whereby He was now able to be manifest in them. Having manifested God’s name to them and imparted

God's word to them, Jesus says He is now “**glorified in them.**” The apostle Paul says that his goal as an apostle is to make known to the saints “***the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: which is Christ in you, the hope of glory***” Col.1:27. Jesus had brought the twelve through to the place where He was glorified in them. In other words, these men were now able to carry the glorious presence of the Lord within themselves and represent Him fully to those who would receive their word.

*The goal is for Christ to be glorified in the saints.
God's church is to grow up into maturity,
to walk in the glory.
This is the goal of the apostolic ministry:
for Christ to be manifest in a glorious church.*

In Romans 8:29-30, we see that we are “**predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son that He might be the first born among many brethren. Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.**” Justification comes through the blood of the cross: we are saved! But glorification comes because the same blood was taken by Jesus into the tabernacle made without human hands, into heaven itself, and placed upon the true mercy seat, signifying that God has called His people to glory in Christ Jesus (Heb.9:11-12, 24, 1Pet.5:10). Jesus raised apostles to the level of maturity whereby He could be glorified in them and then they, through the ministry gift of the apostle, could bring the church to maturity to walk in the revelation of the mystery, which is “**Christ in you.**” God’s goal is to prepare a “**glorious church without spot or wrinkle**” (Eph.5:27).

Kept through the Name

The fourth thing Jesus refers to is to ask the Father to “**keep through Your name those whom You have given Me, that they may be one as We are**” Jn. 17:11. In verse 12, Jesus said that He had “**kept them**” in the Father’s name. In other words, Jesus had shown them the power of His name and He was confident that, after He left, they would continue to know ‘the keeping power of God’. Jude says “**Now to Him who is able to keep you from falling and present you faultless**” v24. The Lord promises that “**the God of peace Himself will sanctify us completely**” and we will be “**preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ**” 1Thess.5:23-4.

A key to coming into a fullness in Christ when everything seems to be too hard and too difficult for us, is to yield, ‘to give up’, to be able to say to God, ‘I cannot do this’. The wisdom from above is “**willing to yield**” (Ja.3:17). Remember faith comes by hearing (Rom.10:17). As we hear the word and are willing to yield, the faith that we need will be given to us. Remember again, God has measured to each one of us the faith we need to function in His grace in the body of Christ (Rom.12:3-4). Let God keep you by His grace in the power of His name. “**While I was with them in the world, I kept them in Your name. Those whom you gave me I have kept**” Jn.17:12a. One of the fundamental lessons that God wants every new believer to learn is to know the authority of His name, the name of Jesus, over the devil and all of the devil’s works. Every believer needs to know that they can resist and overcome even the most fearsome demonic attack.

Jesus acknowledges that even one of the twelve apostles was lost “**that the Scripture might be fulfilled**” (Jn.17:12). A key thing we learn from the Lord’s testimony is that our work

is to do ‘***the will of the Father***’, not our own will. Often, in the ministry and in church life, we are assailed by motivational speakers, church growth proponents and others who want to give us ‘worldly goals’ and so we come under pressure to try to attract and hold numbers of people in our local church or to have many churches etc, whereas the Father wants us to know His will and to do it. The Son of God said He had completed the work the Father gave Him by successfully raising twelve apostles – Matthias replaced Judas (**Acts 1:26**).

My joy fulfilled in them

The fifth thing that Jesus says of the apostles He had raised up is “***that they may have My joy fulfilled in themselves***” Jn.17:13. Because the apostles knew ‘the name of the Lord’ and had received ‘the words Jesus gave them from the Father’, and because they now were able ‘to carry the glory of the Lord in themselves’, and knew ‘the keeping power of God and the protection of His name’, they were ‘filled with His joy’. How are we going to know this joy? Jesus gives us a key in John 16:24: “***Until now you have asked nothing in My name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy be full.***” We are to ask the Father in His name (**Jn.16:23**).

It is this fullness of joy that comes, through knowing Jesus, which enables us to endure the suffering that comes through the various trials we all will face. **James** says “***count it all joy when you fall into various trials***” (Ja.1:2-3), because the trials are for the testing and refining of our faith. Likewise, Peter expounds on this same theme assuring us that, once our faith has been proven, we will “***rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory***” (1Pet.1:7-8). Jesus Himself “***endured the cross, for the joy set before Him***” (Heb.12:2). The grace of receiving Jesus the Apostle, which can be released in us by receiving the apostle(s) He sends to us, is full and all encompassing. As a result, we are able to walk in a fullness of sonship that releases the grace we need to endure the sufferings brought about by the trials we face. His joy is fulfilled in us.

The word gives us victory in the world

“***I have given them Your word and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world***” Jn.17:14. It is the word of God that brings division. Jesus said “***I did not come to bring peace but a sword***” (Matt.18:34). When we speak the truth of the word, men will either love us or hate us.

“***I do not pray that You should take them out of the world but that You should keep them from the evil one***” Jn.17:15. Jesus taught us to pray “***deliver us from the evil one***” (Matt.6:13), and in 2Thessalonians 3:1-3 Paul is speaking about the need to be delivered “***from unreasonable and wicked men***” [the world], and then he says, “***the Lord is faithful, who will establish you and guard you from the evil one.***” We are not called to fight the devil but to submit to God and His word and He will deliver us.

“***Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth***” Jn.17:17. The word of God has within itself great sanctifying power. It is the word working in us that separates us unto the will of God. We need to continue in the word; we need to continue to be disciples of the word and then we “***shall know the truth and the truth shall make us free***” (Jn.8:31-32). It is by the “***washing of water by the word***” that we are cleansed and sanctified, to be presented ‘***to Himself a glorious church***” (Eph.5:27).

Sent as apostles

The result of Jesus having properly trained and prepared the men that God had given Him is that He is now able to send them forth into the world as apostles: “***As you sent Me into the***

world, I also have sent them into the world” Jn.17:18. This word ‘sent’ is the Greek word ‘*apostello*’ which is the verb form of apostle. Jesus had completed the work His Father had given Him to do. He had devoted much of the three and a half years of His ministry to teaching and training the apostles. In **John 17** from **verse 4**, Jesus is clearly declaring that He has finished the work the Father gave Him.

That work was to raise the apostles to a place of maturity where they were now ready to be sent as apostles to represent Jesus and the Father, and bring to pass the outworking of His will through the preaching of the gospel and the building of the church of Jesus Christ.

Jesus’ task as the apostle of God was to build the church. Jesus declared “**I will build My church and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it” Matt.16:18.** The apostles had already been appointed by this time and Jesus specifically told Peter “**you are Peter and upon this rock I will build My church.**” Peter, as an apostle, is going to play a key role in the foundation and building of the church. Later Paul says that, as an apostle, he was “**a wise master builder**”. Paul had the keys. He knew how to build! He knew what to build! The church is to be built, that is, grown up to maturity, able to carry the glory of God in Christ, that is, ‘Christ in us’.

Jesus Prays for all Believers

Having established with the Father that the men the Father had given Him were trained and ready to be sent, Jesus then prays “**for those who will believe in Me through their [the apostles] word” Jn.17:20.** His prayer is that all who are taught by the apostles will become “**one**”. This oneness is the oneness of Jesus being in the Father and the Father being in Jesus, “**as You Father, in Me, and I in You” Jn.17:21.** The result of the believers coming into the oneness of the Godhead will be **that the world may believe God sent Jesus (v.21)**.

*The faith was first presented by apostles
and those who believed the word of the apostles
were to become one and to continue in oneness.*

After His resurrection, Jesus commissioned the apostles to make disciples by teaching them the words Jesus had given to them (**Matt.28:20**). It is as apostles are sent by Jesus and received by the believers that the church is formed according to the words of Jesus. The church is His body and must come together in the way that He has ordained to function fully and express His life and His glory, as a witness in all the world.

That they may be perfect in one

Jesus said He was glorified in the apostles (**Jn.17:10**). He then says that He will be glorified in all those who believe (**v.22**). It is this reality of the glory of Christ in the believers that will enable them to “**be one just as We are one: I in them, and You in Me; that they may be perfect in one” Jn.17:22-23.**

God’s goal for the church is perfection. The way to perfection is through God’s glory covering and permeating the whole church. God has promised such a covering for the remnant in **Isaiah 4:5-6**.

*Jesus makes it clear in these verses
that the expression of the glory of God in us
is the means by which we become one.*

This expression of glory becomes known by revelation and wisdom that is shared by apostles who have been raised, trained and sent by Jesus. The result will be that “***the world will know that the Father sent Jesus***” and the world will know that Jesus has “***loved them*** [believers] as You [the Father] ***have loved Me***” Jn.17:23.

Jesus continues to pray for all believers. It is true that every believer living today can receive insight and solace from the prayer of Jesus. It is true, that in many cities, pastors from various churches are coming together in unity movements and that is a legitimate outworking of Jesus’ prayer. However many have missed the full context of the prayer. I have shown in this chapter that the context of Jesus’ prayer for all believers is that they have come to believe in Jesus through the apostles. There is a key here for us in the last days, and the key is, that when apostles are restored and received, the church will come into oneness.

*The oneness that Jesus prayed for, and that many long for,
is only possible through the glory of God in Christ
being made manifest in the believers.*

Jesus is clear: **the glory produces and makes possible the oneness**. The glory is revealed through the preaching and teaching of the deeper wisdom of God among the mature. “We speak wisdom among those who are mature, yet not the wisdom of this age, nor of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing. But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the ages for our glory” **1Cor.2:6-7**. It is this wisdom, the revelation of the mystery, which God is revealing again in our day through the apostles. The oneness that the saints are to experience in Christ will be made manifest through the preaching of the unsearchable riches of Christ that makes all see “***what is the fellowship*** [*koinonia #2842*] ***of the mystery***” (Eph.4:8-9). There is a deeper fellowship which is **the fellowship of oneness**.

The desire of our Lord is for us to be with Him, “***that they also whom You gave Me may be with Me where I am***”, and that we “***may behold His glory***”, the glory which Jesus had with the Father before the foundation of the world (Jn.17:24). Jesus is not referring to a life with Him in heaven but, rather, He is referring to the revelation of the mystery that Paul refers to in Colossians 1:26-27, “***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.***”

Finally, Jesus declares in His prayer that the ones that He has received from the Father have come to know that the Father sent Jesus (Jn.17:25).

*Our receiving of Jesus is the key
to coming to know the Father.*

*This is the revelation of the apostolic:
coming to know the Father through Jesus,
by receiving the apostle(s) whom Jesus sends.*

*Jesus says, that it is through the declaration
of God's name, that the revelation of God's love
becomes manifest in the apostles and in all believers.*

*The GLORY coming upon the saints
is the key to the ONENESS
of the saints in Christ –
only then can the PERFECT come*

Chapter Three

WHY WE NEED APOSTLES TODAY

We need the restoration of apostles to bring the solid foundational teaching of the basic principles of Christ (Heb.6:1-2); to make known the wisdom of God concerning the structure of the church, concerning the placement of ministries and the appointment of elders in every place.

Until we come to this deeper knowledge of the wisdom of God's word we cannot perceive or understand what God is doing in the earth through His church, nor how to adequately bring the church to that place of maturity to walk in the revelation of the mystery, thus consciously co-operating with the Lord as He manifests Himself through His church.

Times of Restoration

God is a God of restoration. Principles of restoration are clearly taught in the Scriptures. Restoration is:

- the setting in place of the original pattern;
- things becoming as they were in the beginning;
- bringing the creation back to its original created state;
- restoring the church to the Biblical pattern and order

Peter declared to the Jews, when he was preaching in the temple after the healing of the lame man, that we are entering into a time of restoration. *“Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and that He may send Jesus Christ, who was preached to you before, whom heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things, which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began.”* Acts 3:19-21.

*This Scripture shows that there are certain things
that have to happen before Jesus can return.*

*Jesus is being retained in heaven
“until the times of restoration of all things.”*

We are living in that time of restoration and until all things are restored that must be restored according to the word of God, Jesus is not coming back to receive the church to Himself.

“Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish” Eph. 5:25-27. Jesus is coming back for a blood-washed, sanctified, cleansed and glorified church. His plan for the church is to restore the church to be even more glorious than in the beginning.

“The glory of this latter temple [house] shall be greater than the former’, says the LORD of hosts” Hagg.2:9. The book of Acts church is the former church [temple]. The church has to go back to the beginning; it has to go back to the biblical model, to the apostolic pattern as established by Jesus through the first apostles. The church will be restored, *“as it was in the beginning”*, into an even greater glory.

Creation

In Genesis 1:26, God said “*Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.*” God intends for man to have dominion over created things. He wants us to exercise that authority. In Mark 4:41, after Jesus had calmed the storm, His disciples said, “*who can this be, that even the wind and the sea obey Him?*” Jesus demonstrated the authority, that God intends man to have, through His miracles and healings. God will restore dominion authority to the sons of men as they are raised in manifest sonship (**Rom.8:19-21**).

God told the man and the woman He had created, “*be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth*” Gen.1:28. The man and the woman, created in God’s image and likeness, were to fill the earth with godly offspring, thereby extending the goodness and richness of the Garden of Eden throughout the earth. They were to subdue the earth: subdue is a military term meaning to take control over. God’s intention for His people is for them to subdue the devil and rule on the earth.

In Genesis 1:2 we read that “*the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was on the face of the deep.*” The earth was empty; that means it was yet to be inhabited. As we know God created all forms of life to fill the earth so that it was no longer empty. It was shapeless [without form] but the Holy Spirit was moving on the face of the deep and His work was to bring forth shape and symmetry, causing the unformed matter to be formed into a beautiful spherical globe, as we know it today.

There is a principle of God’s awesome goodness demonstrated here: wherever there is darkness and emptiness and lack of purpose, God’s Spirit comes to ‘brood’ [SC #7363], like a bird that sits on her nest to bring forth something new, something beautiful.

Creation Unfolds

“*Then God said, ‘Let there be light’*” v.3. Light was always in existence because it was God’s light, but now God was releasing light into the time/space/matter realm that He was creating. Where God is, there is always light. The word ‘let’ in these verses is a word of permission to do something, but it is more than that, it was also a creative command of incredible force, producing amazing results. Suddenly, within the first day of creation, God had brought form to the empty and shapeless matter that had first appeared.

“*God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament*” v.6. This speaks of the separation of the heavens from the earth. God made the ‘firmament’ [the atmosphere]. Before this there was no atmosphere, just waters around the earth. When God made the firmament, He separated the waters from above and below and there was still no dry land. Then God caused the dry land to appear. When it appeared God said, “*Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb that yields seed, and the fruit tree*” v.11. The creation of the trees and the herbs was not that of a seed sprouting up, but God created all things in full maturity. Therefore full grown trees, “*whose seed is in itself*”, came forth in the earth.

Then in verse 26, God says “*Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness.*” In creating a man and a woman, God is revealing His eternal purpose, His new creation purpose. When Paul teaches us on marriage in **Ephesians 5**, he says, “*I speak of a great mystery*” v.32. He was speaking of Christ and the church. When God created man and woman

and told them to be as one, He was performing a prophetic act. He revealed to us His eternal purpose, which is for there to be a perfect church, perfectly joined to Christ. Even as Eve had to be restored so, too, does the church!

God is a God of RESTORATION!

As it was in the Beginning

God's will is for everything to be restored '**as it was in the beginning**'. In **Matthew 19:4**, Jesus is speaking on marriage to the Pharisees who were questioning Him about divorce. He reminds them of how it was in the beginning. Marriage is one husband to one wife. This is how it was in the beginning. This is God's original plan.

Creation is to be restored by being released from the curse brought by man's sin and liberated by the "**sons of God**" into "**the glorious liberty of the children of God**" (**Rom.8:19-21**).

Jesus is Restoring His Church

Jesus said "**I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it**" **Matt.16:18**. Jesus Christ laid the foundations of the church. He laid them by training up and appointing twelve apostles. God wants to restore His church as it was in the beginning. The early church in the book of **Acts** was not made up of different denominations or institutions. Although there were many people meeting in different groups in houses, they were still part of the church in that city. Paul wrote to the church at Ephesus, the church at Corinth, etc. Jesus is coming back for a perfect church, as it was in the beginning! The church in each city was one people with an eldership submitted to an apostle. Jesus appointed twelve apostles on whom to build His church. He gave Peter a particular foundational role in establishing the church, thereby establishing a pattern for all other apostles. All apostles receive from Jesus a ministry that is both foundational in the forming or reforming of the church and that is vital in bringing the church to maturity.

Principles of Restoration

"So the last will be first, and the first last" **Matt.20:16**. This saying can be interpreted prophetically to say the church of the last days will be as the first church and the first church will be manifested in the last. There is a saying that seeks to explain the historical experience of restoration in the history of the church: '**the first truth lost is the last truth restored; the last truth lost is the first truth restored**'. The first truth lost was the teaching and ministry of the apostles. Historically, very soon after the writing time of the New Testament Canon, individual bishops rose up claiming authority over the church of a city and not receiving any longer the apostles whom God "**had set first in the church**" (**1Cor.12:28**). It is only in very recent years that we are witnessing the restoration of the teaching and ministry of apostles in the last days church.

Truths and Ministries Restored

The last truth lost publicly in the history of Christendom was salvation by faith. This was the first truth restored publicly through Martin Luther in the early sixteenth century. From the time of Luther to our day there have been major restorations of truths and ministries and gifts in the life of the church. This has happened through revivals, through the raising up of pioneering leaders that Christ chose and raised to restore truths. Finally, in the second half of the twentieth

century, the fivefold ministries of **Ephesians 4:11** have been restored to the church. The result of this is that the church today is poised to receive a major portion of its inheritance as the restoration work is largely complete for those who have ears to hear, eyes to see and hearts to understand the unfolding revelation of the mysteries of God's word. These mysteries are being made known again today through the apostles and prophets that God Himself is calling and raising, commissioning and sending forth to speak His word.

Restoration of Apostles

The first church was "*built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets*" (**Eph.2:20**). To build the last days church and see it functioning effectively, we need the restoration of apostles and prophets, and we need the apostles and prophets to be adequately making known "*what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the ages has been hidden in God who created all things through Jesus Christ*" **Eph.3:9**. We need the restoration of apostles to bring the solid foundational teaching of the basic principles of Christ (**Heb.6:1-2**) and to make known the wisdom of God concerning the structure of the church, concerning the placement of ministries and the appointment of elders in every place.

Apostles bring revelation of the mystery

In **Ephesians 3:3**, the apostle Paul says "*that by revelation He made known to me the mystery.*" This mystery has "*now been revealed by the Spirit to His holy apostles and prophets*" v.5. Therefore we need the restoration of apostles and prophets who know the revelation of the mystery of the church. Until we come to this deeper knowledge of the wisdom of God's word we cannot perceive or understand what God is doing in the earth through His church. Nor do we understand how to bring the church to that place of maturity to walk in the revelation of the mystery, thus consciously co-operating with the Lord as He manifests Himself through His church. This revelation "*which in other ages was not made known to the sons of men*" has now been given to apostles through a dispensation of grace, to "*preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, and to make all to see what is the fellowship of the mystery...to the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places*" **Eph.3:8,10**.

There is a revelation of the mystery given only to apostles. Thank God, He is restoring apostles today and the understanding of the deeper wisdom of God is being taught, enabling the church to come into maturity. This is the wisdom which is for the mature; it is "*the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the ages for our glory*" **1 Cor.2:7-8**.

Apostles represent Christ

Apostles are commissioned by Jesus to represent and reveal Him in a unique way. Jesus says this of no other minister. "*He who receives you receives Me, and he who receives Me receives Him who sent Me*" **Matt.10:40**. Jesus used similar language in **Mark 9:37** and **Luke 9:48**, speaking of receiving a child in His name. In so doing, Jesus is emphasising the importance of how we receive the one(s) He sends to us, representing Him. The ministry of the apostle is unique in this regard. The very word apostle literally means 'sent one'. This ministry of the apostle is specific to Jesus, the Apostle of God, and the apostles He raised, including the ones raised after His ascension, to specifically represent Him. While the whole church is meant to be apostolic, that is, representing Jesus to the world, there is a deep revelation being restored to the

church through the restoration of apostles. Without the apostles' doctrine and revelation, we do not have the full revelation of Jesus Christ.

We receive the Son and the Father

Jesus said that, if we receive an apostle, we receive Him. But He then said if we receive Him, we receive the One who sent Him. This means Jesus is saying we are able to receive the Son, Jesus, and the Father. There is a revelation of the Son and a revelation of the Father that comes to us through receiving an apostle. There is revelation of who God is and His very nature: He is the Father and He also is the Son and they are One. This deep and very amazing and satisfying revelation of God is being restored by the apostles being sent to represent Him.

Grace and Apostleship

"Through Him we have received grace and apostleship for obedience to the faith among all nations for His name" Rom.1:5. This Scripture brings together two very powerful aspects of God's work in the earth by the gospel. The key element of the New Covenant that is so awesome and wonderful is grace. The Scripture says twice in Ephesians 2 that we are saved by grace (v5&8). This grace "*was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began*" (2Tim.1:9), but was not released to us until Jesus Christ appeared in the earth. It can be said that the incarnation of God in Jesus Christ is essentially the manifestation of the eternal grace of God into our time-space world. This grace is inextricably linked to apostleship. "*But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift*" Eph.4:7. Grace is released to every member of the body through apostles as well as through the other fivefold ministers of Ephesians 4.

Grace

It is the manifestation of this grace through the **evangelist** that saves us. It is the manifestation of this grace through the **pastor** that nurtures and founds us in the faith that saves us. It is the manifestation of this grace through the **teacher** that grounds us in the word that saves us. It is the manifestation of this grace through the **prophet** that guides and leads us into a much deeper revelation of salvation. It is the manifestation of this grace through the **apostle** that brings us into the fullness of salvation.

Each fivefold ministry given by Christ is a grace gift that releases the grace of God to the members of the body. Most brethren are blessed and excited to participate in evangelism events when a gifted **evangelist** is brought into the city and souls are being born again into the kingdom of God. There is nothing like the grace that the evangelist operates in and that grace is contagious. All of us become more evangelistic when an evangelist is ministering among us.

Many are blessed in being part of a fellowship that is led by a gifted **pastor**. The ministry of **pastor** brings a special grace to the people of God, whereby they feel secure and loved in the fellowship.

Many of us hunger for a deeper knowledge of the word of God and some of us have been blessed to find a gifted **teacher** of the word who brings life and light upon the word as he/she opens up the word. This gift may be shared through written material.

A gifted **prophet** is often very much sought after as there is a profound grace released to the brethren when the prophet is in the midst ministering the word of God and bringing guidance and insight to the church and to individual believers.

Each ministry gift has been given by Christ to minister grace to the body. If we lack

apostles, we lack an essential portion of the grace of God that He has given to His church for the “*perfecting of the saints*” (Eph.4:12).

Apostleship

The word apostleship is *apostole* from the verb *apostello*, to set apart, to send out; *apostole* means commission, i.e., specifically apostolate, translated apostleship. This word appears in **Acts 1:25** in the prayer asking for the Lord’s choice between Joseph and Matthias “**to take part in this ministry and apostleship from which Judas by transgression fell.**” The apostleship here refers to the specific calling and placement as an apostle of the Lamb of one who had accompanied Jesus and the other apostles “**beginning from the baptism of John to that day when He was taken up from us**” **Acts1:22**. This was a particular apostleship with special qualifications.

In **1Corinthians 9:2**, Paul says that the believers “**are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord.**” The seal of one’s apostolic ministry is the brethren who are continuing in the faith and in the ministry as fruit of the particular apostleship. An apostle is judged by the fruit of the ministry.

Then in **Galatians 2:8**, Paul says that Christ “**who worked effectively in Peter for the apostleship to the circumcised also worked effectively in me toward the Gentiles.**” Here the apostleship refers to the sphere of ministry, to the realm of endeavour. While there may be no one with such a broad apostleship today as Peter and Paul, there are clear spheres of ministry for each apostle or company of apostles and this needs to be mutually recognised and supported.

When grace is combined with apostleship the result is “**obedience to the faith among all nations for His name.**” This apostleship refers to the specific commission given by Christ to apostles; it refers to the specific task He gave to apostles. Apostleship is unique and is the primary ministry given by Christ for the building of the church. It is through apostles primarily that Jesus is building the church He spoke of in **Matthew 16:18**, and it is through apostles that the church is equipped by grace and released to fulfil the Great Commission.

Apostles Minister Ascension Life

“*Therefore He says: ‘When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts to men. Now this, ‘He ascended’- what does it mean but that He also first descended into the lower parts of the earth? He who descended is also the One who ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things. And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers’* Eph.4:8-11. It is clear from these verses that the five-fold gifts are ascension gifts. They were given to the church after Christ’s ascension. Even the twelve apostles of the Lamb did not receive the ministry gift of the apostle until the Holy Spirit came upon them in the Upper Room. Yes they had been trained and equipped for ministry by Jesus but the ministry gift of the apostle is an ascension gift given by Christ after “**He ascended far above all the heavens**”. John the Baptist knew that every genuine ministry gift comes from heaven. He said “**a man can receive nothing unless it has been given to him from heaven**” Jn.3:27.

The Ministry Gifts are by God’s Appointment

Some talk about the five-fold gifts emerging out of the plurality of eldership in a city. There may be five-fold gifts in the leadership of the city already but we need to be aware that each ascension gift minister must know the calling and appointment of God in Christ. “**God has**

appointed these in the church: first apostles, second prophets, third teachers” 1Cor.12:28. There is a clear order of appointment set out in this verse. All of these ministries come together in apostolic council as peers. However, the leadership of the church was established in each city in Scripture by the apostle(s) appointing/ordaining elders in each city. What is lacking in most cities currently is a common city eldership and where there is an emerging city eldership, the lack of an apostle who is the apostolic father of the elders. It is this relationship of elders with an apostolic father sent by Christ that brings the elders into an understanding of sonship and into the place of being under oversight and in accountable relationships.

The ministry gifts of Christ come from heaven, not from the earth. When I was first saved in 1974, I knew I was called to be a preacher by Christ. As I shared in the preface to this book, my first years in ministry were challenging and fulfilling as I served in Christian schooling, church administration, pastoring churches and evangelistic chaplaincy on a university campus. But in those ten years I did not really know my ministry calling; nor did I know Christ’s appointment. It was in 1994 when I was invited on to the staff of a local denominational church here in Toowoomba that I knew that Christ had gifted me as a teacher. It was the manifestation of an ascension gift given by Christ in His ascension. Likewise it was Christ who called me in late 1997 to begin to be prepared for the ministry of apostle. It is a profound reality to know one is called and gifted by Christ to serve in the ministry and to know the specific ministry gift that one has received.

Apostles are a Necessary Foundation Ministry

“Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone, in whom the whole building, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit” Eph.2:19-22. These Scriptures teach us much about the building structure of the church. A building must have foundations. The sure foundation is Christ (1 Cor.3:11), and the whole building must be securely built upon Him, that is, upon the revelation of faith “*You are the Christ, the Son of the living God*” Matt.16:16. Jesus has established the ministry of apostles and prophets as the foundation upon which the church is built. It is the ministry of apostles and prophets, through revelation given to them, that provides the foundational doctrines of the faith. Remember Jesus acknowledged that Peter’s confession of faith in Him as the Christ was a revelation from heaven, and then Jesus gave Peter a foundational apostolic placement in the building of His church. In our day we need apostles and prophets to establish and build the church upon the foundation of revelational faith in Christ Jesus.

Christ the Chief Cornerstone

A cornerstone is set in place upon the foundation which is laid first. That means the church must be established upon the foundation of apostolic and prophetic ministry before the cornerstone can be properly set in place. The whole building is joined together in Christ, the chief cornerstone. That building, which is the church, grows into a holy temple: the worldwide church, the one body (Eph.4:4). This temple is the whole church of Jesus Christ but **verse 22** is referring to another aspect of the church, the ‘local’ church, where ‘you’, whether in Ephesus or Toowoomba or a city in another nation, are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit. We are members of, or living stones that make up, the temple of God, but we are also

joined together in the Spirit in the local assembly, as part of the local city church, where we experience God in the Spirit (**1Pet.2:5**).

Jesus chose twelve

In **Acts 1** we see only eleven apostles because of the fall of Judas. Peter is led by the Holy Spirit to appoint the twelfth into office because there were to be twelve foundation apostles. **“Now the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb” Rev.21:14.** The twelve were the leaders of the first church (**Acts 2:14, 6:2**).

The number 12

The number **12** refers to God’s government. It is **3** times **4**. The number **3** is the number of the Godhead, referring to the fullness of God in Christ. It is also the number of perfect witness and the three persons of the Godhead all witness perfectly to the fullness of the Godhead. The number **4** refers to the four directions or the four winds, thus encompassing the whole earth. Through **12 [3x4]** apostles, the gospel of the kingdom of God [the revelation of the Godhead in Christ] will spread over all the earth through the preaching of the gospel and the making of disciples [the Great Commission given to the apostles] (**Mk.16:15, Matt.28:18-20**).

There were 3

Among the **12** Jesus chose **3**: Peter, James and John (**Mk.9:2, Lu.8:51**). These three had privileged opportunities to be with Jesus at special times. They were eye witnesses of extraordinary events, including the transfiguration. When James, the apostle of the Lamb, was killed by Herod he was replaced by James, the brother of Jesus (**Gal.2:9**). These three were called the pillars of the church of Jerusalem by Paul.

Among the original **3** there was **1**, Peter, the rock, the one specifically commissioned by Christ (**Matt.16:18-19**). The **12** had headship/leadership in Peter and also in the **3**. The original **3** had headship/leadership in Peter; the latter **3** had headship/leadership in James (**Gal.2:12**).

Paul Worked with other Apostles

Later Paul was raised up as a special apostle [one specifically commissioned by Christ] and he exercised a powerful headship/leadership apostolic ministry. Again in **1** the Lord invested Himself in a special way to make manifest the revelation of the mystery to the church. Peter was the apostle to the Jews and Paul was the apostle to the Gentiles (**Gal. 2:8**). While Paul stands out on his own in many ways as an apostle, he initially worked in close association with Barnabas who was also an apostle. Later in Paul’s ministry he had many apostles as co-workers including Timothy and Silvanus (**1Thess.1:1, 2:6**), Adronicus and Junia (**Rom.16:7**), Titus and other brethren, **“messengers [apostles] of the churches”** (**2Cor.8:23**) and others.

Apostles are to Work Together

Today as apostles are restored, it is not clear if the Lord is going to manifest Himself through preordained numbers of apostles working together or working separately in the ministry of bringing the church to completion. What is clear is that apostles are meant to work together and that there are many configurations patterned for us by the apostles in the Scriptures, showing us the reality of apostles working together as co-workers or as ones knowing their own sphere of ministry but submitting their doctrine to the leaders of other spheres of ministry and there being mutual submission, acceptance and approval.

The Church is Built on the Apostles' Doctrine

The apostles' doctrine is the teachings of Christ. In the Great Commission Jesus told the apostles to "*teach them to observe all things that I have commanded you*" Matt.28:20. The first church "*continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine*" Acts 2:42. The first new disciples [3000 of them] devoted themselves to the teaching of the apostles. That is how they found out about Jesus. The apostles' doctrine is the word of the four gospels of the New Testament. It is the teachings of Paul (Acts 18:11); it is the New Testament.

Apostles are Needed to Build the Church

"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" 1Cor.3:10. God reveals to apostles His blueprint, His plans, so the church can be built. Moses alone received this blueprint [pattern] in the Old Testament for the building of the Tabernacle. Paul says that he was a wise master builder, receiving by grace a big portion of the revelation of the New Testament church, but it requires apostles today to take up the mantle of apostleship and build the church according to revelation.

Apostles and Prophets Will See Babylon Fall

"Rejoice over her [Babylon], O heaven, and you holy apostles and prophets, for God has avenged you on her!" Rev.18:20. Finally apostles and prophets will be present in the earth to see Babylon fall. The church of Jesus Christ will have been set in order; the saints of the Most High will be equipped and functioning properly, "*every joint supplying, every part contributing to the upbuilding of the whole body*" Eph.4:16. Babylon will fall because of the judgement of God pronounced by the church. Remember Ephesians 3:10, "*to the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places.*"

As the church is restored and established as the body of Him "who fills the all in all" [the whole universe] (Eph.1:23), God's authority will be released through the church. Babylon, representing all that is ungodly and opposed to God, will fall. Remember Jesus promised to the church that overcame the power of Jezebel "*to him I will give power over nations - 'He shall rule them with a rod of iron; they shall be dashed to pieces like the potter's vessels'*" Rev.2:26-27.

We have underestimated the authority of Jesus Christ and, because we have not had apostles, we have not been able to receive His authority. His authority is complete: "*all authority in heaven and on earth*" (Matt.28:18); He is "*the ruler over the kings of the earth*" (Rev.1:5), and "*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. His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey Him*" Dan.7:27.

Apostles are vital ministries:

- *in the founding of the church,*
- *in the life and the development*
- *of the church of Jesus Christ.*

Apostles are needed today:

- *to set the church in order,*
- *to restore proper foundations,*
- *to ordain elders in every place,*
- *to bring the revelation of the mystery,*
- *to release the grace of God,*
- *to work mighty signs and wonders,*
- *to bring the church to maturity.*

Chapter Four

APOSTLES ARE FATHERS

God promises us that in the last days He will send the prophet Elijah to restore fathers.

These are fathers not by name or by position but fathers who have a heart for the children that they will grow up into mature sonship, in turn becoming fathers.

One of the primary roles of the apostles being raised by Jesus today is to father the church. Apostles are fathers! They have the heart of a father for the church because they have been appointed by Jesus to bring the revelation of the Father to the church.

In apostolic relationships, the goal of the father is to bring up the children to be young men who grow to the age of maturity; then the young men enter into sonship by the Spirit of adoption. This place of sonship is a relationship with the heavenly Father. The apostolic father has completed his task.

God has Promised Fathers

In the closing verses of the Old Testament, God says "***Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD, and he will turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers, lest I come and strike the earth with a curse***" **Malachi 4:5-6**. This is an amazing Scripture, revealing God's heart for His people. God's clear and deep desire is for all of us children to have fathers. Worldwide, there is a dearth of good fathers even in normal family relationships. This has been exacerbated in the West by high divorce rates and children born to single mothers, but it seems in all cultures that children suffer for the lack of fathers. Even where there have been comparatively good fathers, the children still often grow up lacking security and without knowing their true identity. God promises us that, in the last days, He will send the prophet Elijah to restore fathers. These are fathers not by name or by position but fathers who have a heart for the children that they will grow up into mature sonship, in turn, becoming fathers.

God is Sending the Spirit and Power of Elijah

The '**great and dreadful day**' referred to has not yet come, and before that day, God is going to send Elijah the prophet. In **Luke 1:16-17** the angel of the Lord is prophesying the coming of John the Baptist, saying "***And he will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God. He will also go before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah, 'to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children,' and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.***" Therefore the manifestation of the spirit and power of Elijah in the ministry of John the Baptist was threefold: '***to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children***', '***the disobedient to the wisdom of the just***' and '***to make ready a people for the Lord***'. This was referring to John the Baptist's ministry to prepare the way for the Lord's first coming. But the spirit and power of Elijah is coming again before the '**great and dreadful day of the LORD**'. This will be before His second coming. At the first coming of the Lord Jesus there was rejoicing, with an angelic choir singing in the heavens (**Lu.2:13-14**). In other words, this was not a

‘**dreadful**’ day. Before that day comes, God is going to restore fathers to the church. These are apostolic fathers who have a heart for God’s people.

Who are Fathers?

The apostle John says twice that fathers are those who “**have known Him who is from the beginning**” (**1Jn.2:12-14**). In this passage the fathers are in the context of “**little children**” and “**young men**”. John’s expectation is for there to be at least three generations in every fellowship of God’s people: little children who are newly saved and receiving the milk and then the bread of God’s word; the young men who are able to receive strong meat, who have victory over the devil and are now ready to minister the word to others; and fathers who are the mature ones, by definition, fathering the children and even the young men until they have become mature sons.

Apostles are Fathers

In these days of apostolic restoration, God is restoring, firstly, the apostles who come as fathers to the body. One of the primary roles of the apostles being raised by Jesus today is to father the church. Apostles are fathers! They have the heart of a father for the church because they have been appointed by Jesus to bring the revelation of the Father to the church. Jesus said to the first apostles “**if they receive you they receive Me, and he who receives Me receives Him who sent Me**” (**Matt.10:40**). This is a key revelation that has been missed because we have not had apostles. We have had evangelists who have powerfully preached a gospel of salvation bringing us to know Jesus. We have had other ministries teaching us and bringing us into other aspects of the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ and of the Holy Spirit.

*But what we have lacked is an intimate relationship with,
and knowledge of, God the Father.*

Jesus is clearly telling us that the revelation of the Father comes automatically when we receive true apostles who are sent by Jesus Christ.

Adam the First Father

In the Old Testament we are presented with many great father figures. While the ministry of the apostle is peculiarly New Testament, we have powerful types of apostolic fathers in the Old Testament. In this sense the first apostle was Adam and he is the father of mankind. We are all, by nature, children of Adam. He was meant to be the father of a godly human race but the covering of God’s glory through the father of the human race, Adam, was broken when he fell into sin and God could not restore that covering in the short term. God intended Adam to be fruitful and multiply and to fill the earth with godly children (**Gen.1:28**), but Adam failed. Before we were saved, we were children of Adam, who was a sinner, and because we were under that broken covering, we all are born sinners.

Noah an Apostolic Father

The godly line through Seth to Noah demonstrates the biblical father/son relationship. Each of the fathers was able to pass on to the firstborn son the inheritance. While little is known of the patriarchs, the pattern is set and the next apostolic leader of note in the Scripture is Noah. Noah was used by God to build an ‘*ark of salvation*’ in his generation and bring deliverance to his family, having preached God’s salvation to the whole human race. Noah then became the

father of the human race. But despite his election and his standing before God, he was still a sinner and not able to father a godly human race.

Abraham a true Father

Approximately two thousand years after Adam, God raised up another father, Abraham. He was called by God, who changed his name from Abram, which means '*exalted father*', to Abraham, which means '*father of a multitude*' (**Gen.17:5**). God chose this man on the fore-knowledge that he would rule his own household well and that he would train up his children to do righteousness and justice (**Gen.18:19**). He was a father in his own household and trained them in the ways of God. Abraham is known as the father of the faith and we are his children through faith in Jesus Christ (**Rom.4:16**). God gave to Abraham the promise that, through him, every family on the earth would be blessed (**Gen.12:3**). God was replacing the fallen apostle, Adam, with His chosen one, Abraham. As believers, we have a father in Abraham. The blessing, promised through Abraham to the whole human race, could not come immediately. Until Jesus came, it was confined to one small people group, the children of Israel. Isaac is Abraham's seed and from him came Jacob. Jacob is the father of the twelve tribes of Israel.

Moses Father of a Nation

About four hundred years later, God raised up Moses who became an apostolic father to the children of Israel. Through Moses, God allowed one nation of people to come under an apostolic covering that separated them from all the other nations that were still under the fallen covering of Adam. The Bible says (**1Cor.10:1-2**) that the children of Israel were all baptized into Moses. God gave them the law and formed them into a nation. They had a '*father*'; they were under a leadership covering of the man of God, and they had identity; they knew who they were. To this day the Jewish religion is based on the law of Moses and the Jews still derive their identity from him at least in part. However this covering was only partial and did not release the blessing promised through Abraham to all the nations.

The Concept of Covering

Concerning the concept of covering, it is never the covering of a man as such. When we speak of Moses providing an apostolic covering to the people of God, it is God working through Moses, by His glory, to cover His people. This covering comes through the accurate preaching and teaching of the word that God gives. In the Old Testament, it was the law given through Moses; in the New Testament, it is the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. This never changes! In the Old Testament, the prophets were calling the people of God back to the word spoken by Moses and, as well, prophetically pointing to the New Covenant yet to come. In the New Testament, the church "**continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine**", and Paul and the other writers of the epistles, similar to the prophets of the Old Testament, are calling the people of God to adhere to the teachings and revelations brought by the Lord Jesus, both which He taught to the apostles of the Lamb and, then by revelation of the Holy Spirit, to the apostles raised up later.

Jesus Christ is the Apostle of God

Through Him the Blessing of Abraham comes to all

There are many apostolic figures throughout the Old Testament, but the next important apostolic figure in our study is Christ Himself. It is through Christ that the blessing which was promised to Abraham is released to all. Moses could only give a covering to the Jews. Through

Christ, that which our father Adam lost is restored to the whole human race.

The blessing of Abraham is the promise of the Spirit, “*that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith*” Gal.3:14. The blessing of the Spirit could not come until Christ came. It is through Christ that we receive our inheritance. “*For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus,*” and “*if you are Christ’s, then you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise*” Gal.3:26,29. When we are born again we become a child of God and the inheritance is ours; but when we step into ‘sonship’ [into the adoption] that is when we actually inherit.

Jesus, the Apostle of God, is our Father

Jesus is the apostle sent by God (Jn.20:21). He is our apostle: “*consider the Apostle and High Priest of our confession, Christ Jesus*” Heb.3:1. Jesus fully represents and manifests the Father to us. In Him we come to know the Father. Jesus refers to or directly addresses God as the Father more than 170 times in the gospels. He became a ‘father’ to ‘children’ through the gospel. He says, “*Here am I and the children whom God has given Me*” Heb.2:13. Jesus is our father. He is leading many sons to glory (Heb.2:10). He does this by bringing us into the full revelation of the apostolic message. If we receive the apostle He sends, we receive Him and, in receiving Him, we receive the Father. He was the Son to His Father and He has given us to the Father. We are the brethren of Jesus in one sense but, in reality, in the household of God, Jesus is our apostolic Father and through Him, we come to know God as our Father. He then appointed apostles to be fathers in the church so that through them we could come to know Jesus and in Him, come to know the Father.

Jesus Raised the Twelve to be Fathers of the Church

One of the main aspects of Jesus’ ministry was to raise up twelve apostles who were to be the foundational and leadership ministries of the church. They were the apostolic fathers through whom Jesus gave birth to the church (1Cor.4:15, Gal.4:19). They are forever the foundation ministries of the eternal church. In these last days Jesus is once again giving apostles to His church and a key aspect of the apostolic ministry is for the apostles to bring fatherhood to the church.

We all need a ‘Father’

Every human being needs a father. Without ‘fathers’ there is a lack of peace and grace. Instead there is a striving to prove oneself. Having a ‘father’ who loves unconditionally brings peace and security and actually releases us into the call of God whereby we come to know our identity. The approval and acceptance that we long for comes to us from God our Father, but often only flows fully to us through an apostolic father. We need to know we belong in the family of God and that ‘knowing’ comes through an apostolic father. Receiving an apostle is receiving Jesus and the Father (Matt.10:40). When we are given or sent an apostle by the Lord, and we receive that one, something happens. The grace of God is released to bring us into a real experience of sonship.

In a period of weeks and months in the latter part of 2002 a number of us at SHILOH came into a remarkable experience of spiritual fatherhood and sonship. For some it was a particular life changing experience; for others it was a gradual transition, realizing that one had come into a wonderful place of security and of tangible grace. Coming into the reality of sonship,

by receiving a spiritual father [apostle] through whom Christ releases the Spirit of adoption, brings us into a wonderful awareness of and deeper relationship with the heavenly Father. Ever since then, the message of sonship and the reality of spiritual fatherhood has gone forth through us and many have entered into sonship.

Recently, I led a team to visit a number of house churches but the major ministry was to a very new house church in a town hundreds of kilometers south of our city. We had only been to this group of people once before and they began to meet as a house church as a result of that visit. In planning our return visit, we had suggested that they host a public seminar to promote the apostolic message. However they contacted us and said ‘we just want our father to come and talk with us’. After being among this people for two days, we realized the Lord was doing a wonderful work in their midst, bringing them into relational security with us and among themselves and giving them vision, purpose and grace to go on. They said to me ‘we knew that when our father came his Father would come also.’ These people have a wonderful revelation because they know how to receive an apostle.

The Revelation of Sonship

This revelation of Jesus and the Father that comes through the apostles, brings to the believer the reality of sonship. A true apostle is sent by Christ with the restoration power of Elijah to restore **“the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to the fathers” Mal.4:6.** Sonship refers to a walk in maturity. It is the same as receiving the Spirit of adoption whereby we come into a real relationship with the Father:

- not as a child who knows the Father as a child,
- not the relationship that a young man has as a servant to the Father,
- but the relationship that a mature son is able to have with the Father.

Jesus is the Pattern Son

Jesus related to and spoke of His Father all the time. Even as a lad of twelve years, He said **“Did you not know that I must be about My Father’s business?” Lu.2:49.** At His baptism, God spoke from heaven, acknowledging Jesus, **“This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased” Lu.3:22.** In **Hebrews 1:5**, the divine relationship between Jesus and His Father is clearly proclaimed in quotes from Old Testament prophetic Scriptures. **“You are My Son, today I have begotten You; and again: I will be to Him a Father, and He shall be to Me a Son.”** God gave **“His only begotten Son”** to us (**Jn.3:16**). In His life as the Son of Man, Jesus demonstrates to us how to relate to God as our Father.

The Revelation of Father and Son

A true son is equal with his father

In the book of **John**, Jesus explains His relationship to the Father. After Jesus had healed the man at the pool of Bethesda and that man told the Jews it was Jesus who had made him well, the Jews wanted to kill Him for healing on the Sabbath (**Jn.5:1-13**). Jesus answered them saying **“My Father has been working until now, and I have been working” Jn.5:17.** The Son does what He sees His Father doing. The Scripture goes on to say that **“the Jews sought all the more to kill Him, because He not only broke the Sabbath, but also said that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God” v.18.** A mature son is equal with his father.

In apostolic relationships the goal of the father is to bring up the children to be young men who grow to the age of maturity; then the young men enter into sonship by the Spirit of adoption. This place of sonship is a relationship with the heavenly Father.

The apostolic father has completed his task.

A true son does the Father's works

Jesus then said "***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***" **Jn.5:19**. In April 2004, sitting on my bed in a hotel in Rwmagana, a provincial town in Rwanda, in the midst of flowing in powerful apostolic ministry, I heard the Lord say to me 'from now on you only have to do what you see Me doing'. This sounds so simple and it is! It is a profound reality to enter into His rest and only do the things that He says to do. By the time Paul sent Timothy to Corinth as a "***beloved and faithful son***", he knew that Timothy would fully represent him, not as a servant but as a son, a mature son equal to his father in that he would do the same works that he had seen his father do. In the same way, I am now able to refer leaders who make inquiry regarding our ministry through our website to apostles in Africa who are sons. In so doing I am able to say, 'this Kenyan apostle will adequately and genuinely represent the apostolic ministry of Christ', to the leader inquiring.

There are greater works for the son

"For the Father loves the Son, and shows Him all things that He Himself does; and He will show Him greater works than these that you may marvel" **Jn.5:20**. One of the awesome revelations that we are learning to walk in as sons is that 'the Father loves me.'

*He loves me as His son, one of His chosen ones,
and He has chosen me for particular "greater works."*

Remember, Jesus told us later on in **John's** gospel that we would do greater works when He went to the Father (**14:12**). These greater works are now taking place. In our ministry we have seen many having transforming experiences when they hear the apostolic revelation and receive the Spirit of adoption. To witness a minister of many years' experience totally change in front of one's eyes is an amazing 'greater work'. Walking in apostolic grace and revelation causes us to give thanks to God continually. Like David in **1 Chronicles 17:16**, I say to God "***who am I, O LORD God? That you have brought me this far?***" Like David, each one of us is a chosen son of God and God is calling us to walk in sonship, to do the greater works.

The Father bears witness to the Son - John.5:31-39

I have stated earlier that Jesus is our Father. Even as the Father bore witness to Jesus as the Son, now it is Jesus who bears witness to His sons. True sons represent the Father. We represent Jesus. While this is specific to the ministry of the apostle, as the spirit and power of Elijah is restored all the saints will come into sonship and will be manifest as sons in the earth (**Rom.8:19**). Sons represent the Father and the Father, by His Spirit, bears witness of the sons. The Lord will bear witness to us as we faithfully preach and teach the Scriptures. It is true that if

we remain faithful to the word of God, to speak the word of God only, then the word will become flesh again and will be seen by all men. ***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*** Jn.14:10. Jesus said ***“He who has seen Me has seen the Father”*** Jn.14:9. The Son bears witness to the Father and the Father bears witness to the son.

The glory of the Father is to be seen in Christ in us!

The Revelation of Father and Son applied

True unity is being one with Jesus and the Father. The only way for this to happen is to receive the apostles that He sends. Remember ***“He who receives you receives Me, and he who receives Me receives Him who sent Me”*** Matt.10:40. God created us in His own image, according to His likeness (Gen.1:26), and that image is revealed to be God as Father and God as Son; God is Father to a Son and Son to a Father. God is bringing His church into this revelation: He is restoring us to His own image and likeness. Therefore He is raising up apostolic fathers and releasing His children into an experience of sonship, thereby bringing us all into a closer relationship with God.

GOD IS SENDING ELIJAH!

*The spirit and power of Elijah has been restored
and is being released.*

Apostles are being raised

*‘Grace and apostleship’ is being received again
from God the Father through Christ.*

*This is releasing the children of God
into apostolic relationships.*

Apostolic fathers have been restored

*Many are coming into this experience
of grace and apostleship,
to be manifest as ‘sons’.*

Chapter Five

WHAT IS AN APOSTLE?

The key to becoming an apostle is to receive a calling from God. God calls a person to be an apostle; God raises that person up, generally after many years of training and preparation, and sends that person to do the ministry work of an apostle.

An apostle is one called by Christ and given a profound measure of grace and anointing by the Father to bring the revelation and reality of God's will and of the Father's love to the church.

The apostles, both the twelve, and those who are given as ascension gift ministries, are foundational ministries upon which the apostolic church of the Lord Jesus Christ is built. Therefore the last days church will again be built on the foundational ministry of apostles.

Even as it was in the beginning of the church, so shall it be in the end-time church - there will be many apostles called by the Lord.

An **apostle** is a “**sent one**”, a special delegate, one commissioned for a particular task or role, one sent forth with a message; officially a commissioner of Christ [Strong’s Concordance #652]. Literally, an apostle is *one sent forth*.

*An apostle is one sent on behalf of another with the authority
of the sender to successfully fulfill that for which he is sent,
and to fully represent and make known the sender.*

The key to becoming an apostle is to receive a calling from God. God calls a person to be an apostle; God raises that person up, generally after many years of training and preparation, and sends that person to do the ministry work of an apostle. Paul the apostle declared that he was set apart from his mother's womb for the purpose of God (Gal.1:15). At the time of his conversion, God revealed to the disciple Ananias that there was a powerful apostolic calling upon Paul's life (**Acts 9:15-16**). It was not until many years later, when Paul [Saul] was ministering as part of the leadership team of the church at Antioch, that the Holy Spirit revealed that it was now time for Paul and Barnabas to be ordained to the ministry of apostle (**Acts 13:1-3**).

Some have said that there are **three delineating features** of an apostle. Let us look at these three features.

‘**One who has had a visible encounter with the resurrected Christ.**’ What does that mean? Paul the apostle never saw Jesus in the flesh but he had a visible encounter with the risen Lord on the road to Damascus which dramatically changed his life. Stephen, the first martyr, had a visible encounter with the Lord as he was being stoned. My testimony is that the apostolic calling needs to be based on a very clear encounter with the Lord so that the person called to be an apostle has no doubts that their calling is from Christ. There is much contending against the apostolic ministry, both within the church from other ministers, and in the spirit realm from the powers of darkness. I shared, in the introduction to this book, that I have seen the Lord and He commissioned me to the ministry of the apostle. This has been a powerful foundational

testimony that has enabled me to stand in many nations, before principalities and powers, and before large and small congregations of leaders and declare that I am an apostle of Jesus Christ.

'One who plants churches.' In the Scripture it is not only apostles who plant churches. In **Acts 8**, Philip planted the church in Samaria but the apostles soon became involved to properly found and set the church in order. In **Acts 11**, some disciples planted the church in Antioch but, when the apostles in Jerusalem heard of it, they sent Barnabas to help as an apostolic delegate in the leadership of the church. Perhaps it is more enlightening to say that the apostle is the master builder of the church, laying the foundations and setting the church in order so that every local church can function fruitfully. For a church to be properly planted there needs to be involvement by both apostles and prophets as both these ministries provide necessary foundational teaching and instruction for the church to be built properly (**Eph.2:19-22**).

'One who functions in the ministry with signs, wonders and miracles.' Every ascension gift ministry can expect to function with signs and wonders. In fact, every true believer, which scripturally means an apostolic believer, can expect to see signs and wonders (**Mk.16:17-18**). The calling of the apostle should be confirmed by the Lord in this way, specifically: "**many wonders and signs were done through the apostles**" **Acts 2:43**. "**Truly the signs of an apostle were accomplished among you with all perseverance, in signs and wonders and mighty deeds**" **2Cor.12:12**. Notice that perseverance is a key characteristic of the apostle. I bear witness that God grants remarkable signs through the ministry of apostles, and I bear witness that perseverance is a key quality to learn and grow in.

[*The three quotations in bold are quoted from Marvin Vincent in the word wealth in the Spirit Filled Life Bible p.1738; the extra comments are mine.*]

The Lord Calls People by Name to Be Apostles

In **Matthew 10**, we read of the calling of the first apostles by the Lord Jesus Christ. The first calling we all receive is the call to follow Jesus; then comes the appointment to a specific ministry. Out of many who were following Jesus, God called the twelve to be His apostles. In **verses 2-4**, Jesus names the ones who are to be His apostles. **He called them by name**. They were chosen by Jesus after a night spent in prayer, talking to His Father (**Lu. 6:12-13**). Both **Luke** and **Mark** also record the names of the twelve. There are at least twenty-two apostles named in the New Testament and other apostles are referred to. It is interesting to note that there are no pastors named in the New Testament; there were very few prophets or teachers named and only one evangelist. Even as it was in the beginning of the church, so shall it be in the end-time church - there will be many apostles called by the Lord.

In these days God has equipped me, and this ministry, with the ability to recognize and commission apostles. We operate in this area very carefully.

*The apostolic ministry is not something that we
aspire to of our own volition or ambition,
but rather it is a response to the clear calling
and appointment of the Lord.*

Apostles are empowered by the Lord

"When He had called His twelve disciples to Him, He gave them power over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease" **Mt.10:1**. The signs of the apostle, given by Jesus, are power over unclean spirits and the ability to cast

them out, and the ability to heal the sick. Notice that Jesus has given authority to heal “***all kinds of sickness and disease.***” We should boldly pray for every sick person confidently in the authority of the word.

Testimony of signs and wonders

The testimony of our own ministry is as follows: from 1995 to 1998, we as a ministry team saw many signs and wonders everywhere we went both within Australia and overseas. We were primarily **an itinerant teaching ministry** in those days. From 1999, the season changed and the Lord put us ‘underground’ to learn the apostolic ministry, beginning with foundations. However, from late 2002, the Lord has raised this ministry in apostolic authority. As a result, our focus and emphasis is not on signs and wonders and yet regularly the Lord grants mighty signs and wonders, confirming the word that we are speaking.

For example, in February 2003, I was taken to a village church outside of Yangon, Myanmar. In the course of the evening meeting, I was asked to pray for three boys who were brothers, all suffering from ‘blood cancer’. The oldest boy was visibly sick. I was without a team on that occasion and simply prayed in faith according to **Mark 16:18 “they will lay hands on the sick and they will recover.”** I returned to Yangon in September that year and two Christian workers from that village church came to meet me in the capital to tell me that the three boys had been totally healed.

In September 2005 I was with a team in Pakistan and, on one evening, I was the speaker in an open gospel crusade in a large tent that had been erected for some meetings. Hundreds of people attended the night meeting and, as soon as we came on to the platform, we observed a demonized woman attracting a lot of attention in the midst of the congregation. My team saw this and began to pray and intercede and the demonic behavior ceased so I could minister. At the end of the meeting there was an altar call for the healing of the sick and the ushers began to carry the demonized woman forward. During the meeting, God had put a conviction in my heart that this woman would be set free. However, I instructed the ushers to take the woman to the back of the meeting as the demonic behavior had flared again as the demon wanted to attract attention and interrupt the healing of others.

As we left the meeting, I went straight to the demonized woman and she was set free very quickly simply by binding the devil in her, in the name of Jesus, and then getting the woman to agree with me, speaking out the name of Jesus and commanding it to leave. The demon left; we stood the woman on her feet and prayed for her to be filled with the Holy Spirit and she spoke in a heavenly language. This woman had been demonized from childhood. The people, and especially the local pastors with us, were amazed. The pastors said ‘we have never seen anything like this! This is the greatest miracle we have ever seen!’

Apostles are Sent to Specific People Groups

The apostles are sent out by the Lord. Jesus gave the apostles specific instructions: to which people group they were to go, and where they were not to go. **“Do not go into the way of the Gentiles, and do not enter a city of the Samaritans. But go rather to the lost sheep of Israel” Matt.10:5-6.** Paul also was clearly sent to specific cities or regions. In **Acts 16:6** Paul said **“they were forbidden by the Holy Spirit to preach the word in Asia [a Roman province].”** Then Paul was directed by the Lord to proceed to Macedonia to preach the gospel there (v.10).

Myanmar

In early 1997 I went with another pastor to Myanmar and, while there, the Lord made it clear to me that I would be returning to that nation bringing ministry teams. I was back in Myanmar for the fourth time in early 1999 and significant work was opening up for us. Other teams from our ministry had already gone into Myanmar as well. I had known from the early years of my Christian experience that I would be ministering in Asia and this was now being fulfilled. I had never thought of going to Africa, thinking that the European nations should be responsible to help the African churches. However, while in Myanmar in 1999, an invitation to Kenya came to me via a fax message and the Lord spoke to me telling me clearly I would be going to Africa.

Africa

The Lord's sending of our ministry to Africa has been very specific, being confirmed in many ways, and now the work in Kenya has become a primary focus of our apostolic ministry and we are seeing lasting fruit. Many apostles have been raised in Kenya and, even in this year of 2006, apostolic ministries are going out from Kenya. Apostolic ministers have been to a Congolese Refugee Camp in Western Tanzania and to Dar Es Salaam, the capital of Tanzania. Teams have been to towns and villages in Southern Sudan. A Kenyan apostle, George Muteti, regularly visits four Central African nations, ministering in the capital cities of Burundi, Rwanda and Uganda and in other towns and cities as well as in Goma, Democratic Republic of Congo. There are other apostolic sons ministering powerfully within Kenya and in other African nations.

The Conduct of Apostolic Ministry

What were the apostles to do?

They were to "*preach, saying, 'The kingdom of heaven is at hand.' Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out demons*" Matt.10:7-8. One of the key areas of restoration that the Lord is emphasizing in his church in these days is 'the rediscovery of the kingdom of God' and that the gospel is 'the gospel of the kingdom of God [or the kingdom of heaven]'. The twentieth century was the century of modern evangelism, beginning at the end of the nineteenth century with the rise of Charles Spurgeon in England, and then in America, D.L. Moody.

It was Moody who was the father of twentieth century evangelism. It was Moody who introduced altar calls where the lost could come to salvation through saying the 'sinner's prayer' and being counseled. This became the way of evangelism for all soul winning ministries. The emphasis in this evangelism was the salvation of souls and, in many ways, an unscriptural focus was put on 'going to heaven' rather than the preaching of the biblical injunctions such as Jesus' own words when He began preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, "*The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel*" Mark 1:14-15.

Then in John 3, Jesus is explaining to Nicodemus how to enter the kingdom, "*Most assuredly I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God. Unless one is born of water and the spirit he cannot enter the kingdom of God*" v.3,5

*People are 'saved' to enter the kingdom of God now,
not just to have an assurance of going to heaven when they die.*

How were they to conduct the ministry?

They were sent out by the Lord and were obedient to His instructions (**Mt.10:9-15**). On this occasion, the Lord sent them out with “**neither gold, nor silver, nor copper in your money belts,**” nor even a change of clothes, assuring them that they would be fed and looked after. At the Last Supper, Jesus reminded the disciples of the time He sent them out with nothing but then told them that, in the light of His impending suffering and death, they would now need a moneybag, a knapsack and even a sword (**Lu.22:35-36**). From these two passages of Scripture, we learn that the Lord has ways of providing specifically for each mission for which He sends His servants.

From the beginning of our ministry in 1998, we have known from a ‘*rhema*’ [quickened] word from the Lord that our ministry would be ‘sent, safe and supplied’.

*Over the years the Lord has taught us :
every mission of God has His permission
and His provision. God has resources that
we do not know of, and He is able to supply.*

Testimony of the Lord’s provision

Sometimes we have set out in Australia with a team traveling by car and we have only had a small amount of money for fuel etc. And yet we have always been supplied with every need, often bringing home offerings to fund the ministry. When we are convicted that the Lord is sending us on an international trip, often the team members including myself, have no funds available for the trip. We have to trust the Lord completely for His provision. It is our practice, until now, to always pay our own way when we go overseas as our destination has been to developing nations. This has meant that, on occasions, we have needed to provide extra money to facilitate conferences and seminars in the host nation, as well as meeting our own accommodation and travel expenses. However, this situation is changing as the brethren in the host nations become more apostolic in doctrine and practice. Soon, it will be possible to visit these brethren and God will enable them to provide the needs of the visiting ministers. The point is that we need to consult the Lord and go out in His will and in the confidence of His provision, whether it be with a money belt or without.

In our ministry, we have many testimonies of God’s provision both for our upkeep here in Australia and for many international trips. Some years ago, I was booked to go to Africa with a team. I was confident that our planning was in the will of God but, two days before our tickets were to be paid for, I had no money at all. I sought the Lord and He answered me and said, ‘borrow the money for the tickets because the money for the African trip is coming.’ I approached someone whom I believed would lend me the money and amazingly God had already spoken to them about this. I paid for my ticket and still needed over one thousand dollars for the actual trip costs. The very next day a person came to the office and shared with one of my co-workers that an inheritance had come to them in the form of a house which was to be sold. The person said ‘I will be tithing on that sale and tell Paul he can use some of that money for the African trip’. Some weeks went by and it was not until the last working day before we left for Africa that the person brought the tithe to us. You can imagine that it was a challenging time having to wait until the eleventh hour to repay my debt and to have money to travel with but the Lord provided!

Apostles will be persecuted

Persecution will come when people step out into a full- on ministry for the Lord, even from family. The apostles were to expect persecution but not to fear it because the Holy Spirit would tell them what they were to say (**Matt.10:16-20**). As an apostolic ministry, we have experienced some real opposition, both within Australia and in some overseas nations, from other church leaders because we have gone forth doing the ministry work of the apostle. I have been called before ‘the council’ more than once and been accused of all sorts of fallacies in my teaching and practice. I have been threatened and other ministers have been warned against our ministry, not because of scriptural errors in doctrine or practice in our ministry, but because the apostolic ministry challenges the doctrine and practice of others.

Apostles are to lay down their lives Matt.10:27-31

Apostles are expected to preach openly the things that Jesus reveals to them. This can even imperil the life of the apostle. The apostle is to be full of courage, boldly declaring the whole counsel of God. In the current church, this includes exposing the errors of the ‘prosperity doctrine’ which has corrupted many ministers and impoverished many believers; it includes declaring the biblical truth concerning the sin of homosexuality which some denominations have declared to no longer be a sin; it includes clear teaching from the Scripture concerning the second coming of Christ and the need for the church to be prepared to “*endure to the end*” (**Matt.24:13**).

Apostles are to confess Christ Matt.10:32-33

Notice that this Scripture has been misused by evangelists asking a brand new Christian to come forward in a meeting to confess Christ publicly. It is the apostles who are to confess Christ publicly. If one does this, Jesus has promised to confess their name before the Father. The public confession of Christ will bring division. Households will be divided, but this is part of the cost of fulfilling the call (**v.34-39**). Jesus said ‘***He who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me***’ **v.38**.

He who receives an apostle receives the Lord

There are rewards for those who receive an apostle. Jesus said, speaking to the apostles, “***He who receives you receives Me, and he who receives Me receives Him who sent Me***” (**Matt.10:40**). If you receive an apostle you receive the Lord.

*Herein is a mystery: when we receive a true apostle
of Jesus Christ, we receive a much deeper revelation
of Jesus and the Father; the Son and the Father!
The revelation of God is made known to the church
at a much deeper level through apostles.*

A true apostle is empowered by Christ to minister “***apostleship***” through grace. Paul says “***Through Him we have received grace and apostleship for obedience to the faith among all nations for His name***” **Rom.1:5**. An apostle is not just another five-fold minister. An apostle is one called by Christ and given a profound measure of grace and anointing by the Father to bring the revelation and reality of God’s will and of the Father’s love to the church. It is our experience that, when we receive an apostle of Jesus Christ in reality, we receive an enormous endowment

of God's grace that is not able to be compared to anything previously received. As one becomes obedient to the apostles' doctrine, there comes a deeper revelation of Jesus Christ and the Father. The apostles' doctrine initially can only be taught by the apostles whom Jesus is restoring to the church today. Through the apostles, Jesus is restoring apostolic doctrine and the revelation of the mystery. However, when the apostles' doctrine is taught, all ministers begin to function with an apostolic anointing and revelation and begin to teach the apostles' doctrine themselves. The apostles' doctrine, in simple terms, is teaching the Scriptures accurately.

The Apostles of the Lamb are the Foundations

The apostles had been with Jesus for some time before He named them. They had already had some training with Jesus. He knew them. In the New Jerusalem the walls of the city are built on the foundations of the twelve apostles of the Lamb (**Rev. 21:14**). There are only 12 apostles of the Lamb. In **Acts 1:15-26**, we read of a replacement being chosen for Judas; the qualifications for that replacement: one who had been with Jesus from the day of His baptism with John to the day of His ascension (**v.21-22**).

The Church: Built on the Foundation of Apostles

The church is built on the foundations of the apostles and prophets (**Eph.2:20**). The apostles, both the twelve and those who are given as ascension gift ministries, are foundational ministries upon which the apostolic church of the Lord Jesus Christ is built. Therefore, the last days church will again be built on the foundational ministry of apostles. The last days apostles are also required to do the work of the ministry to bring the church to maturity. While the church remains under the leadership of bishops and pastors it cannot, by definition, come to full maturity. This is because the church needs the full five-fold ministry functioning to release the grace that is required for the church to grow to maturity.

This has not concerned many leaders as they do not believe that the church is pre-destined to come into glorious maturity in preparation for the Lord's return. Rather they believe and teach that the church is to be 'raptured' out of this world in its present state of immaturity. Therefore, the attitude is: get people saved and look after them as best as possible in the present church structure until Jesus comes to rapture the church.

The keys of the kingdom of heaven

In **Matthew 16:18-19**, Jesus declares that He will build the church on the confession of faith in Him. Because Peter had this revelation, he is singled out as a model to be a foundational apostle of the church. Jesus gave to the apostle Peter the keys of the kingdom. The only other clear reference to keys in the Scripture is to the 'key of David', first mentioned in **Isaiah 22:22** and then in **Revelation 3:7**. Jesus is identified as the one who holds the key of David. It is reasonable to believe that Jesus was giving to the apostle something of the nature of the key of David.

Peter uses the keys

In Jerusalem - Acts 2:17-41

Peter was the one chosen by God to stand up with the eleven and preach on the Day of Pentecost with the result that 3000 Jewish men were released into the kingdom. On that day Peter used the keys to open the door to the kingdom of heaven to those 3000 Jewish men.

In Samaria - Acts 8:14-17

After Phillip had preached in Samaria as a successful evangelist with signs and wonders, men and women alike had believed and been baptized but had not received the Holy Spirit. The church in Jerusalem sent Peter and John, the two leading apostles, who laid hands on them that they might receive the Holy Spirit. Peter fulfilled his commission by using the keys to release the baptism of the Holy Spirit in Samaria.

In Caesarea - Acts 10:30-46

Peter went to the house of Cornelius, a Gentile, to share the gospel and, using the keys, he preached Jesus to them and God released the Holy Spirit to them. Then he baptized them in water. Peter opened the kingdom of God to the Gentiles.

Peter is used as a foundational apostle in three specific ways in the book of **Acts** to fulfill the Great Commission. In **Acts 1:8**, Jesus commanded the apostles that, once they had received the power of the Holy Spirit, they were to preach in three major areas: the Jews in Jerusalem and Judea, the Samarians, and the Gentiles.

Paul the apostle had the same keys

Paul was first called to apostolic ministry when Ananias was sent to heal him, see him filled with the Holy Spirit and baptized in water. In **Acts 9:15-16**, we read the commission given to Paul by Jesus through Ananias, “***he is a chosen vessel of Mine to bear My name before Gentiles, kings and the children of Israel.***” Paul received the keys when he was ordained to be an apostle. In **Acts 13:1-4**, Paul is sent out as an apostle by the Holy Spirit to do the ministry work of the apostle. Before that he is called a teacher. He is already recognized as having the ascension gift ministry of teacher. The church met together ‘***ministered to the Lord and fasted***'; then the Holy Spirit spoke to them, “***Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.***” The other prophets and teachers then laid hands on them and sent them out.

In **Acts 14:1-4**, Paul and Barnabas begin to minister as apostles, preaching to and teaching Jews and Gentiles alike, winning new converts and experiencing strong opposition. In verse 3 we read that the Lord was “***bearing witness to the word of His grace, granting signs and wonders to be done by their hands.***”

In **Acts 19:1-7**, we see Paul using the keys of the kingdom of heaven to plant the church in Ephesus. How did Paul use the keys in Ephesus? He preached Jesus to them. They were baptized in the name of Jesus and received the Holy Spirit; they spoke in tongues and prophesied. These twelve men became the foundation stones of the church in Ephesus.

Apostles in the book of Acts

Peter doing the work of the Evangelist.

In **Acts 2:38**, ‘***Then Peter said to them, “Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”***’ Peter is using the keys: calling people to repent, be baptized in the name of Jesus and receive the Holy Spirit. For some years the Lord has directed me to concentrate on leadership conferences and seminars to bring the leaders of the church into the apostolic revelation. However, during my trip into Pakistan in September 2005, I was asked to speak in a number of open-air crusades. I had not done the work of the evangelist like this for some years. Now, as an apostle with some experience in the apostolic ministry, I found that I had much grace and wisdom and understanding to present the gospel in such a way that the lost were saved, that the

need for water baptism was presented, that believers were able to receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit and that there was food for everyone in the preaching of the word. I experienced a much greater authority as I am aware that the Lord has given me “***the keys of the kingdom of heaven.***”

Apostles releasing the Holy 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. The apostle is used to release the Holy Spirit.

Some years ago, I and a team were asked to minister for a few days at the end of a short-term training school [six-weeks] in central Myanmar. The students had been thoroughly taught but God used us to release the power of the Holy Spirit “***as He had not yet fallen on any of them***” (Acts 8:16). Some of those students went forth in powerful ministry from that school and we are still in contact with them today.

The Calling of Paul

The Lord said to Ananias, “***Go, for he is a chosen vessel of Mine to bear My name before Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel. For I will show him how many things he must suffer for My name's sake***” Acts 9:15-16. Paul, the apostle, was called and commissioned by Jesus, and this was confirmed by the Holy Spirit in Acts 13:2. While the calling of Paul was unique, it is also true that Paul is a ‘model’ apostle for all of us who are called into the apostolic ministry. Because Paul was not one of the twelve apostles of the Lamb, he demonstrates for us how apostles are called today.

The first church established among the Gentiles

In Acts 10:1-44, Peter was sent by the Lord to the house of Cornelius, to Gentiles. He preached Jesus, the Holy Spirit fell and he baptized the new believers. Peter the apostle is founding the church. Notice that the church is being founded in the ‘house’. We have found for the last eight years that the Lord has directed us into establishing the church in the house. Often in our own ministry in Australia, where we have concentrated on planting the church in the house, we have been able to minister salvation, including water baptism and baptism of the Holy Spirit. We have done baptisms in bath tubs, in the ocean when it is nearby, in rivers, lakes and ponds and in both public and private swimming pools.

We have written of church in the house elsewhere and need to write more because the biblical church is the church that meets “***from house to house***”. It is our experience that the smaller meeting in the house is the perfect training ground for bringing the saints up to be ministers as each member is able to function in the house fellowship, no longer a ‘pew-sitter’.

The benefits of church in the house will become more and more evident as the times that we live in usher in the inevitable persecutions and tribulation of the last days. Even at this time, the voice of the prophets is starting to be heard, instructing the church that a time of suffering will come upon the church world-wide and that the Western church is ill-prepared for such a future.

It is the Holy Spirit who Anoints and Sends

“***So, being sent out by the Holy Spirit***” Acts 13:4. Paul and Barnabas were sent out to do the ministry work of the apostle by the Holy Spirit. The whole church is meant to be apostolic.

Many have thought in recent decades that missionaries are the modern apostles. There is no doubt that many who have gone out to the mission field have been called and sent by the Lord. However, the fruit of much missionary work has been the establishment of denominational churches in every nation on earth. Therefore, the missionary work has not been truly apostolic, but denominational, in character.

*Again today, we are seeing the Holy Spirit
anoint and send apostles.*

One of the marks of my own ministry as an apostle has been the ability by the Holy Spirit to recognize and anoint apostles. This began in our March/April 2003 trip to Kenya. On this trip, as we taught in meetings and seminars, a few individuals responded specifically to the word which was explaining the restoration of apostles and, through apostles, the restoration of fathers. At the time the Lord showed us to place a ‘Samuel anointing’ upon those who were being called to be apostles. We understood that even as Samuel anointed David to be king many years before he was actually king, we were anointing individuals who were called to be apostles, knowing that the ministry would emerge in time. Since that time God has continued to raise apostles through us, both in Africa and Asia, and it is clearly a work of the Holy Spirit.

Apostles plant and strengthen, and appoint elders

“And when they had preached the gospel to that city and made many disciples they returned to Lystra, Iconium and Antioch, strengthening the souls of the disciples, exhorting them to continue in the faith, and saying, ‘We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God.’ So when they had appointed elders in every church, and prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed” Acts 14:21-23. The apostles are able to discern those who are to be raised up into leadership.

The Apostles’ Doctrine establishes the church

In **Acts 18:1-8**, Paul visited Corinth and we see apostolic work happening: the church is being raised up, the work of evangelism is being done and the word of God is being taught. This was the foundation of a strong church being raised up in Corinth, which moved in signs and wonders. The work of the apostle today is generally not in evangelism, as the work of evangelism has already been done in most places, and the church has been established in some form. However, the work of the apostle today is very much to teach the word, the apostles’ doctrine, setting the church in order.

Appointing leaders

On a trip to Kenya in early 2006, I was invited to speak in a one-day seminar, on a Saturday with an apostolic company led by apostle George Muteti. Then, on the Sunday morning, I had the privilege of ministering in the meeting where a number of house churches had gathered. George has been functioning as an apostle for a few years and he had trained a number of disciples who were now ready for ministry. It was an amazing time: I **ordained** George as **an apostle**, having commissioned him two years earlier; I **ordained two pastors**, who had been functioning in the local churches in this apostolic company; I **commissioned** approximately eighteen **men and women to various ministries**, including pastoral, teaching, deacon, eldership, prophetic worship and intercession.

Setting the Church in order

In the Sunday meeting, I had the opportunity to set a number of things in order including the Lord's Supper, tithes and offerings; also helping the church to be led by the Holy Spirit in worship and in the ministry of the gifts of the Holy Spirit. I taught the word concerning the full restoration of women in ministry. Both George and I were aware at the time that God was authorizing and enabling a wonderful work of establishing and strengthening this apostolic company in biblical order. Setting the church in order included ordaining and commissioning leaders. Since then, I have received testimonies from George concerning the change in his own ministry function - an increase of authority and clarity in the ministry gift of the apostle - and the release of ministry in the lives of the ones I commissioned.

The Church in a Refugee Camp

A couple of years ago, two pastors from a Congolese Refugee camp in West Tanzania contacted us through our web-site. They were urging me to come to visit but that did not seem possible. However, in September 2005, apostle Peter Akeck from Kakamega in West Kenya, accompanied by a pastor, traveled to this camp on my behalf and the brethren there were very appreciative. As a result of this visit, Peter returned in November '05 and conducted a four-day seminar in the camp for Christian leaders. Pastors and ministers, including Bible College principals, attended the seminar and when, at the end of the fourth day, Peter asked if there were any questions, the only question was 'when can we have this again?' There are 56,000 people in the camp and they have been there for nine years.

After the seminar, the pastors who were in contact with me wrote a report and I quote from it: "*The camp got revival about the word of the ministry and the restoration of the church. We would formally let you know that we are still children and do not know anything about the word of God although we are pastors and church leaders, since our knowledge is still low.*

We believe that God has accepted us to be refugees on purpose. This is enabling us to become disciples, from discipleship to servants and then sons. Let us confess that the church in DRC has lost the plan we are now looking for. Missionaries who colonized us did not preach the Gospel announcing the kingdom of God in its clearness. However, the only thing that can restore all things is the church using the apostolic teachings which are spiritually powerful and greatly inspired by the Holy Ghost."

At the request of the leaders in the camp, Peter returned to do a further seminar in March 2006 and, also at the request of the leaders, a specific course of study has been set in place. This course includes the study of nine manuals [these are teaching manuals produced by Revival Ministries Australia. An outline of the course can be found in the Appendix of this book]. The course will be completed by the end of November and Peter will return in July and then in November for further seminars and to graduate the successful students at the end of November.

The Ephesian Model

In **Acts 19:1-7**, the foundations of the faith were being laid in the lives of twelve individual men and through them the church was planted in Ephesus. Within months of Paul beginning his ministry in Ephesus, he established an apostolic training centre in the school of Tyrannus, teaching there daily. "***This continued for two years so that all who dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks***" v.10. This is the first clear example of an apostolic training school, where the apostle taught the word continually, training many ministers and sending them out during the course of the school to evangelise the whole province

of Asia. Paul's ministry in Ephesus was characterised by mighty signs and wonders but, even more so, "***the word of the Lord grew mightily and prevailed***" v.20.

The church in Ephesus grew into a strong apostolic and evangelistic church with all the gift ministries operating. In **Ephesians 4:11**, the five-fold ministry is clearly presented and the purpose of the five-fold ministry is detailed in **verses 12-16**. The Ephesian church is the model church in the Scripture. We have more information about this church than any other and it is in the letter to the **Ephesians** that Paul makes known so much of his knowledge of the mystery of the church, that is, coming to know its true nature. In these last days, the Lord is once again raising His church in the earth and it is according to the pattern of the Scripture.

An integral part of the apostolic ministry

is to make known again the pattern

that is revealed in Scripture

according to which the church

must be established and built.

Chapter Six

CHARACTERISTICS OF AN APOSTOLIC MINISTRY

We notice that Jesus did not choose twelve prophets, twelve evangelists, twelve pastors or twelve teachers; He purposefully raised a new ministry and invested into that ministry the uniqueness of His own apostleship.

Jesus' primary task as the apostle of God was to raise apostles and it is only through the ministry of apostles that finally the church will be built according to the Scriptural pattern.

Before Jesus ascended, He imparted His authority to the apostles and, through them, to the whole church. The Scripture does not know of churches that are not flowing in apostolic authority. Therefore, it is reasonable to say that the church of the New Testament is apostolic.

The apostle is to live a life that is an example to others. He/she must be able to say 'Follow me as I follow Christ.'

Jesus chose twelve apostles

In this chapter, we are doing a brief study of the New Testament to find characteristics of the ministry of an apostle. The ministry of the apostles is unique to the New Testament. While we can now look back at the Old Testament and see types of the apostolic leader and learn more about apostles by doing this, Jesus specifically was sent to the earth as the Apostle of God and, as the Apostle, His main ministry was to raise the twelve chosen ones into apostleship. We notice that Jesus did not choose twelve prophets, twelve evangelists, twelve pastors or twelve teachers; He purposefully raised a new ministry and invested into that ministry the uniqueness of His own apostleship.

Cessationist teaching is false

The whole of the New Testament is a revelation of Jesus Christ and His church. The whole of the Bible is God's word and the New Testament brings forth the fulfillment of all that is spoken of in the Old Testament. The New Testament is an apostolic document and is the 'primary' source for Biblical doctrine and practice in the church today. Unfortunately, we have come through centuries of 'cessationist' teaching which insists that there are no apostles today. Such teachers have traditionally claimed that there is no baptism of the Holy Spirit today, no healing, no miracles, no casting out of devils etc. However, even among those who have accepted the restoration of Holy Spirit baptism, there are many who do not accept the full restoration of the five-fold ministry gifts of **Ephesians 4:11**. Further, even among those who accept in some way the restoration of the five-fold ministry gifts, there is a lack of understanding and acceptance of apostles as clearly taught in the New Testament. And yet, Jesus' primary task, as the apostle of God, was to raise apostles and it is only through the ministry of apostles that finally the church will be built according to the Scriptural pattern.

In **John 17:4-19**, Jesus is relating to His Father concerning the apostolic work the Father had given Him. Remember in **Hebrews 3:1** we are to consider "***the Apostle and High Priest of our confession, Jesus Christ.***" Jesus' apostolic work was completed (**Jn.17:4**) and that work

was to raise twelve apostles, bringing those trainees to the place where they were ready to be sent out as apostles (**Jn.17:18**).

The following are characteristics of the ministry of the apostles drawn from the Scriptures:

Apostles are called by name and are sent by the Lord

In **Mark 3:13**, Jesus went up on the mountain and ‘*called to Him those He wanted*’. In **v14-15** “*He appointed twelve, that they might be with Him and that He might send them out to preach, and to have power to heal sicknesses and to cast out demons*”. Then He named the twelve (**17-19**).

The initial twelve [Judas replaced by Matthias] are the twelve apostles of the lamb (**Rev.21:14**). However, in the New Testament, at least eleven other apostles are named and many more are referred to. Today, the Lord is calling and appointing apostles. It is by the Holy Spirit that the Lord does this. In **Acts 13:1-4** the Holy Spirit identified Saul and Barnabas to be set apart and sent out as apostles. These are the first two of many ascension gift apostles called by name to be apostles.

[Apostles named in the New Testament: 12 in **Matt.10:2-4**; Matthias in **Acts 1:26**; Paul & Barnabas in **Acts 13:2/14:14**; Andronicus & Junia in **Rom.16:7** & other apostles referred to; Apollos in **1Cor.1:12, 4:5-6**; Titus in **2Cor.8:23**; James in **Gal.1:19**; Epaphroditus in **Phil.2:25**; Silvanus & Timothy in **1Thess.1:1 & 2:6**; four other brothers of the Lord **1Cor.9:5; Mk.6:3**]

Apostles are used to plant churches and lay foundations

Jerusalem - in **Acts 2**, Peter the apostle is laying the foundations of the church on the day of Pentecost. He told the people to “*Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.*” Notice that Peter refers to three of the first four foundations listed in **Hebrews 6:1-2**. These are the elementary or foundational doctrines of Christ that the church must be founded in before we can go on to perfection. Number two in the list is missing, ‘faith toward God’; this foundation is already in place because the hearers on the day of Pentecost were acting in faith on the word they had heard.

Samaria - In **Acts 8**, the apostles Peter and John are sent to Samaria where Phillip had been preaching. They prayed for the new believers that they might receive the Holy Spirit (**v.15**) through the laying on of hands (**v.17**). Philip had already laid the first three foundations of repentance, faith and water baptism.

Ceasarea - the foundations were being laid in **Acts 10** when Peter ministered the word in the house of Cornelius. He preached Jesus to the Gentiles, the Holy Spirit came and Peter commanded them to be baptized. The church was planted.

Ephesus - in **Acts 19:1-7**, the apostle Paul was used to establish the church in Ephesus. The disciples were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus because they believed the preaching of Paul concerning Christ. These disciples were already followers of John but they repented [changed their mind] and believed in Jesus. Then Paul ‘*laid hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them and they spoke with tongues and prophesied*’ **v.6**.

Checking foundations

Much of the work of the apostle today is to check foundations because, in most places,

the church has already been planted, but without due regard to the apostolic pattern and practice of the Scripture. Therefore many believers are not properly founded in the faith.

Apostle Peter Akeck of West Kenya was asked to preach in a Sunday morning service by a pastor who had heard him share in a seminar. The local church was a congregation of about one hundred and twenty adults. Peter wrote in an email on the 15th February 2006, “*The Spirit led me to share very basic things from Acts 2:36-42. The whole church was shocked at the awesome revelation in those verses which they have often rushed over. At the end of the message, over fifty people were ready for baptism, not willing to go home and get clothes to change. The conviction brought by the revelation of what baptism is, overwhelmed them and for the first time in my life, I took over fifty adults to the river - two kilometers away - and baptized them. They - old women, men, young ladies and young men - were very happy, going home dripping with water.*

This was after over one hundred adults admitted that they were not filled with the Spirit and I prayed for them with the laying on of hands and about eighty were wonderfully filled and spoke with other tongues and magnified God.” The apostle sets the foundations in order.

Apostles are given power by Jesus to heal, cleanse, raise the dead and cast out demons

In **Matthew 10**, Jesus sent out the twelve and commanded them in v.8 to “*Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out demons.*” This is repeated in **Mark 3:15**, where Jesus gave the apostles “*power to heal sicknesses and to cast out demons*”. This is part of the great commission given to the apostles before Jesus ascended into heaven, “*And these signs will follow those who believe, in My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues; they will take up serpents; and if they drink anything deadly, it will by no means hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick and they will recover*” **Mk. 16:17-18**. The power to heal the sick and cast out demons is then given to all believers: the whole church, finally, is meant to be apostolic.

The ministry of the apostle is characterized by signs and wonders. In **Romans 15:18-19**, Paul is writing to the church in Rome, “*For I will not dare to speak of any of those things which Christ has not accomplished through me, in word and deed, to make the Gentiles obedient in mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God, so that from Jerusalem and round about to Illyricum I have fully preached the gospel of Christ.*” A gospel without power is not really the gospel. Remember that Paul, in **1Corinthians 2:1-5**, testifies to the power of God that was demonstrated by the Holy Spirit in Corinth.

Apostles are used by God to release the Holy Spirit

In **Acts 8**, Philip went down to Samaria and preached Christ to the people. Many responded, believed and were baptized. “*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. For as yet He had fallen upon none of them. They had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then they laid hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit*” **Acts8:14-17**. In **Acts 10**, Peter preached to the Gentiles in the house of Cornelius. “*While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who heard the word.*” v44

In **Acts 19**, Paul came to Ephesus and met a group of disciples and asked them if they had received the Holy Spirit. They replied “*We have not so much as heard whether there is a*

Holy Spirit" v.2. Paul opened up the Scripture to them and then he "***laid hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke with tongues and prophesied***" v.6. It is not only apostles who can release the gift of the Holy Spirit. For example, the disciple Ananias laid hands on Saul for him to be filled with the Holy Spirit (**Acts 9:17**). I was only a few months old in the Lord when I first laid hands on a new believer and they spoke in tongues.

Apostles have authority from Jesus to bind and to loose

"And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven" Matt.16:19. Jesus firstly gave the keys of the kingdom to Peter, an apostle. We have written on these keys elsewhere. In the context of binding and loosing we must note that there is no reference to fighting with, or trying to bind, principalities or powers. The reference is to the kingdom of God and Peter used these keys effectively by preaching Jesus Christ and commanding baptism, including receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit. This is the primary context of understanding these keys and the power to bind and loose. The second, and only other, time that binding and loosing is mentioned is in **Matthew 18:18**; there the context is that of church discipline - dealing with a brother who refused to repent of sin.

Before Jesus ascended, He imparted His authority to the apostles and through them to the whole church. The Scripture does not know of churches that are not flowing in apostolic authority. Therefore, it is reasonable to say that the church of the New Testament is apostolic. "***And Jesus came and spoke to them saying, 'All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth'***" Matt.28:18 and that authority is to be found and expressed in the church of Jesus Christ. **This is the authority to bind and loose, to open the door to the kingdom of God that people may enter in, no longer bound in sin.**

Apostles have authority to remit sins or to retain sins

(Jn.20:23). Some may see this as an application of the authority 'to bind and loose' and that is a correct understanding.

After the resurrection, Jesus came to His disciples, "***He breathed on them and said to them, 'Receive the Holy Spirit.'***" In giving the Holy Spirit to His disciples, Jesus then tells them that they have the authority to "***remit sin***", that is, to forgive sin. This is a very powerful thing that Jesus gave to His ministers: even as He had the authority to forgive sin on the earth, the apostles now had the power to forgive sin, albeit, through the gospel. Often the forgiving of sins is the key to a person receiving their healing. If a person remains unrepentant, as Simon the sorcerer did in **Acts 8**, then that person is left bound or retained in their sin.

On one occasion, a young man came into an outreach fellowship meeting. He had a nominal Catholic background. He came forward at the end of the meeting for prayer. I explained to him about being born again and asked if I could lead him in prayer and confession. He agreed. We went through a 'sinner's prayer' and he asked Jesus into his life. Nothing happened! The Holy Spirit prompted me to break the power of sin from his life. I did this and then led him through the sinner's prayer again and he experienced Christ coming into his life. This is an example of the power that Jesus has given to us to remit sin.

Apostles are called to prayer and ministry of the word

In **Acts 6:1-4**, a dispute arose between the Hebrews and the Hellenists [Greek speaking Jews] over daily distribution to the widows. The apostles decided to appoint seven men who would oversee these needs. Peter made it clear that the apostles' main ministry was to preach and

teach the word of God. He said “*we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word*” v.2-4. Herein, we are given insight to the true nature of ministry: firstly, the minister must spend time continually in prayer; out of the prayer comes the ministry of the word. My own testimony confirms this: for years I spent much time in prayer with the Bible open in my hand, praying the Scripture and diligently seeking the Lord. In the prayer time, the Lord would give me revelation and understanding which I could then preach. To this day, our ministry is firmly based in prayer with set prayer meetings and many impromptu calls to prayer.

Apostles raise others up to do the work of the ministry

In Acts 6:1-7, seven others are raised up to help with the work; they are commissioned with the laying on of hands. The result of multiplying ministry is “*the word of God spread, the number of the disciples multiplied greatly.*” True apostolic leadership is able to make godly decisions and the godly decisions release further revival. This administrative oversight is summarized by Paul when he instructs Titus to “*set in order the things that are lacking, and appoint elders in every city*” Titus 1:5. Many churches base their structure and order of doing things, including appointment to leadership, on denominational and institutional standards. It is very rare to find churches operating in scriptural order with elders who have been appointed by an apostle. There must be a multiplying of ministers and it is apostles who initiate and administrate this.

Apostles pastor, feed and shepherd the flock

Peter, the apostle, was commissioned by Jesus to the pastoral ministry. In John 21:15-17 Jesus instructed Peter to “*feed My lambs*”, “*tend My sheep*”, and again to “*feed My sheep*”. All apostles will have a heart for the sheep as fathers and will be able to train pastors to “*shepherd the flock of God*” Acts 20:28.

Apostles minister publicly and from house to house

Acts 2:42-47. The early church was taught the ‘*apostles’ doctrine*’ and they ‘*continued daily with one accord in the temple and breaking bread from house to house*’. The first apostles taught the word from house to house. The early church primarily met in houses. The apostles and, later on prophets and other five-fold ministers, did most of their ministry work in the house churches.

In Acts 20:20, Paul is speaking to the elders of the church at Ephesus, reminding them how he proclaimed the gospel to them and ‘*taught publicly and from house to house*’. Unfortunately, many ministers today are puffed up and do not understand the true nature of church, which is the fellowship meetings in smaller groups, meeting in houses. Such ministers look for crowds and big offerings rather than devoting themselves to the work of the ministry “*willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly; nor as being lords over those entrusted, but being examples to the flock*” 1 Pet.5:2b-3. Some of the most powerful meetings we have experienced have been in houses. Sometimes here in Australia, we travel to a remote town or rural area and brethren gather in one house, some even bringing caravans and tents to sleep in. We continue in fellowship for two or three days, or more, and people come to the house from the local area as well.

Apostles teach the word; declare the whole counsel of God

Their word is as a commandment, “*that you may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us, the apostles of the Lord and Saviour*” 2Pet.3:2. Paul, as an apostle, was able to say that he had not ‘*shunned to declare*’

the whole counsel of God' (Acts 20:27). James the apostle declared the counsel of God to the council of Jerusalem. "*The apostles and elders came together to consider this matter*" Acts 15:6, then in v13-21 James spoke the word of God 'as it is written' from the book of Amos. This wisdom of the Holy Spirit resolved the situation that the council was facing.

"But as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, even so we speak, not as pleasing men, but God who tests our hearts" 1 Thess.2:4. Apostles have been entrusted with the whole counsel of God. Because apostles have been entrusted with the message of the gospel in a specific way, then, when the apostle is speaking the truth of the word as an apostle, the elders [ministers] and the brethren need to take heed. The word of the apostle will not always be "*as pleasing men*."

In Hebrews 6:1-2, six foundations are listed which have to be taught before the church can go on to maturity. The apostle is to call the church back to foundations, to ensure that they are properly laid. Unless foundations are properly laid, God is unable to release the greater depth of His word to believers.

In the Great Commission given by Jesus (Matt.28:20) the apostles are commanded to "*teach them all things that I have commanded you*." The apostles taught "*the apostles' doctrine*" (Acts 2:42). The apostles' teaching was the foundational word upon which the church is built and it remains the same today. Just as the law of Moses governed the life of the Old Testament church, the apostles' doctrine is what governed the life of the New Testament church.

The apostle Paul taught in Corinth: "*And he continued there a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them*" Acts 18:11. In Ephesus, Paul "*reasoned daily in the school of Tyrannus. And this continued for two years, so that all who dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks*" Acts 19:9-10. In Rome, "*Paul dwelt two whole years in his own rented house, and received all who came to him, preaching the kingdom of God and teaching the things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ with all confidence, no one forbidding him*" Acts 28:30-31.

Paul taught Timothy and instructed him to teach others, "*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.

From the beginning of our ministry as Revival Ministries Australia in January 1998, we envisaged having an apostolic training centre, modeled on the example of apostle Paul in Ephesus in **Acts 19**. God has enabled this to come to pass and we have been conducting short-term schools in Australia and overseas for many years. We are now in the process of developing many more training opportunities.

Apostles ordain elders

The apostles visited churches in different cities (**Acts14:21**); then they "*appointed elders in every church, and prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed*" v 23. Paul commissioned Titus to appoint elders, "*For this reason I left you in Crete, that you should set in order the things that are lacking, and appoint elders in every city as I commanded you*" Titus 1:5. Paul, as an apostle, was part of the eldership that ordained Timothy (**1 Tim.4:14**) and Paul says that he specifically had imparted a gift to Timothy through the laying on of hands. We can assume that this impartation took place when Paul laid hands on Timothy with the eldership. It is best practice for every local church leadership [pastors/elders] to ask the apostle that they relate to and whose leadership they follow, to be part of the ordination of ministers being appointed.

Apostles are to persevere in persecution and tribulation

Matthew 10:5-15 lists the instructions Jesus gave to the twelve before He sent them out, then in v16-26, Jesus warns them that persecutions are coming. In 2 Corinthians 11:23-28, Paul lists the sufferings he has endured as an apostle. Jesus warns in Luke 21:16 “*You will be betrayed even by parents and brothers, relatives and friends; and they will put some of you to death.*” These warnings are repeated in Mark 13:9-13. Jesus was rejected and persecuted. He told His disciples, “*A servant is not greater than his master, if they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you*” (Jn.15:20). The apostles in the early church experienced this persecution Acts 4:1-22. Peter and John were arrested and put in jail, and commanded not to preach in the name of Jesus. Paul expected persecution and summed it up in 1 Corinthians 4:9 “*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.*” Persecutions are guaranteed but the key character quality required is perseverance. “*We are hard-pressed on every side, yet not crushed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed*” 2 Cor.3:8-9.

Apostles carry concern and burden for the churches

“*In weariness, toil, sleeplessness, hunger and thirst, often with fasting, in cold and nakedness - besides the other things, what comes upon me daily: my deep concern for all the churches*” 2 Cor.11:27-28. Paul is saying that his greatest burden is not the difficult things he had suffered but his concern for the churches. An apostle is like a parent watching over their children. By his letters, it is apparent that Paul carried a deep burden for all the churches he had visited. “*Now for the third time I am ready to come to you. And I will not be burdensome to you; for I do not seek yours, but you. For the children ought not to lay up for the parents, but the parents for the children*” 2 Cor.12:14. Writing to the Galatians, Paul reveals his deep fatherly concern for them to grow to maturity “*My little children, for whom I labor in birth again until Christ is formed in you*” Gal.4:19.

The Apostle gives all for the saints in the churches

This follows on from the previous point. The apostle Paul says to the Corinthians in 2 Cor.12:15, “*And I will very gladly spend and be spent for your souls; though the more abundantly I love you, the less I am loved.*” Even though Paul felt that the Corinthians did not appreciate what he had done and was doing for them, his life was totally laid down for them. A true minister of Christ is prepared to suffer in order to be able to minister effectively to the body. Paul says in Colossians 1:24 “*I now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up in my flesh what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ, for the sake of His body, which is the church.*”

The Apostle does all things for edification

“*Again, do you think that we excuse ourselves to you? We speak before God in Christ. But we do all things, beloved, for your edification*” 2 Cor.12:19. The work of the ministry is to “*build up the body of Christ*” until the body grows to maturity (Eph.4:12-16). The apostle, and all five-fold ministers, are to give themselves to “*the work of the ministry*”. The work of the ministry is not complete until the body of Christ has come to maturity as clearly taught in these verses in Ephesians. Everything must be done in word and deed for the edification of the church, the people of God (1Thess.5:11).

Christ proves Himself mighty in the ministry of the Apostle

“Since you seek a proof of Christ speaking in me, who is not weak toward you, but mighty in you” 2 Cor.13:3. The ministry of the apostle is to specifically represent Christ. Much grace is available to the apostle to represent and manifest the reality of Christ. However, this also includes such authority that emanates in judgment as was the case in Acts 5 with Ananias and Sapphira. Paul said that he preferred to always minister *“by the meekness and gentleness of Christ”* but he also indicated that, if necessary, he would be bold in the Lord toward those who judged him *“as walking according to the flesh”* 2 Cor.10:1-2, and that he would not *“spare those who have sinned”* 2 Cor.13:2.

An Apostle lives and ministers by the power of God

Paul knew he had to rely on the power of the Holy Spirit. *“And I, brethren, when I came to you, did not come with excellence of speech or of wisdom declaring to you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified. I was with you in weakness, in fear, and in much trembling. And my speech and my preaching were not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God”* 1 Cor.2:1-5. Paul was dependent on the power of God that was within him, *“For though He was crucified in weakness, yet He lives by the power of God. For we also are weak in Him, but we shall live with Him by the power of God toward you”* 2 Cor.13:4. Those called to apostolic ministry must know the ‘death to self’ and have an ongoing and growing experience of the power of God working in them and through them.

An Apostle knows the grace, love and fellowship of God

Paul is able to share the grace of the Lord, God’s love and the communion of the Holy Spirit with the saints (2 Cor.13:14). Because the apostle knows these depths of relationship with God in Christ, he is able to minister and, thereby, bring the saints into that reality. We note that most of the epistles by both Paul and Peter begin with the ministry of *“grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ”, and often end with a similar ministry of grace*. For years we have tended to skip over the introductory verses to the epistles and yet there is an awesome ministry of impartation from the apostle to the saints of grace and peace. Furthermore, the apostle is able to bring the saints into a greater depth of the love of God and demonstrate a deeper walk with the Holy Spirit.

The Apostle knows and wields the weapons of warfare

“For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ” 2 Cor.10:3-6. An apostle must be able to demonstrate, to the saints, the walk in obedience to Christ. It is when our obedience is complete that we are able to punish all disobedience. The punishing of disobedience is through the accurate and Spirit-empowered preaching of the word and the leading of prayer in the truth and reality of the word. In these Scriptures in Corinthians, Paul is not referring to spiritual warfare in the heavenlies against ‘principalities and powers’ but he is referring to the full renewing of the mind by the pulling down of mindsets, prejudices, opinions and areas of personal pride that prevent us from walking in obedience to the word of God.

Apostles are not to be compared with each other, or compare themselves with others

"For we dare not class ourselves or compare ourselves with those who commend themselves. But they, measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise" 2 Cor.10:12. Any true minister must have a true estimate of who they are in Christ and what they have been appointed to do. Each minister will be unique in the conduct of their ministry in obedience to Christ's calling. In fact, every apostle and every saint needs to come to the experience of, and the walk in, sonship. It is this grace of becoming a son that brings security and a right understanding of one's identity. The grace of sonship deals with life-long insecurities.

Apostles know the sphere of ministry God has appointed

"We, however, will not boast beyond measure, but within the limits of the sphere which God appointed us, a sphere which especially includes you" 2Cor.10:13. Initially Jesus sent the twelve to the lost sheep of Israel commanding them to not go "***in the way of the Gentiles and do not enter a city of the Samaritans***" Matt.10:5-6. Paul was appointed primarily to go to the Gentiles (Gal.2:8). During the course of his ministry life, like Jesus, Paul pushed on to preach the gospel to other cities also. I do not believe that there are apostolic 'territories' as some claim but there are clear spheres of ministry that the Lord appoints apostles to function in. I have found that the way of the apostolic is to remain humble and let the Lord reveal and prove the sphere of ministry.

Apostles facilitate the gospel going to the regions beyond

Paul knows that he is called "***to preach the gospel in the regions beyond you, and not to boast in another man's sphere of accomplishment***" 2Cor.10:14-16. An apostle is a pioneer and must be allowed to lead the way into new realms of ministry. The apostle is to obey the command that Jesus gave in **Matthew 28:19-20**, and give leadership to the fulfillment of the commission, "***making disciples of all the nations.***" Simply preaching the gospel in an evangelistic way does not fulfill the Great Commission. The apostle facilitates the local church and its ministers to 'make disciples'.

The Apostle can be used to expose false apostles

Paul exercised this discernment "***For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ***" 2Cor.11:13. Jesus commands the "***angel of the church of Ephesus,***" for having "***tested those who say they are apostles and are not, and have found them liars***" Rev.2:1-2. The angel of the church can be seen as the 'messenger' [the literal meaning of angel]. It is interesting that the King James Bible translates the Greek word *apostolos* twice in the Bible as messenger (**2 Cor.8:23 & Phil. 2:25**). It makes sense that the leaders of the churches in **Revelation 2 & 3** would be apostles.

As with currency notes, one knows a counterfeit note by being familiar with the genuine note; even so, one who is a true apostle is able to discern one who is not. The mistake that many pastoral leaders and bishops are making is that, without knowing the true apostle, they reject all apostles as being false.

The Apostle is supported financially by various churches

The apostle Paul states that he received wages from other churches so he could preach the gospel '***free of charge***' to the church in Corinth (**2Cor.11:7-9**). Apostles have a right to be supported. Paul argues that those who preach the gospel should be supported, just as those who

render any service have a right to receive remuneration. “***Do you not know that those who minister the holy things eat of the things of the temple, and those who serve at the altar partake of the offerings of the altar? Even so the Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should live from the gospel***” 1Cor.9:13-14.

In the contemporary church the income of the church from tithes and offerings is seen as being under the control of the local pastor. In some situations, it is the bishop who oversees a number of churches who controls the finances of all the churches. Both of these situations fall short of the Scriptural model. In both situations, there is no place for apostles and when apostles are restored, there is resistance to releasing financial support to them. The example of the early church was to bring the money and lay it “***at the apostles' feet***” Acts 4:35. In my own situation, God has raised up a support base through a number of related house churches and fellowships who support the apostolic ministry based at SHILOH.

“***And laid them at the apostles' feet; and they distributed to each as anyone had need***” Acts 4:35. The early church “***shared all things***”. When they wanted to give of their excess they brought it to the apostles and sought the counsel and confirmation of the leadership as to the distribution of the gifts. “***Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given orders to the churches of Galatia, so you must do also***” 1Cor.16:1.

The Lord upholds His apostles

Paul found that there were those who forsook him, those who sought to do him harm and those who resisted him. “***But the Lord stood with me and strengthened me, so that the message might be preached fully through me, and that all the Gentiles might hear. Also I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion. And the Lord will deliver me from every evil work and preserve me for His heavenly kingdom***” 2 Tim.4:17-18. During Paul’s first apostolic journey, John Mark deserted the apostles, turning back from the journey. When it came time for a second journey, and Barnabas wanted to take John Mark with them, Paul refused. However, later in Paul’s ministry, Mark had become a respected co-worker with Paul. In Colossians Demas is among Paul’s co-workers (4:14) but in 2Timothy 4:10 he has forsaken Paul “***having loved this present world.***” I have experienced similar things with co-workers who have abandoned us and, thankfully, we have also experienced some being restored to us.

Apostles must be disciplined in body/flesh

“***But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself would become disqualified***” 1 Cor.9:27. Paul also says “***if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted***” Gal.6:1. Apostles must be temperate in all things. “***And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown***” 1 Cor.9:25. They are to exercise self-control. “***And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit***” Eph.5:18.

The Apostle is to be a leader that others can follow

“***Brethren, join in following my example, and note those who so walk, as you have us for a pattern***” Phil. 3:17. Paul is saying ‘***follow my example***’. The apostle is to live a life that is an example to others. He/she must be able to say ‘***Follow me as I follow Christ.***’ Some years ago in our training school, I was asked to give a session on leadership. I had not done this as such before. I had been to leadership seminars and had been surprised to find the teaching was based

on successful business principles not on the Scriptures. I took the session and, for the first time in my life, realized that I had to be able to say to the leaders: ‘Follow me as I follow Christ!’ I was able to share that, if any leader wanted to know how to pray effectively, I could show them how to pray; if someone wanted to know the Scriptural pattern for giving financially, I could demonstrate through my own giving; if someone wanted to know how to preach, I could train them; if someone believed they were to go to the nations, I could take them. I realized that God had brought me to the place where I could lead by example. Paul says “***I urge you, imitate me***” (**1 Cor.4:16**). In our recent International Training School, a number of the leaders who had come from other nations publicly testified to the high level of commitment and the dedication demonstrated in the lifestyle of the leaders here at SHILOH.

An Apostle’s life should be an exemplification of grace

“***Through Him we have received grace and apostleship for obedience to the faith among all nations for His name***” **Rom. 1:5**. Grace is received through Jesus Christ, and it is the grace that is released through the ministry of the apostle that is the mark of the apostle. Each one of us has received grace, but there is a grace for the apostle to walk in and minister to the Body. The apostle’s life ought to demonstrate the grace received. Paul declares that he received a “***dispensation of the grace of God***” to make known the revelation of the mystery and “***to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ***” **Eph.3:2-3,8**.

An apostle’s ministry can include all the five-fold ministries

Mature apostolic ministry exhibits characteristics of all forms of other ministries. “***And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers***” **Eph.4:11**. Paul demonstrated that blending of ministry: “***for which I was appointed a preacher and an apostle – I am speaking the truth in Christ and not lying - a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth***” **1Tim.2:7**. Paul preached the gospel as an evangelist; he taught the word and he ministered as an apostle. He specifically says that he was appointed to three ministries. We know from Paul’s writings that he had tremendous prophetic insight into the word of God and we also know that he had a pastors’ heart for the brethren working closely with him.

Conclusion

As one reads the New Testament, looking to understand who are apostles and what they do, one finds an abundance of material. So much of the teaching of Jesus is directed to apostles. Much of Paul’s writing is sharing about the ministry of the apostle. The New Testament is written by apostles or by their close co-workers as in the case of Luke. The book of **Acts** is the Acts of the Apostles.

The Lord Jesus, the Head of the Church, is restoring the gift ministry of the apostle in the church worldwide. The final ‘***setting in order of the church***’ is taking place so that the Lord can release the last days revival in every nation. The river of God will flow, but not until the foundations are strongly and properly set, according to the word of God and not according to denominational tradition. When the one hundred and twenty disciples gathered in the upper room after the ascension of Jesus into heaven, the Bible says, “***These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication***” **Acts1:14**. Out of the committed prayer, Peter was led to replace Judas, the apostate apostle who had committed suicide by this time. Once the foundation apostles were in place, then the Day of Pentecost ‘***fully came!***’ The Lord was setting the church in order to receive an unprecedented outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

*And who was being set in order?
Apostles, the foundation ministry of the church.*

*The Lord is showing us that the apostles
have been set in the church;
they are first! (1Cor.12:28).*

*They are the foundation ministry upon
which all else is built.*

*Apostles must be received,
for when the church receives an apostle
they receive Jesus the Messiah
and in receiving Him
they will receive the Father God!
Matt.10:40*

Chapter Seven

WHAT IS APOSTLES' DOCTRINE?

The actual Gospels as written are primary apostolic doctrine

A true apostle is one who comes in the name of the Lord, who comes non-denominationally, who comes not representing a part of the church or a particular group, but who comes with the true heart of Jesus for His people and for His body. Through the teaching of the apostles, Jesus is revealed.

There are meant to be at least three generations of inspired, trained teachers operating in the body of Christ: the apostles who train and impart to other ministers; then the ministers who train and impart to faithful men; the faithful men who teach others.

If we preach the perfecting of the church, the preparation of a glorious bride church, if we preach the grace of God to endure tribulation and exalt in it, then we will be preaching and teaching the Word of God accurately and declaring the whole counsel of God

The Four Gospels

The first example of the apostles' doctrine in the New Testament is the testimony of the four Gospel writers. Matthew and John were apostles of the Lamb and directly share their experience of Jesus. While there is no clear evidence that Mark and Luke were apostles [they could have been] in the ministry of the church, they both worked with apostles very closely over a long period of time and passed on the teaching and testimony. The actual gospels, as written, are **primary apostolic doctrine**. They include the actual teachings of the Lord Jesus and testimony of His acts.

The Gospel of Mark

***"The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ the Son of God"* Mk 1:1.** Mark's gospel is an amazingly compact testimony of the life and ministry of our Lord Jesus. The gospel is the good news which includes the promise of salvation and its fulfillment in the life, death, resurrection and ascension of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Gospel of John

John wrote his gospel as an eyewitness of Jesus. He tells us why he wrote the gospel: ***"But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name"* Jn.20:31.** John wrote his gospel so that people could believe and be saved. Apostolic doctrine is teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ (**Acts 5:42**) to the intent that the hearers come to the saving knowledge of God.

The Gospel of Luke

In introducing his gospel, Luke gives us important insights as to the nature of apostolic doctrine. He writes ***"Inasmuch as many have taken in hand to set in order a narrative of those things that have been fulfilled among us, just as those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word delivered them to us, it seemed to me also, having perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write to you an orderly account, most excellent Theophilus, that you may know the certainty of those things in which you were instructed"* Lu.1:1-4.**

There are four things in these verses that describe what apostolic doctrine is:

- **a clear ordered narrative**

Apostolic doctrine, as expressed in Luke's gospel, is a clear, ordered narrative [story] of the life, teaching and ministry of the Lord Jesus.

- **delivered by eyewitnesses**

The gospel was delivered by eyewitnesses [apostles of the Lamb] and ministers of the word [those apostles who were with Him, also including post-ascension apostles].

- **perfect understanding**

Luke has received perfect understanding from the apostles' testimony. Remember, Luke is a Gentile who became a disciple of Paul a number of years after Jesus' death and resurrection.

- **know the certainty of these things**

Having been instructed, Luke is able to write an orderly account so that another may '**know the certainty of those things**' which Luke has come to know from receiving apostolic teaching.

In **1John1:1-4**, John talks in a similar way: the testimony of Jesus is shared by the apostles, the eyewitnesses and ministers of the word, so that we, the hearers, may come in to eternal life which is fellowship "**with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.**"

The Gospel of Matthew

Matthew's gospel, amongst other things, shows the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies in the life and ministry of Jesus Christ. The interpretation of the Old Testament is an important aspect of apostolic doctrine. The book of **Hebrews** demonstrates this aspect of apostolic doctrine more fully as it is a total interpretation [showing the fulfillment] of Old Testament types and shadows. To understand Hebrews, one needs a good working knowledge of the Old Testament.

Jesus did not come to destroy the law, but to fulfill it. He declared that the law would be fulfilled. Jesus wants us to teach the word of God from the Old Testament prophetically.

*Apostolic doctrine gives to the people of God
the understanding of the law and of the commandments,
of the prophets and the writings;
to enable all to see and understand
their fulfillment in Christ (Matt.5:17-19).*

We need to have the revelation of Christ and His church in the Old Testament so that we can teach the prophetic fulfillment in the New Testament. "**And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself**" **Lu.24:27**. Jesus confirmed to His apostles "**these are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and Prophets and Psalms concerning Me.' And He opened their understanding that they might comprehend the Scriptures**" (**Lu.24:44-45**).

Apostolic doctrine is to be passed on

“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” 2Tim.2:2. Paul gives us a similar understanding of how apostolic doctrine is to be received and passed on to others. The apostle, who is an eyewitness [Paul said he had seen the Lord] and the minister of the word [Peter said the apostles must give themselves to “**the ministry of the word**” Acts 6:4] teaches and trains others to become ministers [not all are apostles; this includes all five-fold ministers]. The ministers who have received from the apostle are then to pass on the apostolic doctrine to faithful men [neither male nor female] who will teach others. There are meant to be at least three generations of inspired, trained teachers operating in the body of Christ:

- the **apostles** who train and impart to other ministers;
- the **ministers** who train and impart to faithful men;
- the **faithful men** who teach others.

The Apostles' Doctrine in The Book of Acts

“And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers” Acts 2:42. The four things that they continued in are really the ‘first works’ of the early church. In **Revelation 2**, Jesus is writing to the church at Ephesus and in **verse 4** He says, *“Nevertheless I have this against you, that you have left your first love.”* In **verse 5** He goes on to say, *“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.”* This church had lost its first love and was being told by Jesus to repent and do the first works again. In order to find out what the first works are, we need to look at the practice of the first church.

The first church included the 120 believers, [including the 12 apostles of the Lamb], on whom the Holy Spirit fell on the Day of Pentecost and the 3000 men who had believed and were baptised on that day. These believers continued in the four things listed in **Acts 2:42**: the apostles’ doctrine, fellowship, the breaking of bread and prayer. They continued in the fellowship of the apostles’ doctrine, the fellowship of breaking bread together and the fellowship of corporate prayer; as they continued in fellowship, there was a profound ‘caring and sharing’ among the believers (**Acts 2:44-45**).

If we continue steadfastly in these four things, the ongoing result will be that we will be in love with Jesus and we will not lose that love. It will increase every time we share the Lord’s table; every time we come together in prayer and worship; every time we meet in faith filled fellowship, which cares and shares, meeting one another’s needs, and every time we share the apostles’ doctrine, which is the teaching of the Word of God [the teaching which has been faithfully passed on by apostles]. This verse specifically says “**the apostles’ doctrine**”, not simply the teaching of the word. The word of God has been taught in some measure ever since the Reformation in the sixteenth century, but rarely has there been an apostle to teach the word in recent centuries. Therefore we need to understand what is the ‘**apostles’ doctrine**’?

Revelation is given to Apostles and Prophets

Basically, the whole New Testament is the apostles’ doctrine but the revelation of the word of God is given specifically to apostles and prophets (**Eph.3:5**). In these days, we need apostles to be raised up in the anointing to teach the Scriptures. The Scriptures can be taught by pastors, teachers and evangelists, but a lot of key revelation is given to apostles and prophets. It

is by a special dispensation of grace that apostles and prophets are able to bring forth the knowledge of the mystery. ***If indeed you have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which was given to me for you*** Eph.3:2. Paul, as an apostle, had received a certain dispensation of grace. The outworking of that grace is **verse 4** “***by which, when you read, you may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ.***” The Lord Himself reveals to apostles and prophets the mystery. [This mystery is also referred to in **1Cor.2:6-16 & Col.1:24-29**]. Paul had knowledge of the mystery of Christ and he shared and taught that knowledge. Each member of the body then receives grace by receiving the apostolic doctrine **“which in other ages was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to His holy apostles and prophets”** Eph.3:5. This mystery had not been revealed to Abraham or other men of God in the Old Testament. These Old Testament men cannot come into fulfillment until Jesus has raised up His church (**Heb.11:40**).

What Is the Mystery?

The mystery is oneness in Christ

That the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ through the gospel Eph.3:6. It is only the gospel that can bring Jew and Gentile into oneness (**Eph.2:14-18**). Jesus is our peace and has made both one, creating one new man from the two. God wants ‘**one new man**’; He sees only one new man! The wall of separation has been removed.

Paul illustrates this mystery further in **Romans 11** speaking of an olive tree that represents God’s people. There is only ever one true olive tree. The original tree grew out of God choosing the patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. The root is Messiah, Jesus. He says **“I am the Root and the Offspring of David”** Rev.22:16. He says **“before Abraham was, I AM”** Jn.8:58. Jesus also referred to Himself as the “**true vine**” and the members of the church are the branches (**Jn.15:1-8**). The one new man, the body of Christ, the olive tree and the vine are all speaking of the New Covenant **“Israel of God”** (**Gal.6:16**).

When Christ came in the flesh, only a remnant of Israel received and entered into righteousness in Christ (**Rom.11:5-7**). The rest were cut off as dead branches and the believing Gentiles were grafted into the original olive tree through faith (**v17**). However, Paul goes on to reveal to us that, because of the “**fathers**”, God is going to do a final great work of redemption among those of natural Israel who were blinded to the gospel because of their unbelief (**v25-28**). What will be the result? Jews and Gentiles happily growing together in righteousness in the one olive tree!

The mystery is the “bride church”

In **Ephesians 5:23-33**, Paul explains the mystery of the bride church in terms of marriage and the relationship in marriage between husband and wife. In conclusion, He says **“This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church”**. In **Revelation 21:9-11**, John is shown in the Spirit **“the bride, the Lamb’s wife.”** The church is both a bride in preparation for marriage and a wife for the Lamb. Jesus Himself is **“sanctifying and cleansing the church with the washing of water by the word, that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish”** Eph.5:26-27. This church that Jesus is going to present to Himself will be glorious. In the natural, we generally perceive that a bride is going to be presented on her wedding day with every effort made for her to look beautiful and for everything to be done to make the wedding day as perfect as possible.

The church is to be fully joined to the Lord: “***he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit with Him***” **1Cor.6:17**. This is as a spiritual marriage, a full joining. We are “***members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones***” **Eph.5:30**. This is what Adam said when he first saw Eve and called her ‘woman’ (**Gen.2:23**).

The mystery is the grace of God

Paul said he became a minister “***according to the gift of the grace of God given to me by the effective working of His power***” **Eph.3:7**. The result of that grace was “***that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ***” v.8. God has “***saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began, but has now been revealed by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ, who has abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel, to which I was appointed a preacher, an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles***” **2 Tim.1:9-11**. This grace was given before time began.

The mystery of the grace of God is that Paul, of the circumcision, is appointed as a teacher to the Gentiles. Grace is the enabling power of God, enabling His will to be done. [Enabling a pharisee of the pharisees to become the apostle to Gentiles]

The fellowship of the mystery

Paul says he was given grace “***to preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, to make all see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the ages has been hidden in God who created all things through Jesus Christ***” **Eph.3:9**. There is a fellowship of the mystery that God wants us to see and experience. The word for fellowship is *koinonia* SC#2842 and, in the context of the fellowship of the mystery, it is referring to a deep relationship with God and between brethren who have come into maturity. Paul tells us that the deeper wisdom of God, the mystery, is for the mature (**1Cor.2:6-7**). I understand that this level of maturity is of grace whereby the Spirit of God places us as sons in Christ, in a relationship with the Father as sons and in a relationship with one another that is deeper than anything we have experienced before. Maturity refers to that walk with God in Christ that we call sonship, “***but you receive the Spirit of sonship***” (**Rom.8:15 NIV**). We testify that the fellowship we enjoy as sons together is rich and deep and is bringing us into an experience of being joined together in the body, walking in a much fuller and deeper revelation of the body of Christ.

Another part of the revelation of the mystery is “***that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might bring together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth in Him***” **Eph.1:10**. This is referring to the coming together of the saints who are in heaven with Jesus and who are coming back with Him, and the saints who are the sanctified ones in the earth, ready for the Lord’s coming (**1Thess.4:13-17**). What a fellowship that will be!

Displacement of principalities and powers

Paul says that the result of the church coming to know the fellowship of the mystery is “***To the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly place***” **Eph.3:10**. When the church comes into the fellowship of the mystery [the deeper wisdom], then the **manifold wisdom** of God will be revealed. This verse suggests that the church has been designed by God so that when it comes into this apostolic and prophetic revelation, walking in sonship, ruling and reigning in Christ, the saints will speak and preach with such power that the principalities and powers will be disempowered and the gospel will begin to fill the atmosphere.

The revelation of the mystery, of ‘who Christ is’, reveals that when Christ rose from the dead He was raised up by the power of God “*and seated at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come. And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all*

” Eph.1:20-23. This means that God has made the church, which is His body, the head over all things in Christ. This is the revelation that all things, even thrones and dominions in the invisible realms, were created by God through Jesus Christ (**Col.1:16**). Such rulers “*are coming to nothing*” (**1Cor.2:6**) because of the revelation of the mystery, the teaching of the deeper wisdom.

The power of the church, walking in a mature revelation of the mystery and, thus displacing principalities and powers, is illustrated in **Acts 8** when Phillip went to Samaria and began to preach in that city. He preached the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus and mighty signs and wonders were happening to confirm the preaching. Men and women believed the gospel and were baptized. Through Phillip’s preaching, the manifold wisdom of God was made known to the principalities and powers in the city of Samaria so that even the chief strongman of the city, Simon the sorcerer, wanted to become obedient to the gospel and be baptized.

The mystery of the church ‘going on to perfection’

The church is called to “*go on to perfection*” (**Heb.6:1**). We have already spoken of this church in the **Introduction**. It is only when the church is walking in maturity, going on to perfection that the glory of the Lord will be seen in the church.

“*Arise, shine; for your light has come! And the glory of the LORD is risen upon you*” **Isa. 60:1**. God is saying to His people, ‘Arise, shine for the glory of the LORD is risen upon you’. This is present tense! The Light, Jesus, has come, and today the glory of the LORD is rising upon His people. “*The whole earth is full of His glory,*” the seraphim said in **Isaiah 6:3**. This glory will be revealed [made known] as the church becomes the true sanctuary of the LORD’s presence in the earth.

“*For behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and deep darkness the people; but the LORD will arise over you, and His glory will be seen upon you*” **Isa.60:2**. This is what we are experiencing in the world now; it is increasing. The beast is arising. The darkness is spreading all over the world, but the church is to arise in Him, in His glory.

“*The Gentiles shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your rising. Lift up your eyes all around, and see; they all gather together, they come to you; your sons shall come from afar, and your daughters shall be nursed at your side. Then you shall see and become radiant, and your heart shall swell with joy; because the abundance of the sea shall be turned to you. The wealth of the Gentiles shall come to you*” **Isa.60:3-5**. This is the revelation of the mystery that, in these last days, Gentiles are coming to the Lord in increasing numbers. This is happening because the time of the Gentiles is almost fulfilled.

“*All the flocks of Kedar shall be gathered together to you. The rams of Nebaioth shall minister to you; they shall ascend with acceptance on My altar, and I will glorify the house of My glory*” **Isa.60:7**. Kedar and Nebaioth were the first-born sons of Ishmael. Prophetically, it is possible to believe that many Muslims will be saved in the last days. Leaders and their congregations will be saved and come into God’s kingdom. ‘*They will ascend with acceptance on My altar*’; this altar is Jesus. Many Muslims are going to come to Jesus and He will accept them.

Foundational Doctrines of Christ

Apostolic doctrine grounds the church in the elementary principles, or fundamental teachings, of Christ. These foundational doctrines are listed for us in **Hebrews 6:1-2**; they must be properly laid before the church can go on to perfection. Apostles' doctrine must be thoroughly taught to all believers in these six areas before the saints will be able to understand the deeper wisdom that God wants all the saints to receive.

Repentance from dead works is the foundational doctrine of the faith of the gospel. To repent is to change. Repentance is to be preached (Luke 24:47). If people repent, their sins are remitted [forgiven].

Faith toward God follows repentance. When we repent we turn from something to something; we turn away from sin, we turn toward God through faith in Christ. The gospel of Jesus Christ is to be preached so people will come to faith in God through Him.

Doctrine of Baptisms, while plural, primarily refers to baptism in water in the name of Jesus Christ, following the practice of the apostles in the book of Acts. In Romans 6, Paul teaches the doctrine of baptism. Peter teaches on baptism in 1 Peter 3:20-22. Both apostles teach that, through baptism, the believer is raised in resurrection life [seated in heavenly places].

Laying on of hands primarily refers to receiving the Holy Spirit. When Saul [Paul] was saved, the disciple Ananias came and laid hands on him. Saul was healed and filled with the Holy Spirit.

Resurrection of the dead refers to our walk in the resurrection power of Jesus Christ. There are three important aspects of this doctrine: Jesus Christ literally rose from the dead; through His resurrection we receive eternal life [new birth]; thirdly, every soul will rise, some to the resurrection of the just and some to resurrection of damnation (Jn.5:28-29).

Eternal Judgement is the doctrine of eternal states, understanding that there are rewards and punishments and understanding that the church is to come into the place of true judgment in Christ.

Apostles' doctrine is the teaching of the apostles

They are the ones commissioned and appointed by Christ to fully represent His power and authority, wisdom and knowledge in the earth today. It is a gift given to some, by Christ, for His church (**Eph.4:11**). In **Matthew 10:40**, Jesus is speaking in the context of the appointing and commissioning of His apostles. He says "***He who receives you receives Me, and he who receives Me receives Him who sent Me.***" It was the Father who sent Jesus. Jesus is saying that apostles, who are truly appointed and commissioned by Him, fully represent Him. In the church age, such apostles are ones who have received the ascension gift of the apostle, from Jesus the ascended Lord, according to **Ephesians 4:7-11**. A true apostle is one who comes in the name of the Lord, who comes non-denominationally, who comes, not representing a part of the church or a particular group but who comes with the true heart of Jesus for His people and for His body. Through the teaching of the apostles, Jesus is revealed.

In **Matthew 23:39**, Jesus is speaking to the Jews when He says "***for I say to you, you shall see Me no more till you say, 'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!'***" For the Jews of today, this means that they will not see the Lord until they say 'blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord'. The one who came in the name of the Lord was Jesus. Who is the one who comes in the name of the Lord today? Firstly, His apostles whom He sends, and secondly, His church, His apostolic body, which He sends to the whole world.

FIVE ASPECTS OF APOSTOLIC DOCTRINE

There are specific aspects of teaching in the New Testament that are emphasized in one way or another by most churches in some way in their teaching. However, it is rare to find a church covering all of these aspects in a scriptural way. Some of these aspects are: the Great Commission, Building the Church, Perfecting the Saints, Exalting in Tribulation and Preparing for the Lord's Return.

I) THE GREAT COMMISSION

Preach the Gospel

The clearest thing that Jesus told the church to do is to preach the gospel. "***Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptised will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned***" Mk 16:15-16. Everyone made in God's image and likeness needs to hear the gospel; some will believe and be saved and some will believe not and be condemned. In Matthew 24, where Jesus is explaining signs of the end times and signs of His coming, He says "***and this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come***" v14. One of the clearest signs that we can look for and recognise and, thereby, know that the end of the age is near is worldwide evangelism. The 1990's were declared to be the decade of worldwide evangelism. There has been enormous growth in evangelism worldwide in the last fifteen years. Christianity is by far the fastest growing faith or religion, despite the obvious spread of Islam that the media gives so much attention to. Often Muslims are a very small minority but, because of the world system, they exercise influence far beyond their numbers. The church is God's answer for the world and His church will emerge and the gates of Hell will not prevail against it.

Even though evangelism has been widespread, as mentioned elsewhere in this book, the gospel preached has been a gospel of salvation focused on going to heaven.

*It is the gospel of the kingdom that will produce
"sons of the kingdom" who will inherit the kingdom
of the Father in the earth (Matt.13:38,43).*

Make Disciples

The Great Commission Jesus gave us begins with the preaching of the gospel so that men can be saved, but is only complete with the making of disciples.

All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptising 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; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age" Matt.28:18-20. We are called to go to all the nations, all the people groups, baptising them and teaching them. Jesus promised to be with us until the work is finished at the end of the age. Unreached people groups are now receiving the gospel. There has been a quickening of the work in the last 10-15 years. The sign of the gospel, in Matthew 24:14, is being fulfilled very quickly. Praise the Lord!

We are told, in Mark 16:16, that some will hear the message and be saved, others will not believe and be condemned. These are those who are going to be punished at the coming of the Lord: "***those who do not know God, and those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ***" 2Thess.1:8. It seems that there will be those who will refuse to believe in God even though they have heard the message and there will be those who hear the gospel but refuse to obey it.

The Promise of the Holy Spirit

The key to fulfilling the Great Commission is the Holy Spirit whom Jesus promised His disciples, “Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high” Lu.24:49. “But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth” Acts 1:8.

In Psalm 2:7-8, the psalmist wrote prophetically “I will declare the decree; the LORD has said to Me, You are My Son, today I have begotten You. Ask of Me, and I will give You the nations for Your inheritance, and the ends of the earth for Your possession.” The nations have been promised to Jesus as His inheritance but we are also partakers of this inheritance. “Now to Abraham and his Seed were the promises made. He does not say, ‘and seeds,’ as of many, but as of one, ‘and to your Seed’, who is Christ.” “And if you are Christ’s, then you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise” Gal.3:16,29. Jesus has been promised the nations; Jesus is the Seed of Abraham to whom the promises were made and, if we are Christ’s, we are also heirs according to the promise.

II) BUILDING THE CHURCH

In the 1980’s we had a scourge of church growth specialists who claimed to know how to add numbers to your local church. The presumption was that the only important thing about the church was how many people were attending a particular building and, thereby, making the particular minister appear successful. The advice given in church growth seminars included having suitable signs in the car park, how to present a user-friendly welcome pack, how to train the ushers, etc etc. Building the church is all about growing up the particular disciples that God gives to each eldership [in the New Testament, church leadership was in plurality]. The goal of church growth is to bring the believers to maturity, having equipped [perfected] them to function in the body properly.

Jesus said to Peter “you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it” Matt.16:18. Peter was a foundational apostle set in place by Jesus Christ. Later Peter speaks about his revelation of being a foundation stone and that the church [temple] is built of living stones. “Coming to Him as to a living stone, rejected indeed by men, but chosen by God and precious, you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house” 1 Pet.2:4-5. Jesus said something like this to Peter, ‘you are a living stone and because you have faith in me, I am going to use you to build my church’.

Jesus said He would build His church and He is going to use apostles as the foundation. He is also going to use prophets, evangelists, pastors, teachers and every other ministry and gift that the Holy Spirit is going to release again into the church. This church will prevail over hell. Jesus said, ‘I give unto you, the church apostolic, the keys of the kingdom of heaven.’ These are the keys spoken of in Matthew 16:19 “And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.”

Christ Gave Gifts for The Building of The Church

These gifts are the five-fold ministries given by Christ in His ascension. “And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers” Eph.4:11. Why were they given? To build the church: ‘by equipping [perfecting] the saints; by doing the work of the ministry and by building up the body of Christ’ (Eph.4:12).

The church is to be built [by the five-fold ministries] until it comes to maturity. The goal is perfection. There is a state of maturity to grow into as an individual believer and there is a state of maturity to grow into as a church, “*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*” v.13. Christ, as Son, is building God’s house and is Head over the house, the church (Heb.3:3).

III) PERFECTING THE SAINTS

In many Christian circles in recent decades there has been no understanding of the perfecting of the saints or the need for it. This is because of mistaken end-time views and because there has been little acceptance of the five-fold ministries of Ephesians 4:11. And yet the Scripture says that the work of the ministry of these gifts given by Christ is the perfecting of the saints. God’s goal is for there to be “*a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ*” v.13. How is the perfecting of the saints to be accomplished? Through ministry done after the pattern set by our Lord Jesus. In Colossians 1:24-29, Paul speaks of sacrificial service for Christ and His body as a minister. Are you willing to suffer as a minister of the gospel? Paul is saying that, to be an effective minister, you must be willing to suffer because that is essential for effective ministry in Christ.

The Work of The Ministry

Perfection comes through suffering. “*I now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up in my flesh what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ, for the sake of His body, which is the church, of which I became a minister according to the stewardship from God which was given to me for you, to fulfill the word of God*” Col.1:24-25. In the work of a minister, there is much suffering for the sake of ‘*His body*’, which is the church. The goal is for Christ to be fully formed in the lives of the saints. In writing to the believers in Galatia, Paul says “*my little children for whom I labor in birth again until Christ is formed in you*” Gal.4:19. We are ministers ‘*according to the stewardship from God*’, which is the grace given to us to do the work of the ministry.

The work of the ministry is to make known “*the mystery which has been hidden from ages and from generations, but now has been revealed to His saints*” Col.1:26. There are generations to whom the mystery is still hidden. They have not yet heard the gospel; and even many who have heard have only heard in part. The Lord wants all of the believers to be disciplined and then to be instructed in the knowledge of 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.

Bringing the Saints to Perfection

The glory of the Lord is risen upon us, now, today. **We are to tell the church the mystery!** If we faithfully impart the message of the gospel, it will spread and multiply. To be born again is a mystery to those who do not believe, but the gospel is much more than being born again. In the context of Colossians, Paul is speaking to a church. He is not preaching the gospel to the lost; he is showing the believers how they are to go on. To this end Christ must be preached not only for salvation but for glorification. “*Him we preach, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus. To this end I also labor, striving according to His working which works in me mightily*” v.28-29. It is Christ’s mighty power that works through us to bring the saints to maturity in Christ.

Let Us Go On ...

In **Philippians 3:12-14**, Paul says, “*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.*” We are going on to perfection, by apprehending [taking hold of] that which we have been called to do. We are to forget what lies behind and press on to the new thing that God is doing. Take hold of the apostolic revelation that God is now revealing. “**Therefore let us, as many as are mature, have this mind**” **Phil.3:15**. There is agreement coming among brethren who are receiving the apostolic doctrine, who are receiving the apostles Christ is sending forth. The major ministry of the apostle today is to make known the revelation of the mystery and ministering out of this revelation for the perfecting of the saints.

IV) EXALTING IN TRIBULATION

Every teaching in the New Testament about tribulation tells the saints to exalt in tribulation, to glory in tribulation, to endure in tribulation. Paul says in **Romans 5:3-5** “*we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; and perseverance, character; and character, hope. Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.*” To glory in tribulation is only possible by standing in grace. We enter into that standing in grace through faith in Jesus Christ.

The word ‘**tribulation**’ SC#2347 simply means ‘**pressure**’, and is translated: *afflicted, affliction, anguish, burdened, persecution, tribulation, trouble*. When we stand in faith in Christ, the grace of God is released to us. Many preachers and believers fear tribulation and the only reason that one would fear tribulation is because one does not know the manifest grace of God. A key aspect of the apostolic revelation is the reality of the tangible grace of God which enables one to stand in tribulation and in all suffering.

Paul prays to know the “**fellowship of His suffering**” and to be conformed to “**the image of His death**” (**Phil.3:10**). It is this reality of embracing suffering, of purposing to die to self in every way, that releases the grace to endure, to persevere and to overcome in the midst of tribulation. Come on church! Let us preach and teach the Word of God and not a doctrine whose title does not even appear in the Word of God.

The Lord comes after Tribulation

The coming of the Lord is in the midst of tribulation in the church according to **2 Thessalonians 1:4-7**. Paul tells the Thessalonians who are experiencing persecution and tribulation that God will deal with those who cause the persecution when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven. God will give the suffering saints rest when the Lord Jesus comes.

The saints will suffer

Chapter 2 of Thessalonians speaks of the coming of the “**son of perdition**”. Judas Iscariot was a particular ‘son of perdition’ and he betrayed the Son of God Himself. In the last days, there is coming another and much more powerful ‘son of perdition’ who will have pervasive influence on the world through the spirit of apostasy and lawlessness that is coming upon the earth; he will especially target the true church, having gained power through the false

church, the church that has fallen away. It is the church of the last days that will suffer for a season because this evil one is allowed to rule and oppress the saints. This is clearly prophesied in **Daniel 7:21** and **Revelation 13:7**. If you look at both those passages you will find that the saints are being overcome by the ruling of the beast, but the awesome reality is that finally “*judgment was made in favour of the saints of the Most High, and the time came for the saints to possess the kingdom*” Dan.7:22. This same testing time referred to in **Revelation 13:7-10** will demonstrate “*the patience and the faith of the saints*”.

Matthew 24:13-28 speaks of the great tribulation that ushers in the coming of the Son of Man. “*He who endures to the end will be saved*” v13. We are to endure to the end, not until a ‘rapture’ comes to rescue us, but until Jesus comes who will deal with our enemies. Jesus promised that He would be with the church until the end of the age (**Matt.28:20**) so He will enable the church to be preaching the gospel to every nation until the end comes (**Matt.24:14**). The great tribulation of **verse 21** firstly refers to the Roman siege and destruction of Jerusalem in AD70. However, because our Lord is answering questions about the destruction of the temple, as well as the end of the age and His coming, there is good reason to understand another great tribulation will take place at the end of the age. But even this latter tribulation is, in the context, centred in “*Judea*” (**v16**). It is only God’s grace that enables the saints to endure the tribulation. In fact God will “*shorten the days for the elect’s sake*” (**v22**).

The sign of the coming of the Son of Man appears “*immediately after the tribulation of those days*”. That means that Jesus comes after the tribulation to gather His elect “*from the four winds*” **v.29-31**. The saints, the elect, pass through tribulation. The true saints have done so in every century of the church age and there is not some special dispensation for late 20th, early 21st century saints. It is time for the church, especially in the West, to toughen up and become real saints of the Most High God.

V) PREPARING FOR THE LORD’S RETURN

Many have been taught to prepare for a rapture that rescues the believers out of the world before the world is subjected to great tribulation. In the context of this teaching the believers are told to be ready but, in reality, they are not being prepared for the Lord’s return.

Being sanctified and cleansed

How do we prepare for the Lord’s return? **In Ephesians 5:22-32**, Paul is teaching us that Christ Himself is preparing His church so that she will be ready for His return. “*Just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word*” v. 25-26. When the word of God is preached and taught, it is being used by Jesus to cleanse His church. “*You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you*” Jn.15:3. Thank God for every opportunity you have to preach or teach, but make sure you are teaching the apostles doctrine. The word that goes forth sanctifies the church so that the church might be presented to Jesus, “*that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish*” v. 27.

*How do we prepare for the Lord’s return?
By sanctifying and cleansing the church,
through teaching the word,
bringing her to be a glorious, pure, perfect body.*

The church is the bride of Jesus Christ and is to be treated as holy. If we preach a ‘rapture’ that rescues the church out of a troubled world, believers will believe for the rapture. If we preach the perfecting of the church, the preparation of a glorious bride church, if we preach the grace of God to endure tribulation and exalt in it (**Rom.5:3-5**), then we will be preaching and teaching the Word of God accurately and declaring the whole counsel of God. Believers will believe for what is taught, because “faith comes by hearing” (**Rom.10:17**).

Purifying ourselves

“Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is, and everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure” **1 Jn.3:2-3**. We are to purify ourselves; this is how we are to prepare for the Lord’s coming. Our hearts are purified by God through faith (**Acts15:8-9**). Peter says that we purify our souls by *“obeying the truth through the Spirit in sincere love of the brethren”* **1Pet.1:22**. James says, *“cleanse your hands you sinners, and purify your hearts”* from double mindedness (**Ja.4:8**). Jesus Himself has purified us to be His own special people, *“zealous for good works”* (**Titus 2:14**).

The coming of the Lord

Paul gives us more detail about the actual coming of the Lord in **1 Thessalonians 4:13-18**, and also in **2 Thessalonians 1:3-12** and **chapter 2**. The Scripture tells us that those *“who have fallen asleep in Jesus, God will bring with Him at the coming of the Lord”* **1Thess.4:13-15**. This is the wonderful hope that Paul also refers to in **1 Corinthians 15**, that believers who have died in faith will rise again and, that resurrection takes place, at the coming of the Lord. The spirit bodies of the saints who have died are with Jesus now (**2Cor.5:8**), and they will return to planet earth with Him. Then in some miraculous way their new glorified bodies rise from the earth. There will be a company of saints who *“are alive and remain, who will be caught up together with them [the dead in Christ] in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air”* **1Thess.4:17**. These words about the coming of the Lord are meant to bring comfort and encouragement (**v. 18**).

Glorified in His saints! Admired among all who believe!

When the *“Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels”*, He will be present in the *“glory of His power, when He comes, in that day, to be glorified in His saints and to be admired among all those who believe”* **2Thess.1:7,9,10**. The reference to *“saints”* and *“those who believe”* seems to be referring to two groups of people. Jesus will be glorified in the saints. The saints are those who will be ready and prepared for His coming and they are the ones who will be caught up to meet the Lord in the air. It appears there is another much larger group of people who believe but are not saints.

*Saints are holy ones; ones set apart; ones sanctified!
It is the saints who receive glorified bodies
at the coming of the Lord.*

There will be many as signified by the five foolish virgins (**Matt.25**) who believe in Jesus but will not be ready for his actual *parousia* [coming] but will *“admire Him”* when He comes. I assume that it is all these believers who admire Jesus when He comes who will be the people

who transit into the Millennium. We know that those “***who do not know God and those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ shall be punished with everlasting destruction***” **2Thess.1:8-9**. Therefore, idol worshippers, atheists, and those disobedient to the gospel will not survive the coming of the Lord.

The coming of the Lord will also deal with the “***lawless one, whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming***” **2Thess.2:8**

Many teach and believe there are two comings but **2 Thessalonians 1&2** clearly declare that the gathering of the saints to meet the Lord in the air is the same coming of the Lord Jesus Christ that will destroy the lawless one.

What Is Apostles Doctrine?

It is the teaching of the Word of God 2Tim.3:16.

It is the whole counsel of God Acts 20:27.

It is the revelation of the mystery Eph.3:3-5.

It is the deeper wisdom of God 1Cor.2:6-10.

It is Christ revealed, Eph.4:17 Phil.3:8-11.

It is the continual preaching and teaching of Jesus as the Christ Acts 5:42.

The final picture we have of Apostle Paul

in the Book of Acts 28:30-31 is of him

*“preaching the kingdom of God and teaching the
things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ with
all confidence, no one forbidding him.”*

Conclusion THE APOSTOLIC REVELATION

In the last ten years, there has been an amazing proliferation of apostolic ministry across the church of Jesus Christ world-wide. To walk into a Christian bookshop ten years ago and find material on ‘apostles today’ was almost impossible. There may have been one or two books. By 2006 there are a number of books written by apostles that give insight and understanding to the ministry of apostles and that herald the restoration of apostles today. But more than by the written word,

there are more and more apostles ministering in the nations, and this is resulting in a deep structural change in the form of the church and is releasing the deeper teaching of the word of God, that is, the revelation of the mystery.

As the Lord brings us into the apostolic revelation of His word, we come to know the authority of Christ in, and through, His word. It is the deeper wisdom of God’s word that actually brings us into the glory of God (**1Cor.2:7**). As we saw in Chapter 2, Jesus prays for us to receive His glory which He had with the Father before time began (**Jn.17:22**).

*It is the revelation of the glory of Christ that brings us into oneness and it is in oneness that we come to perfection.
There is no other way!*

Recently, I shared from **John 17** in a house church meeting with a few mature believers. When we finished the study of the word and entered into prayer, we all experienced a profound sense of His glory: the weight of His glory fell on us and a number of the brethren were physically transfixed; they could not move but were able to worship God in Spirit and truth! We understood that God was bearing witness to His word and He was confirming to us that we are entering into a new phase, the third phase; that we are coming into another dimension, a third dimension, where we are totally covered with His glory. As a result, we can be in the **Holiest** with the Father and manifest His glory which is “**Christ in us.**” The next step is to walk in the glory - “**them that He justified He also glorified**” (**Rom.8:30**).

*The whole earth will be filled with His glory as mature sons, in whom His indwelling presence has manifested His glory, carry that glory into the work place, into the market place, into the homes, into every place being fruitful and multiplying and filling the earth.’ (**Gen.1:28**)*

We are in that generation of millennial change, that time of transition into the new age, the age to come (**Eph.1:21**). Some are preaching about this as the third day!

*We are entering into the third phase of God’s revealed purpose being fulfilled.
We are to celebrate the third and greatest feast!*

The feast of Tabernacles has been forgotten in church history and replaced by Christmas and the focus of the fulfilment of all things has been lost. Since the Latter Rain revival in 1948, God has been restoring to the church the knowledge of, and the expectation that, the Feast of Tabernacles will be fulfilled.

God is calling us to come into the Holy of Holies. It is only as we understand that Jesus, as the eternal High Priest, has fulfilled the Day of Atonement and has gone within the veil as a forerunner for us (**Heb.6:19-20**), that we can now hear the trumpets [the prophetic word of God] calling us into the full apostolic revelation, to understand the immensity of what Jesus has done by shedding His blood on the cross and then entering into the Most Holy Place in heaven above with His own blood (**Heb.9:11,12,24**). This signifies that all sin has been forgiven and done away with forever, “*I will forgive their iniquity and remember their sin no more*” **Jer.31:34b**.

This is the New Covenant promise sealed in the blood of Jesus so that every time we come to the Lord’s table and we commune [fellowship] in the blood of Christ (**1Cor.10:16**), we are acknowledging that Jesus, by His blood, has forgiven all of our iniquity and God remembers our sin no more. We have come to the Day of Atonement, knowing that “*after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God*” **Heb.10:12**. Jesus has “*by one offering perfected forever those who are being sanctified*” **Heb.10:14**.

*The time for the perfect has come!
Everything has been done!
It is time for the church to inherit,
to come into the fulfilment of all things in Christ.*

This means that it is time for God to indwell His people, “*if anyone loves Me, he will keep My words; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him*” **Jn.14:23**. The word ‘home’ in this verse is the same Greek word as ‘mansion’ in verse 2. It means ‘a dwelling place’; it means ‘a tabernacle’. It is time for the fulfilment of the Feast of Tabernacles! It is time to come into the Holy of Holies and experience the glory of the Father.

It is time to come to know the third person of the Godhead who is actually the first person of the Godhead, “*the first shall be last*”. It is time to come to know the Father! And how does this happen? Jesus said “*if they receive you [the apostles] they receive Me; and if they receive Me they receive the One [the Father] who sent Me.*”

*It is essential for apostles to be restored today!
It is time for the apostolic revelation!*

Appendix i - APOSTOLIC COUNCIL

Why we need Apostolic Councils

To avoid further denominations

It is time for the apostolic leaders of the church **to form an apostolic council that will provide oversight and leadership for ministers, ministries and fellowships who are wanting to be part of the apostolic church as patterned in the Scripture** and that is emerging everywhere today. Such a council would include leaders of various apostolic companies and apostolic and prophetic bodies. The council being formed is not the beginning of a new movement, denomination or network but a realistic outworking of scriptural practice.

Apostolic faith is growing

At some point in the near future, there will be a great number of saints, ministers and whole fellowships led by their ministers joining with the apostolic faith which is “*the faith once and for all delivered to the saints*” **Jude 3**.

For Apostles to be accountable

In the present time, various apostles and prophets have been raised and companies have gathered around them or churches have been planted by an apostolic leader, or fellowships and their ministers have come into relationship with an apostle. However, these leaders do not have any place or forum where they can relate as peers and submit in a mutual relationship and be accountable for their doctrine and practice. Because of this, when a problem arises, a leader can act unilaterally and be out of order, causing unnecessary division and damage.

To avoid a leader drawing away disciples

Another dangerous development is for an individual leader to become overly influential through his particular interpretation of apostolic teaching and ministry [obviously the same applies to a prophet or a teacher]. Attention is thereby drawn to the leader and much emphasis is then placed on that leader’s opinion and judgment of all things. This is a miss-development that detracts from the centrality of Jesus and the pre-eminence that must be given to Him in all things. Such a development leads to the particular ministry leader and those who adhere to his teaching and practice becoming a delineated movement, no longer being a genuine apostolic ministry to the body of Christ.

The Issue of Covering

An issue of importance to most ministers is that of **covering**. The apostolic council is clearly under the covering of the Lord Jesus Christ. In fact there is no other covering for the church. Jesus alone is the head of all of us and He does not delegate headship, in His church, to any man. Through the mutual submission of all members, the council then provides oversight to each member. The apostolic council is according to the pattern of **Acts 15**.

The Jerusalem Council

Acts 15:5 reports on a serious problem that had arisen in the church because “*some of the sect of the Pharisees who believed rose up, saying, ‘It is necessary to circumcise them [Gentile believers] and to command them to keep the Law of Moses.’*”

v6 Apostles and elders gathered “*to consider this matter*”. There was a large number in that council, “**multitude**” **v.12**.

v7 “*there had been much dispute.*”

v12 But after Peter had spoken of his experience in Cornelius’ house (**Acts 10**) and Paul and Barnabas were now to speak, the multitude kept silent and listened. When apostles, with present truth to share, speak, they command the attention of everyone.

v15 James then brings the council to a proper conclusion by bringing the quickened word from the Scripture: **it is written!** The Scripture finally settles the issue and that should be our motto: **Scripture alone.** The Scripture is our only authority for faith and practice.

v22 Notice the reference to “*their own company*”. The idea of apostolic company has a scriptural basis.

v25 While the council started in dispute, they finally were able to say “***It seemed good to us, being assembled with one accord.***” Being in one accord is the goal that we can achieve by being willing to handle disputes in a biblical way and allowing the Holy Spirit and the word of God to be the final arbiters, not the will of a strong leader.

v28 “***For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us.***” The Holy Spirit is the head of the apostolic council.

v31 Good fruit came from the Jerusalem council: when the letter was read in Antioch “***they rejoiced over its encouragement.***”

A Smaller Apostolic Council

In **Galatians 2:1-10**, Paul tells of his going up to Jerusalem with Barnabas and Titus to purposefully communicate the gospel that he was preaching “***among the Gentiles***” **v2**. He met with James, Peter and John “***who seemed to be pillars***” **v9**. Paul, as a senior apostle and a man who clearly knew the call and commissioning of the Lord and who received awesome revelation of the gospel, wanted to communicate with the leading apostles in Jerusalem. It was in this meeting of apostles that it became clear that Paul was to go to the Gentiles while Peter was to specifically lead ministry “***for the circumcised***” **v7-8**.

Notice that there was no hierarchy among these apostles. One was not ‘the spiritual father’ of the others. Rather they recognised that **they were peers and that the Father of all is the Apostle, Jesus Christ.**

The aim is ONENESS

*The council is a place where leaders of various groups can come together because of a shared commitment to the end goal. This goal is clearly expressed in **Ephesians 4:12-16**, specifically v15b-16 “growing up in all things into Him who is the head – Christ – from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.”*

Each group pursues the vision the Lord has given to them and therefore contributes into the body for the up-building of the whole body. The council enables various leaders to come into a place of safety and security, where they are recognised and received.
