

Scriptures and Doctrine :: Apostles today

Apostles today, on: 2006/12/1 19:05

I am looking for information on the relevancy of the gift of apostleship in this day and age.

Has this been discussed before? I did a search and couldn't come up with anything.

Does Calvary Chapel believe in apostles? It seem like I remember hearing Don McClure say he was an apostle (in the sense of establishing churches).

Any help would be appreciated!

Thanks. :-)

Re: Apostles today - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2006/12/1 19:12

Quote:

-----Has this been discussed before?

Yes, this has been discussed a few times before but on more of the negative stance with examples of such men that are "self-pronounced" and "proclaimed" apostles. There is a movement of this under the leadership of Peter Wagner and others who claim the titles of apostles in Canada and the United States and have divided up the country under their jurisdictions. Obviously this is not correct and a mis-application of scriptures. I do believe that there have been and are apostles. I would say in a modern sense they are those that bring the gospel to a country or people group more or less. Such as William Carey being an apostle to India, etc.

I could also accept the idea of a modern day apostle being a man that is under the leadership of many and has a particular relationship with God above the rest. It might sound a bit mystical but I also think it is of someone that has seen even a vision of Christ and had an experience beyond other Christians.

Quote:

-----Does Calvary Chapel believe in apostles?

Hmm. Well the main scripture that Calvary Chapel mentions modern day apostleship would be this scripture:

Ephesians 4:11 - "And he gave **some apostles**; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers."

The word means being "sent out" I believe in the Greek and the interpretation is that of a missionary, being sent to another people group or area. As stated above I agree in some sense with this interpretation.

Re:, on: 2006/12/1 20:19

Thanks for the reply, Greg. Are there any sermons or articles on this topic on SI?

I've seen the gift of apostleship as one who establishes churches, whether local or foreign, and then moves on after God has established the leadership in that church. Like what the apostle Paul did. But some people say that apostles are only those who saw Christ in His lifetime. Thus, we wouldn't have apostles today.

Would you say that one would *have to have* an experience beyond what a normal Christian would have to be an apostle?

Re: - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2006/12/1 20:50

Quote:

-----Would you say that one would have to have an experience beyond what a normal Christian would have to be an apostle?

I think you really gave a more biblical good example of what exactly a apostle is. He is one that has the grace of God to be able to establish churches and fellowships. I think of galatians where it says that Paul was "an apostle not of men, neither by men, but **by Jesus Christ**." and in galatians 1:15 it says that paul was "called by his grace".

"an experience beyond what a normal Christian would have to be an apostle?" - In that I mean they need to be called of God for that special work. All are not apostles. I was also thinking when I wrote that of the qualifications for deacons and bishops! how much more an apostle! I think Paul gives 2 passages in Corinthians for the proper qualifications of an apostle, namely one that is willing to suffer!

As far as I know there are no direct teachings on this subject on SI. I think this is a great discussion topic and it would be profitable to look more into the scriptures about this idea of "modern apostles"

Re: The character of an Apostle. - posted by adamdawkins, on: 2006/12/1 21:24

I feel like taking a slightly different stance on this thread. I believe what we need in the modern day apostle, more than the ability to found fellowships (which I am not belittling) is we need men and women in the church with the character of apostles as we see in the New Testament.

A modern day apostle that, whether pastorally or evangelistically focused makes a stand against the current age and, by the grace of God can call on believers in humility to "be imitators of me" (1Corinthians 4v15) Or "be imitators of me as I am also of Christ (1Cor 11v1).

In the verse before he calls people to imitate him he refers to being a father to the Corinthians, "for I have begotten you in Christ Jesus through the Gospel". (1Cor4v14) Perhaps the apostle has a supernatural gift that combines and oversees that of pastorship and evangelism.

As Greg said, they are willing to suffer. The verses I referred to above are in the context of:

1Co 4:9-16 For I think that God has set forth us last, the apostles, as it were appointed to death; for we have become a spectacle to the world and to angels and to men. (10) We are fools for Christ's sake, but you are wise in Christ. We are weak, but you are strong. You are honorable, but we are despised. (11) Even until this present hour we both hunger and thirst and are naked and are buffeted and have no certain dwelling place. (12) And we labor, working with our own hands. Being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it; (13) being defamed, we entreat. We are made as the filth of the world, the offscouring of all things until now. (14) I do not write these things to shame you, but as my beloved children I warn you. (15) For though you have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet you do not have many fathers; for I have begotten you in Christ Jesus through the gospel. (16) Therefore I beseech you, be imitators of me."

A challenge to us all, in character.

Re: Greg, on: 2006/12/1 22:03

Quote:

-----Greg: He is one that has the grace of God to be able to establish churches and fellowships.

Quote:

-----Greg: In that I mean they need to be called of God for that special work.

I think that is exactly it. Paul stresses that he was called to be an apostle. Romans 1:1; "Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God,Â"

But truly it is a high calling!

Quote:
-----Greg: I think Paul gives 2 passages in Corinthians for the proper qualifications of an apostle, namely one that is willing to suffer!

Wow, I had never thought about the suffering an apostle must go through. But, I think all those called to the ministry must be prepared for suffering. All Christians go through suffering, but there is something about the suffering of those serving Christ in ministry.

Re: AdamDawkins, on: 2006/12/1 22:08

Quote:
-----A modern day apostle that, whether pastorally or evangelistically focused makes a stand against the current age and, by the grace of God can call on believers in humility to "be imitators of me" (1Corinthians 4v15) Or "be imitators of me as I am also of Christ (1Cor 11v1).

Amen!

Quote:
-----Perhaps the apostle has a supernatural gift that combines and oversees that of pastorship and evangelism.

Now, that sounds like what I've seen in one man called to be a modern apostle. Both the giftings of a pastor and evangelist combined!

Re: - posted by KingJimmy (), on: 2006/12/1 23:03

Regarding what an apostolic man is to be in his character, I cannot recommend enough Art Katz's "Apostolic Foundations."

The question of whether there are modern day apostles is a great question to consider. What do the Scriptures say? Well, we know beyond a shadow of a doubt that **there is at least one modern day apostle: Jesus Christ!** For it says in Hebrews 3:1 "...consider Jesus, the Apostle and High Priest of our confession." So, for those who might dismiss modern day apostles, they can't do so without dismissing Christ. And if Christ is a modern day apostle, then why can't there be other modern day apostles?

Re: - posted by Christinyou (), on: 2006/12/1 23:27

Who is the Gifted One? Is not the Son the greatest Apostle that ever has or will be?

Who was gifted with every spiritual gift available? Was it not the Son of God. What was most important to Him being an Apostle or being a Son. Who disperses the Gifts of God as He wishes?

1 Corinthians 12:18 But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him.

1 Corinthians 12:7 But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal.

Who has the manifestation of the Spirit?
Every man that is saved.

If we have the Son we have all of Him, not just part of Him in pieces here and there.

If The Son is the Gifted One and the Holy Spirit is the one that manifests all that Christ is in the believer, then all the Gifts are available to every man, it is up to the Holy Spirit to use them as He Pleases, not up to man to be gifted as an apostle.

le, for the Body of Christ are all Apostles by the Christ that is in them and able to be used anytime the Holy Spirit please s to the building up of the Body of Christ the Church.

1 Corinthians 12:8-11 For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues: But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will.

This will set everybody at odds with me, but here it is.

1 Corinthians 12:27-31 Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular. And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues. Are all apostles? are all prophets? are all teachers? are all workers of miracles? Have all the gifts of healing? do all speak with tongues? do all interpret? Here it is; a resounding YES.

YES

We all have all the Gifts of Christ by the Holy Spirit and can be used anytime the Holy Spirit pleases in anyone that is saved by the Christ that is born again in Him.

But covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet shew I unto you a more excellent way.

Then 1 Corinthians 13: If we had all the Gifts of the Spirit of Christ without Love we are a clanging cymbal and nothing works. Who is Love?

God is Love, Christ is Love, The Holy Spirit Makes Love the first prerequisite for dispersing a Gift. That is Christ in you the Hope of Glory.

We are all apostles in Christ Jesus by His birthing in us.

In Christ, an apostle of Christ by, "the Hope of Glory" of Christ in us: Phillip

Yet greater than this, son's. Then God the Father can use son's for any gift mentioned, fulfilled by the Love of Christ, "who loved us first and gave His life for us.

Gal 2:20 I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

Praise God: Phillip

Gal 1:4 Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father:

Tts 2:14 Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.

Re: - posted by KingJimmy (), on: 2006/12/2 0:16

I think if one is going to understand what apostolic ministry is, I think it is important to examine some Scriptures. I think this is a good first one to consider:

Ephesians 2:19 So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God's household, 20 having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner stone, 21 in whom the whole building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord, 22 in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit.

This verse has often been misquoted and interpreted to mean that the purpose of the apostles was to write Scripture and the such. However, there is no evidence whatsoever that this was the purpose of apostolic ministry. If such was the purpose, then the first generation of apostles failed horribly. For of all the apostles named in Scripture, only Peter, Paul, John, Matthew and James wrote something that made it into the New Testament. And of these, only three were of the original twelve!

So then, what is this verse saying? Apostolic ministry is a foundational ministry upon which the entire Church is built upon. This is not merely some once-for-all past tense phenomenon. Such is obviously included, however, if it were merely such, then Jesus Christ ministry is merely past tense as well, being that He is the corner stone of the entire building! But, we know that the ministry of Christ continues even today.

So, what exactly is this foundational ministry that apostles lay? I think Paul's words are best. Paul says, "According to the grace of God which was given to me, like a wise master builder, I laid a foundation... For no man can lay a foundation other than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ." (1 Cor 3:10-11) And how did Paul do this? He says:

Romans 15:19 in the power of signs and wonders, in the power of the Spirit; so that from Jerusalem and round about as far as Illyricum I have fully preached the gospel of Christ. 20 And thus I aspired to preach the gospel, not where Christ was already named, so that I would not build on another man's foundation;

Paul's activity as an apostle at its core centered around establishing Christ where Christ was yet named. Once the name of Christ was established somewhere, it wasn't too long before Paul was getting an itch to move on somewhere else, and preach the gospel where the gospel had yet to be preached. However, that is not to say he only sought to preach where there were no other Christians, for he did desire to evangelize in Rome and "obtain some fruit among you." (Romans 1:13)

Paul seemed to break the land-speed record when it came to this work. For in the book of Acts, you seldom see him staying at any location more than a few months before going somewhere else. Sometimes he stayed over a year at a given location, but this seemed to be the exception, not the rule. Thus, it is not shocking to see that by the time he's writing to the Romans, he's already considering doing missions work beyond their region.

However, don't conceive of the apostle as being merely somebody who is here one moment and then gone the next, and only bringing the gospel to people who have never heard it before. For his foundational work is not over simply because he went out and made a few converts in a city. Being that an apostle is a foundational man, he is also concerned about the maintaining of that foundation. He is interested in seeing that the foundation he established stand the test of time. He is concerned that those who now name Christ will continue to do so. Thus, he sought to come to the Romans not only to evangelize, but further help the Christians there be established in their faith (Romans 1:11).

Thus, in the book of Acts and the epistles, we see that apostles like Paul went about also "strengthening" the individual churches (Acts 14:22, 15:41, 16:5, 18:23), and providing pastoral oversight. Not only this, but they would also appoint elders in each locale (Acts 14:23, Titus 1:5, 1 Tim 3) who would also provide pastoral oversight.

This all goes back to what was said in Ephesians 2:21-22. In strengthening established foundations, apostolic ministry exists to continue to build up and grow the local church. This is stated further in Ephesians 4:11-16, that apostolic ministry (amongst the other ministries) is for the equipping of the saints, building up the body of Christ to a mature man, and attaining unity.

So, in summary, apostolic ministry is mainly that of being who lays foundations. An apostle does this through missionary work by taking the gospel to where the gospel has never been. He also seeks to even "do the work of an evangelist" where Christ is already named. And finally, he seeks to strengthen the faith of the faithful, wherever they might be - even in a church where they never laid the original foundations e.g. Paul to the Romans.

I hope this has given you guys something to chew on.

Re: - posted by EVANGELIST (), on: 2006/12/2 2:07

Apostles today? What does the Bible say?

In Eph. 4:11, "And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; you see what he did. In 12, For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: you see the purpose. In 13, Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: YOU SEE FOR HOW LONG. One of the key words in vs. 13 is Till or in some translations Until. Have we all come into the unity of the faith? No! When we do we will not need Apostles, Pastors Etc.

Some teach that you have to meet two qualifications to be an Apostle; Acts 1:21-22 21 Wherefore of these men which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, 22 Beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that he was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection . If we look at the text it is not talking about the qualifications of an Apostle it is dealing with one taking the place of Judas. Acts 1:20 20 For it is written in the book of Psalms, Let his habitation be desolate, and let no man dwell therein: and his bishoprick let another take. Let another take his place. Who is the HIS?

I believe that there are Apostles today. I have a friend that pioneered works in Japan and works in the Philippines and they have connected more than 10 million people to his works. I consider him an Apostle. I also believe some have apostolic ministries who move in deep realms of the Spirit of God. Yet, I do not believe everyone who claims to be an Apostle is an Apostle.

Revelation 2:2 I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars:

Re: - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2006/12/2 2:25

Quote:

-----we need men and women in the church with the character of apostles as we see in the New Testament.

Excellent! truly the "character" of the apostles is what we need to see in leaders. And Jesus as our "Apostle" is our example. Oh for men of this sort.

Perhaps this article is not speaking particularly of apostles but of men of a caliber and walk with God that we don't see these days:

A DIFFERENT RACE OF MEN by Greg Gordon

https://www.sermonindex.net/modules/newbb/viewtopic.php?topic_id=13571&forum=16&1

Re: - posted by lovegrace, on: 2006/12/2 9:18

Let's not get all 'hyped' up on the apostleship. I feel that God has called me to one, but let's not honor one above another.

Anywho, an apostle is simply a missionary. A person who starts something. I think Chip Brogden, in his study of the book of Galatians, stated that an apostle spreads Christ.

I can't remember who I listened to on SI that stated the same thing but to more in-depthness. I thought it was T-Austin Sparks but I don't think so after looking around.

Some teachers say that an apostle had to see Jesus. Which isn't biblical. Others say signs and wonders are to follow them, which I tend to agree with.

2 Corinthians 12:12

The signs of a true apostle were performed among you with all perseverance, by signs and wonders and miracles.

Others say that an apostle is like a father because of Paul's nature towards his calling. Which is alright. I haven't seen any scripture to defend this other than Paul's nature in ministry. Like his way of doing it, he was very personal and very close to the ministry he was entrusted to.

One thing I think is clear, is that an apostle lays the foundation for the Church's walk with Christ. He brings the basics of Christianity. No apostle looks the same as another.

That's just my experience with this word and I'm still learning. Blessings.

Here is a link for a study on it. It states that you must have seen Jesus, but that's not the truth of the Word of God. The rest, after glance, looked fine. Except they say apostles have ceased

<http://www.biblicalstudies.com/bstudy/spiritualgifts/ch14.htm>

I haven't really found anything on SI to help you with this. Art Katz's message really didn't hit the mark for me. ;-)

Re: - posted by adamdawkins, on: 2006/12/2 11:48

Quote:
-----lovegrace : Let's not get all 'hyped' up on the apostleship. I feel that God has called me to one, but let's not honor one above another.

This is a crucial point! We have a natural habit to see apostleship as a calling greater than a lot of other callings, when in reality we all called as part of the same Body to function in unity.

And yes, as I and other have mentioned, it takes a lot of character to be an apostle, but remember Paul encouraged people to imitate him and, regardless of whether we are called to apostleship or not, we should all be willing to suffer for Christ, and be willing to live a life worthy of the Gospel (see Philipians 1v27 I think).

Even the New Testament apostles weren't 'super-christians' as we sometimes like to see them, but we can all live in the same way, because we all have access to the grace that the apostles had.

I know we know this, but I think it's important to remind ourselves of it :)

Thanks lovegrace,

Adam.

Re: Apostles today - posted by InTheLight (), on: 2006/12/2 12:16

Quote:
-----I am looking for information on the relevancy of the gift of apostleship in this day and age.

Roniya, I'm wondering if you had some person/persons specifically in mind who you thought might have this calling today.

As I was listening to Keith Daniel's latest sermons this week the thought that he had the calling of an apostle came to my mind, I wonder if you would agree? This man's character, and the things that he has done and seen in his ministry are just astounding to me.

In Christ,

Ron

Re: - posted by EVANGELIST (), on: 2006/12/2 13:19

I know many people who have been sent out, but are not Apostles.
Everyone sent out = Apostle No
Everyone who has a character like an apostle = Apostle No
Every Missionary = Apostle No

Does Apostle mean the same thing today as it did when written in Scripture?
Or has it been defined differently today.

One thing I've noticed in today's world if one claims to be an Apostle, people say he is full of pride. If one claim to be a Pastor it is OK ???

I know within the whole group of Apostles, there is a subset of Apostles (the 70, the 12, ect.) that were unique for their specific purposes (writing Scripture ect.).

I roofed many years and was considered to be a roofer. I have also seen those who put one or two roofs on and claimed to be a roofer; but they were not roofers.

I'd like to ask any who are Apostles; can you share with me the uniqueness of your ministry today?

Re: - posted by lovegrace, on: 2006/12/2 13:38

Evangelist. You have said this and that isn't an apostle yet you give no scriptural backing. Brother, any opinion should be thrown in hell. Even mine. Scripture is our basis, not personal experience. I am considered to be a 'pentacostal/charismatic' but I know the Word of God is our basis NOT personal experience, not like many of my close brothers and sisters.

There are many missionaries that fulfill the scripture *2 Corinthians 12:12
The signs of a true apostle were performed among you with all perseverance, by signs and wonders and miracles.*

Even if they are baptist, methodist, or presbyterian. If someone receives the gospel and their life is changed, THAT is a miracle my brother. A sign is something visible to point to God and that again would be the infiltration of the Gospel into someone's heart and their life changing experience.

You see that the scripture doesn't say healings. And even if it did. A healing of the soul is more important, for what good is there if someone has a perfectly healthy body without eternal life? None.

For me personally, I haven't been 'sent out' yet. God is taking me through training in His Word and I'm writing a book about it by His grace.

My ministry, if it really matters, I see it being a grassroots ministry. One that brings up people within the city to send them out. I'm not called to any country right now, other than America. I feel inner healing, physically healing, foundational teaching, and relevant teaching is my calling. First to the youth then to all ages.

I also feel the need to go back to the 'old paths' listed in scripture. Where revival and love are natural within the church.

I tend to go out of the normal thinking. I'm an out of the box kind of thinking. Tradition breaker, if you want to say. But Word of God based.

Has this happened in my life? Yes, in part. But God is now working out many character issues and has done a great job. But He is also giving me a strong scriptural foundation.

Re: - posted by EVANGELIST (), on: 2006/12/2 17:22

Lovegrace. First of all I never claimed personal experience. Second of all I agree that opinions are of little value. When I was saying this or that about Apostles; I did not use scriptural backing, because it is a simple universal truth that only requires common sense.

Every Christian Church that believes in modern day Apostles (that I'm aware of) would agree with this simple logic. If you do not agree; then you believe: everyone sent out is an apostle, everyone that has characteristics of an apostle is an apostle, and every missionary is an apostle. Think over this, and if you still want scriptural backing I'll give you as much as you want...Here I'll give you one Philip the evangelist was sent out. Was he an apostle? NO! He was an evangelist!

Can SOME being sent out be an Apostle? Yes

Can SOME with the characteristics of an Apostle indeed be an Apostle? Yes
Can SOME missionaries be Apostles? Yes

Once again Iâ'm looking for someone who can share the uniqueness of the apostolic working in their ministry today.

Re: Thanks..., on: 2006/12/2 19:03

Brother Ron, yes, I do have someone in mind. But it wasn't brother Keith. I see him as being more of an evangelist. If we look at an apostle as one who comes in and does the foundational work, then I would say brother Keith is more of one who comes in and helps in building upon that foundation. Which I suppose could in some sense fit in with the apostle gifting...but I know that brother Keith considers himself to be an evangelist. He speaks and moves on.

KingJimmy, thank you for your excellent explanation! You said some really good things that were very helpful.

I agree with Lovegrace that the gift of apostleship is not to be above another gift. We are all servants of Christ and members of the Bride of Christ. It is amazing to study the Body and see how God has gifted different people in areas of serving.

Lovegrace, I read that article and I was wanting something that gave the other side. :-o So, if you come upon anything, please let me know.

Thanks for everyone's input. This has been very helpful...at least no one has come out that this gifting has ceased from the church!

Re: - posted by KingJimmy (), on: 2006/12/2 22:54

Technically speaking, those who claim to be called by God as missionaries have absolutely no Scriptural backing for such a claim. The Bible knows nothing of somebody called to be a missionary. Never in all the New Testament is there any mention of somebody being a missionary.

However, if one does a study of the word "missionary," one will find it ultimately comes from the word "apostle." If memory serves correct, the word "missionary" is a latinized version of the greek word for apostle. Thus, grammatically and Biblically speaking, anybody claiming to be called as a missionary is technically claiming to be an apostle.

Thus, every God called missionary is actually called to be an apostle. To say otherwise is to say that not every God called apostle is called to be an apostle. Which, of course, is absurd.

Re: - posted by KingJimmy (), on: 2006/12/2 23:15

This might be a really crude way of thinking, but I think it helps clarify the ministry of an apostle. An apostle is essentially an evangelist and pastor rolled up into one. I don't believe Keith Daniel is an apostle because he takes no responsibility of oversight for the churches he ministers at. If they never invite him back to speak again, he will probably never take much thought to them again.

Each church an apostle is established with will provide continued oversight for the congregation they have a relationship with. He's vested in the care of the congregation. He's not just some itinerant minister floating by to give a good word of encouragement, and then *poof*, gone the next day forevermore. Even when an apostle is visiting some other congregation, he will continue to be interested in the other congregations spiritually. Thus, you see Paul in his letters continually praying and giving thanks for the churches in his network, and continuing to write and visit them.

edit An off-the-cuff after thought. Perhaps one could further divide things like this if it helps them to think about these things more. Imagine dividing apostles, evangelists, elders and teachers into these correlating camps:

- a) Traveling
- b) Localized

Ministry Group 1: a) Apostles b) Elders
Ministry Group 2: a) Evangelists b) Teachers
Ministry Group 3: a & b) Prophets

I would not attempt to defend these things dogmatically. I only give this as a way of thinking to better help us picture it in our mind. In the Scriptures, apostles and elders are related. Elders seem pretty much like localized resident apostles. We never see them going anywhere. Yet, the apostles Peter and John in their epistles writing as apostles also write to localized elders as their "fellow elders."

The only specific example of an evangelist in Scripture is Philip. He seems to simply be an itinerant free-floating preacher, proclaiming the gospel to the heathen everywhere he goes. But since we know from Eph 4:11 that evangelists are not merely for the heathen, but also for the building up and strengthening of the body, it is likely that he also simply went from church to church at times, merely instructing them and moving on. Thus, evangelists are sorta just like free-floating teachers in that regard.

And prophets can function both locally and in traveling.

I hope this has helped clarify.

Re:, on: 2006/12/2 23:42

Quote:
-----This might be a really crude way of thinking, but I think it helps clarify the ministry of an apostle. An apostle is essentially an evangelist and pastor rolled up into one. I don't believe Keith Daniel is an apostle because he takes no responsibility of oversight for the churches he ministers at. If they never invite him back to speak again, he will probably never take much thought to them again.

I would agree. I think a good example of a modern day apostle would be KP Yohannan from GFA.ORG. He truly is an evangelist with a burden for every church they plant and the labors that they send to the field. He regularly visits the churches and the different missions training facilities they start.

Here is a message by him called:

(<https://www.sermonindex.net/modules/mydownloads/visit.php?lid4399>) Christ Call Follow in my Footsteps

Re: - posted by EVANGELIST (), on: 2006/12/2 23:57

A dear Pastor friend of mine ministers in Mexico as a missionary quite often. He is a PASTOR. He is NOT an Apostle, nor claims to be.

Can we fit him in as an apostle by finding some definition using semantic ranges on a Greek word? That's one of the problems we have today, people quote Greek, Hebrew, and Latin and can't read it to save their lives.

Forget the grammatical terms.... When I say Apostle I'm talking about (Eph. 4:8b he gave gifts unto men) these men; Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists ECT. are the gifts unto men. (Eph 4:11) So if I asked if an Evangelist (the one with the special gift) can share insights about his ministry, I'm not just asking anyone who has evangelized. For example I believe Billy Gram is an evangelist, I'm asking him.

I know people who prophesy; but they are not PROPHETS.

Maybe someone understands what I'm trying to communicate.

I'm just asking if someone who is a TRUE APOSTLE (a gift from God, a unique calling for today) can share some insight, that's all.

Re: - posted by EVANGELIST (), on: 2006/12/3 0:10

KingJimmy,

Thanks for your insight. One thing IÂ'm trying to find out is, if you took two men, and both are doing the same type of ministry, yet one has this unique gift and the other does not; What benifet would the one with the gift be? If any?

Re: - posted by Nellie, on: 2006/12/3 12:26

About a Year ago some man came into our Church {or the Church I used to attend}

he poured oil over the Pastors head, and said that the Pastor was an Apostle, and that his Daughter was a Prophetess.

He was giving out the Gifts of the Spirit.

the Pastor hasn't been the same since, and this man told him he would preach to lots of people.

Everytime this man came to Church, the Pastor was exalted over Christ.

He blew some type of horn and was out of order.

Not at any time did the Pastor tell him he was out of order, or disturbing the Service.

I can't tell you what an Apostle is, but I can tell you what one isn't.

This man wasn't sent from God.

Thanks for letting me share this.

God Bless

Nellie

Re: - posted by IRONMAN (), on: 2006/12/3 17:59

brethren

Quote:

-----Let's not get all 'hyped' up on the apostleship. I feel that God has called me to one, but let's not honor one above another.

true, but let it be known that the apostle is honored more in heaven than prophet, preacher, teacher and evangelist. He may be the least esteemed on earth as he will have to be the slave of all, but like the word says, the first shall be last and the last first...nonetheless let each one of us seek God as to what his/her calling/office/responsibility is and do that.

Re: - posted by lovegrace, on: 2006/12/3 18:47

Quote:

-----I did not use scriptural backing, because it is a simple universal truth that only requires common sense.

Evangelist, this is not true. Keep in consideration that some people, maybe even myself, are young in Christ and don't know certain things.

Actually, fyi, Paul was 3 of the 4 (not 5) fold ministry. Evangelist, teacher, AND apostle. See 1 Timothy 2:7 and 2 Timothy 1:11

So, that of itself shows that someone can be an apostle and evangelist and such. And I believe that is the case with Philip, so that's really not a good defination or stance. Because Philip seems to be an apostle AND evangelist. Matt. 10:2-3 (Unless that is a different Phillip) and Acts 21:8

Quote:

-----Can SOME being sent out be an Apostle? Yes

Can SOME with the characteristics of an Apostle indeed be an Apostle? Yes

Can SOME missionaries be Apostles? Yes

Well, according to scripture, which I think that matters, the question should be ALL and remain the same answer 'yes'.

Keith Green was labeled more of a prophet than anything and then near the end of his ministry. He leaned more to evangelist.

King Jimmy great explanation of apostle. I've heard that before but I thought that was mainly for overseers but great use of scripture.

Blessings.

Re: - posted by EVANGELIST (), on: 2006/12/3 20:40

Lovegrace,
It is true that gifting can and does overlap.

Lovegrace, "And I believe that is the case with Phillip"

Scripture never calls Phillip an Apostle, with this in mind I believe it is always safe to lean on what Scripture says. Although it is possible for the gifts and callings to overlap, I still believe some can hold an office and do the work of another office.

Correct me if I am wrong, I never thought Timothy was an Evangelist, yet he was told by Paul to do the WORK of an evangelist (2Tim 4:5)

Does everyone who can do the work of a special gifting (Eph 4:11) automatically make them one? Or is this a divine gift from God?

I have a hard time believing ALL= APOSTLES.

Go ye in to all the world= Universal call= to All Christians
Therefore all Christians are APOSTLES= Sent out ones
This seems to fit your logic;

If this is true just call me APOSTLE, PROPHET, EVANGELIST, THE PASTOR WHO TEACHES Josh

Re: - posted by EVANGELIST (), on: 2006/12/3 21:29

I know the Greek for apostle (apostelo) is sent out. When I'm talking about apostles I'm not just talking about people being sent out. I'm talking about the unique calling of an Apostle.

Example: The Greek word for raise up is from the root (egero) which means simply to rise up.

If I asked you if you can raise the dead, I'm not asking if you can lift up a dead body,

But, I'm sure you can make the Greek word fit for this. So, when I'm asking if you can raise the dead, I'm asking if you can bring back life. The same thing it means in the Bible.

In like manner when I'm asking about Apostles I'm not referring to every Christian I'm referring to one with the calling, you know like, Paul, Peter and John.

Third call, IF THERE IS ANY APOSTLES ON THIS SITE, CAN YOU SHARE THE UNIQUENESS OF YOUR MINISTRY TODAY?

Thanks, Apostle Evangelist... just kidding

Re: - posted by KingJimmy (), on: 2006/12/3 23:21

Quote:

A dear Pastor friend of mine ministers in Mexico as a missionary quite often. He is a PASTOR. He is NOT an Apostle, nor claims to be.

Not everybody that goes and ministers in some place outside of their local residency is an apostle/missionary. Consider John-Mark, in Acts 13:5, who tagged along with the apostles Barnabas and Paul. In this verse he is simply named as "the helper." (NASB) So, not all who go along on missionary journeys are apostles.

However, I would say that anybody claiming to be called as a missionary by God needs to understand that to be a missionary in the more technical usage of the word is to be an apostle.

edit Recently I posted in another thread how I believe that God has recently called me to be a missionary. Specifically the Holy Spirit spoke to me and said, "Missionary to Greensboro." With my understanding of the term "missionary," and my understanding of Scripture, I believe God has called me to be an apostle.

Though because of the abuses that are common today, I prefer to be identified with the word "missionary," though my theological self-identification (that was a mouth full!) is that of an apostle.

Re: - posted by KingJimmy (), on: 2006/12/3 23:24

Quote:

KingJimmy,
Thanks for your insight. One thing I'm trying to find out is, if you took two men, and both are doing the same type of ministry, yet one has this unique gift and the other does not; What benefit would the one with the gift be? If any?

Simply put: the power of God. Just because one has the gift of gab doesn't mean they are called to be a teacher. Many people are doing things in the church these days that are outside the calling that God has placed on them.

Re: - posted by KingJimmy (), on: 2006/12/3 23:28

Quote:

Actually, fyi, Paul was 3 of the 4 (not 5) fold ministry. Evangelist, teacher, AND apostle. See 1 Timothy 2:7 and 2 Timothy 1:11

Indeed, Paul's calling was primarily three-fold... many people overlook this. If he thought himself more than these three things, he is silent about it.

Quote:

Because Philip seems to be an apostle AND evangelist. Matt. 10:2-3 (Unless that is a different Phillip) and Acts 21:8

Philip the apostle is different than Philip the Evangelist. Philip the Evangelist was also one of "the seven" deacons selected in Acts 6. He's also mentioned again in Acts 8.

Re: - posted by EVANGELIST (), on: 2006/12/4 0:55

King Jimmy,

May God abundantly bless you as you follow the HEART OF GOD as a missionary.

Let me ask you this, do you believe in modern day Apostles apart from today's technical usage of the word??? (Missionary)

PS When you go to Greensboro feel free to let me know so I can pray for you.

Re: - posted by GraceAlone (), on: 2006/12/4 11:47

Isn't there a big difference between those "sent out" in the church and those "sent out" by Christ himself. I know that only those who were sent out by Christ Himself had the authority to write Scripture.

Eph 2:20

20 having been built (the church) on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone

Here there is a big difference between the church and the apostles. It also says BUILT in past tense.

Re: - posted by EVANGELIST (), on: 2006/12/4 13:11

GraceAlone,

The question is not, do Apostles exist in the Church? We all ready established the fact that they exist. In Eph. 4:12 It says, "UNTIL or TIL we all come into the unity of faith...." These gifts will remain.

Everyone knows that we do not need anyone to write Scripture today, yet writing Scripture is not the only function of an Apostle. There are many Apostles who never wrote one verse. The question is describing the uniqueness of this gift today. If you only believe in Missionaries or ones sent out from the Church, you really do not believe in modern day Apostles.

Right?

Re: - posted by EVANGELIST (), on: 2006/12/4 13:34

When the Spirit of God moves upon a person and speaks to them a specific place to go, and the words of Jesus speak to their heart "GO YE INTO ALL THE WORLD" and they go who sent them? I'm not asking if the Church bore witness to the call. I'm asking, who sent them?

Re: - posted by GraceAlone (), on: 2006/12/4 13:59

Eph 2:20

20 having been built (the church) on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone

Acts 2:42

And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.

2 Peter 3:16

as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which untaught and unstable people twist to their own destruction, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures.

Acts 2:21-26

21 "Therefore, of these men who have accompanied us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, 22 beginning from the baptism of John to that day when He was taken up from us, one of these must become a witness with us of His resurrection."

23 And they proposed two: Joseph called Barsabas, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias. 24 And they prayed and said, "You, O Lord, who know the hearts of all, show which of these two You have chosen 25 to take part in this ministry and apostleship from which Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place." 26 And they cast their lots, and the lot fell on Matthias. And he was numbered with the eleven apostles.

What of these verses?

Re: - posted by KingJimmy (), on: 2006/12/4 16:05

Quote:

Let me ask you this, do you believe in modern day Apostles apart from today's technical usage of the word??? (Missionary)

I use the term missionary as equal to that of apostle. I don't personally conceive of somebody being a missionary apart from being an apostle, nor an apostle apart from a missionary. I guess if one wants to use the term more loosely, they can. But I tend to be a stickler about word usages.

Re: - posted by KingJimmy (), on: 2006/12/4 16:17

Quote:

Isn't there a big difference between those "sent out" in the church and those "sent out" by Christ himself.

Being that the church is the body of Christ, I don't see how there can really be. See Acts 13 for Barnabas's and Paul's apostolic calling.

Quote:

Eph 2:20

20 having been built (the church) on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone

Here there is a big difference between the church and the apostles. It also says BUILT in past tense

This isn't quite a past tense. It is more literally translated, "being built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets..". The word used for built here is an Active Present Participle. In non-greek terms, this means it is a continuous ongoing action.

Re: - posted by lovegrace, on: 2006/12/4 18:19

Quote:

-----Scripture never calls Phillip an Apostle,

Evangelist. Did you not look at the scripture I quoted for Philip being an APOSTLE AND EVANGELIST? I guess not. You're believing what you heard and not what you seen, or missed, in scripture. I'll quote them again.

Matt. 10:2-3 - Philip is referred to as an APOSTLE.

Acts 21:8 - Philip is referred to as an EVANGELIST.

So, if that is the same Philip (which I believe is, unless someone can show me that it isn't), then Philip was an Apostle AND Evangelist. Scripturally speaking.

Quote:

-----Does everyone who can do the work of a special gifting (Eph 4:11) automatically make them one? Or is this a divine gift from God?

This question is still a question that I'm looking for in scripture and probably won't have solid answer for another year. Due to many other important doctrines that Christ is teaching and helping me unlearn.

We do all know that Timothy was told to do the work of an evangelist but I don't think he was ever referred to as an Evangelist. And also in scripture it says that prophesy is subjected to the Prophets. So, that might be the answer you're looking for. But I'm not 100% confident with that. Cause it's only half of the 4 fold ministry (pastors and teachers are same)

Quote:

-----Go ye in to all the world= Universal call= to All Christians
Therefore all Christians are APOSTLES= Sent out ones
This seems to fit your logic;

No, that's not my logic.

And you must keep in mind that most Christians don't leave their country (in America at least). I am willing to bet less than 10% of the church has been on a missions trip. And OF those 10%, I'd say 100% of them would be considered as an apostle, IF they are bringing the gospel with them.

But, KingJimmy held put up a good point with John-Mark. So. Hmm. I don't know.
;-) I never saw that before.

Eph 2:20 - This was quoted as saying that Apostles and Prophets build/built the foundation of the church. Well, I don't think it was THEM, because if anything has a foundation OTHER THAN CHRIST, it WILL BE DESTROYED. So, I believe that when it refers to 'apostles and prophets' I think it was their message. The message of Christ. All the OT Prophets spoke about the SOON COMING KING and then the Apostles spoke forth that message of Christ.

And this interruption makes perfect sense since looking at the remaining of the verse "Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone"

Blessings, I'm learning a lot.

Re: - posted by EVANGELIST (), on: 2006/12/5 0:18

Lovegrace don't get so snappy,

About Philip the Apostle and Philip the Evangelist. When dealing with the book of Acts, if you apply hermeneutical rules of interpretation you can easily see that they are not the same person. 1. It is inferred by the text. Acts 6:2-3 2 So the twelve (including Philip the Apostle) summoned the congregation of the disciples and said, "It is not desirable for us (the 12) to neglect the word of God in order to serve tables. 3 "Therefore, brethren, select from among you (the congregation of the disciples excluding all the Apostles) seven men of good reputation, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may put in charge of this task. Acts 6:5 5 The statement found approval with the whole congregation; and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit, and Philip (the deacon not the Apostle), Acts 8:1 Acts 8:1 Saul was in hearty agreement with putting him to death. And on that day a great persecution began against the church in Jerusalem, and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, EXCEPT THE APOSTLES (this means Philip the Apostle did not go anywhere) Acts 8:4-5 4 Therefore, those who had been scattered (all of them except the Apostle) went about preaching the word. 5 Philip (not the Apostle, because the Apostles did not go anywhere) went down to the city of Samaria and began proclaiming Christ to them. HOPE THIS CAN HELP YOU

KingJimmy about your Greek,

Eph 2:20 it is in the aorist, Verb Participle Aorist Passive (HAVING BEING BUILT) which is still considered a past tense.

Gracealone,

Are you suggesting that because this is in the past tense (having being built) that there is no longer any purpose for Apostles and Prophets?

Thank you all for all your insight.

Re: - posted by KingJimmy (), on: 2006/12/5 6:43

Quote:

Eph 2:20 it is in the aorist, Verb Participle Aorist Passive (HAVING BEING BUILT) which is still considered a past tense.

Oops! You are correct. I mis-parsed :) However, while an Aorist is considered something having been done in the past, it says nothing about its completion. An aorist is something done in the past over an undefined period of time. It says nothing of completion.

Re: - posted by GraceAlone (), on: 2006/12/5 11:43

Quote:

-----It says nothing of completion. (Eph 2:20)

Because its not done being completed. The church has not stopped being built. The apostles however have. Otherwise, the church couldn't be built considering that they are the foundation of the church.

Eph 2:20

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

Re: - posted by EVANGELIST (), on: 2006/12/5 14:01

How do you deal with Eph 4:11-12

Ephesians 4:11-13 11 And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, 12 for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; 13 UNTIL we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ.

UNTIL In other words all Office/Gifts will remain until we all come into the unity of faith

Re: - posted by KingJimmy (), on: 2006/12/5 15:54

Quote:

Because its not done being completed. The church has not stopped being built. The apostles however have. Otherwise, the church couldn't be built considering that they are the foundation of the church.

Please see earlier posts I wrote in reference to foundations and apostles.

Re: - posted by KingJimmy (), on: 2006/12/5 16:00

Quote:

UNTIL In other words all Office/Gifts will remain until we all come into the unity of faith

Indeed. Until these things happen, apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers will be needed. And because of such, when you study the Scriptures you continue to see the rising up of new apostles and prophets throughout the New Testament.

Altogether there are 20 some odd named apostles in the Scriptures. If apostles were some past-tense once-for-all phenomenon, then they would have never been numbered beyond the original 12. But because they served a purpose beyond that of a once-for-all phenomenon, they continued to be rise up, and have continued into the time in which we live.

Re: - posted by GraceAlone (), on: 2006/12/7 10:17

Eph 4:11-13 -

And he gave. It has just been shown that Christ "gave gifts to men" (Eph_4:7-8). Of these gifts were various offices. The object of all these offices was to promote "the unity of the faith" (Eph_4:13). Christ has appointed the offices, and gives the men in the church who are fitted for these offices. In the matter of those offices that continue, it is the duty of the church to recognize and call out the men who meet the conditions Christ has given.

Some to be apostles. The apostles were all chosen by Christ. All had to be witnesses of his resurrection (Act_1:22). They, therefore, could have no successors, but their own office continues. They still remain teachers and in authority by their writings and example.

And some, prophets. An inspired office, essential in the church for its teaching until the New Testament was completed.

And some, evangelists. Such as Philip (Act_8:4-12; Act_21:8), Timothy, Titus, etc. This office is to preach the gospel, and will be necessary as long as the church continues on earth. As this office did not require extraordinary gifts, it is permanent.

Pastors and teachers. These were not distinct offices. Bishops, or elders, and especially those "who labored in word and doctrine," came under this head. A pastor should always be an elder, but it is not certain that a teacher was always an elder. These offices were all given for the purposes indicated in the next verse.

For the perfecting of the saints. Helping them to higher and holier lives.

For the work of the ministry. For carrying on the various works assigned to the ministry.

For the edifying of the body of Christ. All was intended to minister to the upbuilding of the church, within and without.

Till we all come. These offices are given in order that all may come to a goal that is named just below. They must be continued in some form until that goal is reached.

Quote:
-----But because they served a purpose beyond that of a once-for-all phenomenon, they continued to be rise up, and have continued into the time in which we live.

Who continued to rise up? History shows the ending of hits garbage. This is how we get false prophets like Mormons and Jehovah's Witnesses. Who in the early church claimed to be an apostle after those who lived with Christ died. Stop worrying about being called an apostle and humble yourself and call yourselves slaves. This is a sad discussion. If somebody claims to have the same authority as the apostles Jesus chose they claim to continue to add revelation to the CLOSED canon.

Jude 1:3

Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints.

Re: - posted by KingJimmy (), on: 2006/12/7 12:04

Quote:

The apostles were all chosen by Christ. All had to be witnesses of his resurrection (Act_1:22). They, therefore, could have no successors, but their own office continues. They still remain teachers and in authority by their writings and example.

Indeed, to occupy the abandoned position of Judas, it was required that his replacement have seen the resurrected Christ. However, there is no evidence whatsoever that for apostles who would continue to arise that such was required. No doubt, the apostle Paul saw the resurrected Christ, as well as the apostle James.

However, what of Barnabas, Silas (Silvanus), Timothy, Titus, Apollos, Andronicus, and Junias? All these people are mentioned in Scripture as apostles, yet, the Scriptures are silent in regard to them having seen a resurrected Christ. Indeed, it seems Paul reckon's himself as the last of the apostles to have seen the risen Christ (1 Cor 15:8).

Quote:

Who continued to rise up? History shows the ending of hits garbage.

Don't be so quick to make such a harsh assesment until you have actually studied this out. As mentioned above, such men continued to be named as apostles in the Scriptures. Not only this, but some of the ante-nicene writings contain references to apostles (such as in the second-century "Didache" and Polycarp was called an "apostolic and prophetic man.

") And when one understands the word "missionary" began to be used in place of the word "apostle," then all we have to do is look through the halls of history for people making claim to being a missionary. And no generation of Christianity is without those claiming such, and such is what a missionary is-- an apostle.

Here are some references so that you don't continue uninformed in this matter:

Acts 14:14 But when the apostles Barnabas and Paul heard of it, they tore their robes and rushed out into the crowd, crying out

Barnabas and Paul are both named as apostles.

Galatians 1:19 But I did not see any other of the apostles except James, the Lord's brother.

"James" is the Lord's brother has often wrongly been called "The bishop of Jerusalem." Such is a label never given him in all of Scripture, but comes later in history.

Acts 16:7 Greet Andronicus and Junias, my kinsmen and my fellow prisoners, who are outstanding among the apostles, who also were in Christ before me.

Some interpret this verse to simply mean Andronicus and Junias were simply believers highly esteemed by the apostles. Most, including myself, interpret this verse to mean these individuals were recognized as outstanding examples of apostles.

1 Thes 1:1 Paul and Silvanus and Timothy, to the church of the Thessalonians...

1 Thes 2:1 For you yourselves know, brethren, that our coming to you was not in vain... 6 nor did we seek glory from men, either from you or from others, even though as apostles of Christ we might have asserted our authority 7 But we proved to be gentle among you...

Paul, Silvanus (Silas in Acts), and Timothy co-authored the epistle to the Thessalonians. Thus, the constant use of first person plural pronouns throughout the letter (e.g. "our" and "we"). In their letter, they reminded the church there that as apostles of Christ (that is, Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy), they could have asserted their own authority as apostles, but instead chose not to do such. Rather, they were gentle and motherly towards their flock, and preached the gospel without pay.

And for this reason that Timothy is included in the named apostles of Scripture, when we read 1 & 2 Timothy, we need to understand that the apostle Paul is writing to a fellow apostle. And with the letter of Titus resembling so closely the letter of Timothy, it can be deduced that Titus was also an apostle like Timothy was. 1 & 2 Timothy and Titus have wrongly been labeled "The Pastoral Epistles." Quite wrong. They would better be labeled "The Apostolic Epistles."

For when one compares the activity of Titus and Timothy, as being fellow missionary partner's with the apostle Paul, and going out and establishing churches and appointing elders in various cities, and doing all the same things Paul did in his apostolic ministry, then one cannot help but deduce that Titus was also an apostle.

The same goes with Apollos. For in Acts 18:24-19:1 we meet Apollos for the first time. He is going about the world preaching the gospel, though perhaps not quite as accurately as he could, as he seems to have a limited knowledge of the Way, "only knowing of the baptism of John." While making his way around the world, he eventually meets up with Paul in Corinth.

Paul writes of Apollos in 1 Cor. Everytime Apollos is mentioned in 1 Cor, he is always mentioned in apostolic company. For in Corinth, there seems to be quite a number of apostolic workers ministering there. So much so, party's are beginning to form around them. Some are saying they are of Paul, others Apollos, others of Cephas, and others of Christ. Thus, with Apollos constantly being mentioned in such company, it can be deduced that he was also recognized as an apostle.

Corinth really seems to have been an apostolic hot spot. For 2 Corinthians 11-12 Paul writes this letter with an eye on some false apostles who made their way into the Corinthian congregation. These "super apostles" as they so-styled themselves to be, were coming and saying Paul got it all wrong, and were trying to assert themselves as greater than Paul,

bearing a greater message. The same goes with the church in Ephesus. In Revelation 2 there are "apostles" who visited the congregation recently. And this church put them to the test, found them out to be false apostles.

Now, how were these false apostles written off? To me, the way they were NOT written of is the most telling thing of all. For in none of these examples of false apostles did the apostles Paul or John simply say, "Well, we are the last of the apostles, therefore, everybody else claiming to be an apostle is false." After all, if they were the last apostles, why not just say so if it were so?

The answer is simple, because they had no concept of apostolic ministry ending with them. Christ was continuing to raise up new apostles in their own generation, and there is no evidence whatsoever they ever expected anything else but such to continue after them.

And because of such, it should come as no surprise that when we read a second-century document such as the Didache, we find "let every apostle that cometh to you be received as the Lord..." along with instructions on how to discern false apostles from the true.

Quote:

If somebody claims to have the same authority as the apostles Jesus chose they claim to continue to add revelation to the CLOSED canon.

I've yet to see such a claim be made. So, let's not argue with ghosts.

Re: - posted by lovegrace, on: 2006/12/7 16:51

Does Calvary Chapel believe in Apostles?

I was listening today on Acts 3 by Chuck Smith (Calvary Chapel "Founder")

I believe he said "Do I believe apostles are in the world today? No. And if they are I don't think they are like the ones in the early church but are different." (Paraphrase, as close as I could remember)

Re: - posted by KingJimmy (), on: 2006/12/7 18:19

It is interesting that to date, in my own personal research, I have yet to discover a Pentecostal denomination that believes in modern day apostles. That's not to say, I've yet to find individuals within denominations. However, where it seems where Pentecostal denominations have considered it officially, they've denied modern day existence.

I think this is in part out of fear that to acknowledge modern day apostles would essentially undo the hierarchy of modern day denominational structures.

Re: - posted by lovegrace, on: 2006/12/7 19:58

Quote:

-----I think this is in part out of fear that to acknowledge modern day apostles would essentially undo the hierarchy of modern day denominational structures.

Hmm. Really? How would this be? Please elaborate. I always assumed that Pentacostals/Charasmatics believed in apostleship and such.

Thanks.

Re: - posted by KingJimmy (), on: 2006/12/7 20:42

Quote:

Hmm. Really? How would this be? Please elaborate. I always assumed that Pentacostals/Charasmatics believed in apostleship and such.

Generally speaking, many do, though not all. Officially at denominational levels though, they generally frown upon such notions, or have voted against officially recognizing such individuals. I believe this generally happens because most denominations have some sort of hierarchical/episcopal structure which has no room for apostles. Such would be viewed as a usurping of their authority and the like.

Re: - posted by EVANGELIST (), on: 2006/12/7 23:47

Quote:
-----And some, evangelists. Such as Philip (Act_8:4-12; Act_21:8), Timothy, Titus, etc. This office is to preach the gospel, and will be necessary as long as the church continues on earth. As this office did not require extraordinary gifts, it is permanent.

I wanted to ask about John Calvin's view.

Apostles, Evangelists, and Prophets were bestowed on the church for a limited time only, except in those cases where religion has fallen into decay, and evangelists are raised up in an extraordinary manner, to restore the pure doctrine which had been lost. But without Pastors and Teachers there can be no government of the church.

Do you agree with this? Is this something that maybe some would differ in your Church?

Thanks

Re: - posted by philologos (), on: 2006/12/8 11:10

Quote:
-----Apostles, Evangelists, and Prophets were bestowed on the church for a limited time only, except in those cases where religion has fallen into decay, and evangelists are raised up in an extraordinary manner, to restore the pure doctrine which had been lost. But without Pastors and Teachers there can be no government of the church.

The 'limited time' is clearly defined in...

“till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ;”
(Eph 4:13 NKJV)

When the church is manifest as 'the perfect man' there will be no more need for these gifts from the ascended Christ. Over here we still have some way to go...

BTW There is no scriptural basis for presuming that 'pastors and teachers' have any part to play in 'the government of the church'.

Re: - posted by PaulWest (), on: 2006/12/8 13:19

Quote:
-----There is no scriptural basis for presuming that 'pastors and teachers' have any part to play in 'the government of the church'.

Amen. When did the one-man, federal headship of the "pastorate" begin? I know this has been discussed numerous times. Does anyone know (Ron? ;-)) the quick history of when this concept took over in fellowships...and why? Nowadays, everything seems to filter through the pastor - deciding which evangelist to invite, the vision of the church, the capacity to allow or veto church functions and outreaches. Is this governance entirely scriptural according to Paul? I've lately been thinking much about this - and while reading Timothy I and II in particular. I hear a lot about elders and deacons, bishops...but the concept of one presiding "governor" to make the final call doesn't jump out at me. If anyone can help, I'd sure appreciate the insight!

(edit) I ask about the office of the pastorate not to divert the thread, but to grasp a better understanding of why all the offices (apostleship included) seem now to rest on the one-man "pastor" in some form or another, be it evangelism, missions, teaching, church-planting, prophecy, etc.

Ron Bailey, you're a pastor I deeply venerate. What are your thoughts on this?

Brother Paul

Re: - posted by KingJimmy (), on: 2006/12/8 16:13

I'd like to share a paper I wrote in seminary that documents the transition from apostolic ministry to that of a monarchical bishop ruling the church from the Scriptures into church history. I simply reformatting it to an HTML page, so, its footnotes were sadly chopped off, but, they aren't necessary to the paper.

I'd encourage you all to check it out:

(http://www.christiansteps.com/doctrine/apostles_bishops.htm) The Rise of the Monarchical Bishops in the Ancient Church

Re: - posted by KingJimmy (), on: 2006/12/8 16:42

Quote:

This office is to preach the gospel, and will be necessary as long as the church continues on earth. As this office did not require extraordinary gifts, it is permanent.

It is actually rather sad to read comments like this. For it is horrible for somebody to somehow diminish the gifts of preaching and teaching, as if they were something quite natural gifts or talents. Quite the contrary, the gifts of preaching and teaching are entirely supernatural in nature.

The gifts of preaching and teaching are prophetic in nature (as are all the gifts!), as anybody who has regularly exercised these gifts will tell you the enabling ability the Holy Spirit gives the speaker to say much of what they say, that they really couldn't have said otherwise. These gifts give the minister direction in speech. Thus, of all the thousands of verses a preacher could minister on in the Scripture, they can be assured that whatever they are going to say before a congregation will somehow be applicable to their hearers.

Preaching and teaching should not be confused with speaking about something in the cute little literary form known as a sermon. You can learn to craft 3-point expository messages in Bible college and seminary. But such is not preaching nor is it teaching.

All the gifts of the Spirit are "spectacular" in nature, as they are supernatural in origin. All the gifts are prophetic in nature

e. And with this being the case, the gift of prophecy is just as divine in nature as the gift of teaching. Thus, if prophecy has ceased, then so have the gifts of preaching and teaching.

Re: - posted by GraceAlone (), on: 2006/12/8 18:22

I think you guys would better understand the stance of cessationism if you read about the proof for it. Try to look past the gifts thing and try to understand what it says about APOSTLES.

Cessationism by Willem Berends

Professor of Systematic Theology and Ethics,
Reformed Theological College, 3220; Geelong, Australia.

Many authors discuss the question of prophecy and the closure of the canon from the standpoint of cessationism. When one studies these discussions it soon becomes clear that different people are using the term cessationism in very different ways. Some use the word in a wide sense to indicate the belief that all supernatural activity of an unusual or miraculous nature has ceased. Others use the word in a narrower sense to mean that the miraculous gifts of the Spirit among God's people have ceased. According to the latter view God himself still performs supernatural acts of a miraculous nature, but he no longer gives the power to do such works to his church. However, there is no agreement amongst those who hold this viewpoint as to when the cessation of miraculous gifts went into effect. For some the time of miraculous gifts coincided with the ministry of the apostles, for others gifts and miraculous activities were limited to the days of the early church, and a third position is that the practice of such gifts is reserved for extraordinary times and circumstances.

It follows that those who identify themselves, or maybe are identified by others, as non-cessationists cover a similar range of viewpoints. It is easy to see how people could be talking at cross purposes if they were using the word in question with such different connotations. To help clear up possible misunderstandings we will compare and evaluate the two broader uses of the word cessationism, and then discuss some of the implications of the nuances in connotation associated with the second use.

1. The view that all extraordinary works of God have ceased.

When we speak of the cessation of all extraordinary works, we mean to include such activities as miracles, healing, exorcism, prophecy, and tongues. Usually those who argue that such supernatural activities have ceased do so on the basis that these activities solely served the purpose of manifesting the authority of God's prophets and apostles. It is reasoned that once these extraordinary offices disappeared from the scene the need for miraculous activities disappeared with them.

This position, which I propose to call strong cessationism, is clearly spelled out by Augustus Strong in his definition of miracles:

A miracle is an event in nature, so extraordinary in itself and so coinciding with the prophecy or command of a religious teacher or leader, as fully to warrant the conviction, on the part of those who witness it, that God has wrought it with the design of certifying that this teacher or leader has been commissioned by him.¹ A somewhat different definition of the purpose of a miracle is given later in the same work:

Miracles are the natural accompaniments and attestations of new communications from God...Miracles serve to draw attention to new truth, and cease when this truth has gained currency and foothold.² If Strong's conflicting definitions leave us wondering whether the primary purpose of a miracle is to confirm a leader or to confirm the teachings of Scripture, Charles Hodge is less equivocal. He concludes his study on miracles with the observation:

The point which miracles are designed to prove is not so much the truth of the doctrines taught as the divine mission of the teacher.³

Since the definitions of Strong and Hodge speak of teachers and leaders in biblical times, the above definitions of miracles and their purpose clearly limit the possibility of miracles to the time when these teachers and leaders were still to be found.

The recognition that miracles serve to support the authority of God's servants marks a subtle change away from the position of the Reformers. For the Reformers the recognised purpose of miracles is not so much to support the divine mission of God's servants as to testify to the truth of their message. Thus John Calvin speaks of miracles as 'seals'

added to the Word of God,⁴ and he warns that 'miracles must never be separated from the Word.'⁵ When coupled to the Word of God miracles serve 'to prepare us for faith, or to confirm us in faith.'⁶ But when miracles are divorced from God's Word they 'bring glory to creatures and not to God.'⁷ When miracles bring glory to creatures they conflict with the ultimate purpose of miracles, which is to display 'the glory of God.'⁸ We find a similar position in the works of William Perkins, who states the purpose of miracles is 'to confirm doctrine in the Apostolic churches.'⁹ Perkins is open to the possibility that God may still call men in an extraordinary manner to extraordinary offices today. But to the question whether the gift of miracles would still accompany such a calling today Perkins observes 'that their use is further to confirm doctrine even at this day, it cannot be proved.'¹⁰ The genuineness of a divine call, whether ordinary or extraordinary, is to be measured by whether the one called is true to the doctrines taught by those who had the authority of their teaching confirmed by miracles. Elsewhere he writes that the gift of miracles, in the sense of being able to command miracles to happen, is no longer present in the church.¹¹ John Owen recognized that one of the purposes of miracles was to give authority to 'the ministers of the church.' But that this was not their only purpose follows from the fact that not all those who had the gift of faith to do miracles were officers in the church. Miracles therefore served a wider purpose in that they were 'exceeding useful, and necessary, unto the propagation of the gospel, the vindication of the truth, and the establishment of them that did believe.'¹² In passing it is interesting to note that Owen regarded the faith which made miracles possible as a divine 'warranty' to the miracle received by immediate revelation. In other words, for Owen not only did miracles testify to revelation, but revelation testified to miracles.¹³ The nineteenth century change in emphasis from recognizing the purpose of miracles as confirming doctrine to confirming the ministry of those who brought the doctrine is important, because if the purpose of miracles was merely to confirm the ministry of those who first brought God's Word then there is no further need for miracles today. Here we may well ask why this recognition of the wider purpose of miracles to confirm the Word of God and its teaching was lost in this period of post-reformational developments in theology. The answer is probably to be found in the church's fight against the onslaughts of rationalism, which movement denied all possibility of miracles. Unable to defend miracles on rational and philosophical grounds, many apologetes sought instead to defend miracles on the basis of historical biblical testimony.¹⁴ Since such argumentation only proved that miracles happened in the past, it was attractive to define miracles as something that took place in the past, i.e. in terms of their confirmation of the authority of the prophets and apostles.

When we consider the biblical material it is clear that divine attestation to apostolic authority was indeed one of the purposes of miracles. Paul speaks of 'signs, wonders and miracles' as 'the things that mark an apostle (2 Cor 12:12; cf. Acts 2:43; 5:12; Rom. 15:19). But the Scriptures do not limit the purpose of miracles to this end. In Hebrews, for example, we find that the salvation offered in Christ was not only proclaimed by those who had heard Christ, but 'God also testified to it by signs, wonders and various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will (Heb. 2:2,3). The object of God's miraculous attestation here is not his servants, but the Gospel message.

Other miracles recorded in Scripture had different purposes. The miracle of creation did not bear witness to any human agent, but to God himself. The miracle of the flood was a sign of God's displeasure with sinful man. While some of the miracles during the exodus appear to have served as a testimony to Moses, the miracle of the exodus itself served to confirm God's claim on the people he had saved (Ex. 20:1). Many miracles may have served more than one purpose. Christ's healing of the man blind from birth no doubt served to confirm Christ's authority, but the stated purpose was 'that the works of God might be made manifest in him' (Jn. 9:3).

The wider purpose of miracles is recognised by many Reformed theologians. Geerhardus Vos lists the purposes of miracles as 'apologetic', 'soteric', and 'typical.'¹⁵ Louis Berkhof states that miracles 'are connected with the economy of redemption' and aim at 'a restoration of God's creative work.'¹⁶ Gordon Spijkman identifies miracles as 'confirmations of the invincible truth of God's Word', 'reaffirmations of the normativity of the good creation order', 'signs and wonders of God's intended shalom' and 'manifestations of the future kingdom.'¹⁷ To G.C. Berkouwer the meaning of a miracle lies in the fact that it 'summons faith, and calls to worship.'¹⁸

It is not surprising that those who recognize that the purpose of God's miracles is wider than attesting to the authority of God's servants are more open to the possibility of miracles continuing today. Calvin wrote that for 'the preservation of the Church, almost every day, is accompanied with many miracles.'¹⁹ More recently Berkouwer observed, 'He who sees the miracles of Holy Scripture inseparably connected with the saving and redeeming activity of God knows that there can be no talk of a decrease or diminishing of the power of God unto salvation in this world... There is not a single datum in the New Testament which makes it certain that God, in a new period of strengthening and extending of the Church in heathendom, will not confirm his message with signs, in holy resistance to the demonic influences of the kingdom of darkness.'²⁰

Similarly Spijkman concludes his study on miracles with the observation, 'There is no good biblical reason, therefore, to restrict God's wonder-working power to certain (past) times and (faraway)

places - such as during the biblical era.²¹

2. The view that the miraculous gifts of the Spirit have ceased.

The position which we will call weak cessationism holds that it is not God who has ceased to do supernatural works, but God's people. There are in the main two variants to this position. The first maintains that miracles and such were limited to the church in its infancy, in order to help the spread of the Gospel in days of persecution. The second holds that miraculous gifts of the Spirit were given to confirm the authority of the leadership in the early church. This second view regards the miraculous spiritual gifts as unique to the apostles and those who received the gifts directly from them through the laying on of hands. The first position generally holds to the disappearance of miracles around the time of the establishment of the Christian faith under the first Christian emperor, Constantine. The second maintains that charismatic gifts disappeared from the church with the closing of the apostolic age.

The first position has a long pedigree. In the Reformed tradition Calvin favoured this position. He wrote: Though Christ does not expressly state whether he intends this gift to be temporary, or to remain perpetually in the Church, yet it is more probable that miracles were promised only for a time, in order to give lustre to the gospel while it was new or in a state of obscurity.²²

The second position has been ably defended by Benjamin Warfield, who argued that the special charismata were 'distinctively the authentication of the Apostles.'²³ Warfield does not thereby mean to imply that all supernatural wondrous activity has ceased. When he questions the genuineness of the practice of faith healing he comments:

...the question is not: (1) whether God is an answerer of prayer; nor (2) whether, in answer to prayer, He heals the sick; nor (3) whether his action in healing the sick is a supernatural act; nor (4) whether the supernaturalness of the act may be so apparent as to demonstrate God's activity in it to all right thinking minds conversant with the facts. All this we believe.²⁴

What Warfield does question is that God has promised healing in the manner claimed by so-called 'faith healers,' as an instant response to their healing ministry. The gift which enabled certain of God's people to heal miraculously in the name of Christ has ceased with the apostles.

Berkouwer also believes that the miraculous gifts had a special function in apostolic times, although he does not expressly limit these gifts to this period. He writes:

In the first, foundation-laying days for the Church after Pentecost, signs accompany the preaching of the gospel. Many signs and 'wonders' occur at the hands of the apostles (Acts 5:12). With these miracles, we are told, the Lord certifies His word (Acts 14:3).²⁵

Some authors who speak in support of the cessation of gifts with the establishment of Christianity or the close of the apostolic age are nevertheless open to exceptions. Thus John Calvin and William Perkins seem to allow for God's temporary use of extraordinary offices, presumable with extraordinary gifts.²⁶ Similarly George Gillespie argues for the reappearance of the prophetic gift in extraordinary times.²⁷ In all three cases the authors strongly contest the claims of the 'enthusiasts' that the possession of the spiritual gifts belongs to the ordinary life of the Church.²⁸

Where all weak cessationists are agreed is in their opposition to any suggestion of a regular continuation of the charismatic gifts or their reintroduction by way of a 'second blessing.' The gifts had a foundational function within the church. If some weak cessationists are open to the manifestation of such gifts in extraordinary circumstances the emphasis is always on the fact that this is by way of exception, and contrary to the norm.

Evaluation

Having distinguished between these two positions on cessationism it is fitting that we should seek to evaluate them. Does the Bible lead us to believe that miracles and other supernatural works are limited to certain eras of salvation history? Or is it only the gift of miracles and other special gifts of this nature that were limited in this way? Or are both positions wrong, and were the miraculous charismata meant to be a perpetual gift to the church?

Some authors have suggested that the biblical picture is one of clusters of miracles, centred around the times of Moses, the prophets, and the first and second coming of Christ.²⁹ However, we should note that this clustering applies to recorded miracles, and it would be wrong to conclude from this that miracles did not occur during those periods about which the Bible is largely silent. The testimony of the prophet Jeremiah is interesting in this regard:

You performed miraculous signs and wonders in Egypt and have continued them to this day, both in Israel and among all mankind, and have gained the renown that is still yours. (Jer 32:20).

Note that Jeremiah does not limit God's working of miracles to a specific time or a specific people. The Hebrew words *ʾāyāt wāʾmōt* indicate that miracles took place right up to the time of the prophet's writing. We have hints of God's miraculous works in the time of the judges and the kings, not only within Israel, but also in the wider world. Thus non-Israelites, like Eliphaz, Job, and Nebuchadnezzar, praise God for his miracles (Job 5:9; 9:10; Dan. 4:2). While the Scriptures are in the main concerned with those miracles that were a part of the revealed salvation history, there appears to be no good reason to limit God's wondrous works to the specific periods or places dealt with in the Scriptures.

A number of authors have observed that the understanding of miracles which relegates them to the past is really not too different from Deism. Spijkman points out that the denial of miracles is often based on a deistic dualism which sees God and the world as independent entities. For Deists the only time God intervened in the affairs of the world was at creation, when God set in motion the laws that now govern the world. For strong cessationists the time of God's direct intervention in world affairs is limited to the period before the closure of the canon. Since that time God is seen as working only through the structures set in place. This is a far cry from the biblical picture of a living God, who not only upholds the world day by day through his sovereign power, but who also listens to the prayers of his people, and works all things for the good of those who love him (Rom. 8:28).

The biblical record gives us no right to put God in a box. Rather with the Westminster Confession we must confess that: God, in His ordinary providence, maketh use of means, yet is free to work without, above, and against them, at His pleasure. (5, III)

Note the Confession's use of the present tense, there is no attempt to relegate acts of extraordinary providence, or miracles, to the past. God's continuing sovereign freedom is maintained.

While we confess God's sovereign freedom in continuing to work in miraculous ways, it is quite a different question whether God's Spirit continues to give the power of miracles to his people. Here the Bible gives some indication that some gifts were only of a temporary nature, given for the founding of Christ's church. Among those 'gifts' which were clearly limited to the foundational stage of the church we must first of all include those identified as apostles and prophets (Eph. 4:11). The apostles and prophets were called by Christ to lay the foundation for his church (Eph. 2:20, cf. Mt. 16:18), which is found in the inspired Scriptures, the Word of God (2 Tim. 3:16; Heb. 1:1,2; 1 Pet. 1:12; 2 Pet. 3:16). Once this foundation was laid there was no further need for the apostolic and prophetic offices. The call to apostleship, moreover, could only come to those who had personally witnessed the resurrected Christ (Jn. 15:27; Acts 1:8; 10:41).

It is true that some earlier theologians, including John Calvin, William Perkins and George Gillespie, suggest that God may yet send new apostles in extraordinary circumstances,³⁰ but it would appear that they are thinking more in terms of the general apostolic function to spread the Gospel than the specific apostolic function to lay the foundation of the Church. This is clear in Calvin's handling of the matter. Calvin mentions the possibility of God occasionally raising up apostles in the context of the apostolic task to spread the Gospel into all the world.³¹ Here we must keep in mind that among the Reformers it was commonly believed that the Great Commission had been specifically given to the apostles. The concept of 'missionaries' other than the apostles had not yet taken hold in the Reformed tradition.

It is also reasonable to conclude that with the passing of the apostles those gifts which the Bible identifies as the marks of apostleship departed with them. These marks are listed as 'signs, wonders and miracles' (2 Cor 12:12; cf. Acts 14:3). In apostolic times the authority of the apostolic office was not only demonstrated in the miraculous works done by the apostles themselves, but also by the fact that they could confer the gift to do wondrous works to others through the laying on of hands (Acts 8:17; 19:6; cf. 1 Tim. 4:14). Such strong links between the office of apostleship and the more unusual gifts lend strong support to the conclusion of Benjamin Warfield, that 'the extraordinary gifts belonged to the extraordinary offices and showed themselves only in connection with its activities.'³²

Yet there are some difficult questions associated with the weak cessationist position. The first is: which gifts are to be included among the extraordinary and miraculous gifts which have ceased? There is no consensus on the identity of the miraculous gifts. In the previous article we noted that some regarded the gift of prophecy as extraordinary, while others regarded it as a gift that can be found among preachers who excel in Bible interpretation and application.³³ Those who give the first interpretation tend to list prophecy with the gifts that have ceased, while those who follow the second interpretation list it with the Spirit's permanent gifts to the church.

A second question concerns the time of the cessation of miraculous gifts. John Calvin, William Perkins and George Gillespie, who link the miraculous gifts with the earliest period of the Church's development, are open to the possibility of a re

-occurrence of extraordinary offices and their gifts in extraordinary circumstances. For them the cessation of these gifts meant that they had ceased to function as an ordinary part of church life, not that they had ceased altogether. But Warfield's argument that these gifts were linked with the apostolic office and therefore ceased with the disappearance of this office is consistent with both history and Scripture. Perhaps the insights of both viewpoints can be combined in the recognition that the gift allowing some of God's people to do extraordinary works for God at their will has disappeared, but that God may still use human agents to do wondrous works in extraordinary circumstances.

To sum up, our discussion has shown that the word cessationism is indeed used with many different shades of meaning, and for this reason the word should not be used without careful definitions and qualifications. We rejected that view of cessationism that would deny the possibility of miracles today. At the same time we noted that there is a wide consensus in Reformed theology that the Spirit's miraculous gifts were not meant as permanent and abiding gifts to the church. If the term cessationism is to have any objective meaning it is probably to be sought in this consensus.

Re: - posted by philologos (), on: 2006/12/9 8:44

Quote:

-----Ron Bailey, you're a pastor I deeply venerate. What are your thoughts on this?

I gave up the title over 30 years ago. :-)

There is no evidence that any of the 'functions' of apostle, prophet, evangelist, or pastor/teacher were ever used as titles during the apostolic period.

As regards the slide into priestcraft and hierarchy, there are signs already in John's reference to Diotrephes 3John 9. I wrote to the church, but Diotrephes, who loves to have the preeminence among them, does not receive us. Diotrephes was a 'first-place-lover' and the little cameo shows plainly that he was a control=freak. This was probably the essence of those who wanted a structured pattern; it is much more easy to control.

There is no evidence in the NT for senior elders, teaching elder, first-among-equals, the pastor, or any of these structure labels.

The most obvious push towards the single-elder monarch of the local church is seen in the writings of Ignatius died c100-115 AD. The effort he puts into persuading folks to opt for a single-elder priest shows that at the time of the writing he had not won the argument.

Re: - posted by PaulWest (), on: 2006/12/9 9:59

Quote:

-----There is no evidence in the NT for senior elders, teaching elder, first-among-equals, the pastor, or any of these structure labels.

Yes, this is what I'm beginning to see. In light of this, is the present-day monarchical system out of order? The same pastor, week after week delivering the homily with uncontested authority over the fellowship? You know the deal - if you don't like the preaching or the way the church is structured, well, leave. "This is just how our pastor does things," is a phrase I've heard with much regularity! Obviously, there has to be *some* form of structure and organization, but through a monarchical setting? I like the idea of councils and presbyteries and bishoprics where multiple men preside over the fellowship, each filled with the wisdom of the Spirit and called to preach and teach with equal authority over a congregation. This way a sort of checks-and-balances system is set up, with no elite, one-man presidency with his preaching style, mannerisms and convictions pervading week after week with no variety or exegesis on the same topics by other men of God. I think this may have been the way of the ancient churches, but I also may be wrong.

What would be the structure of a first-century NT local fellowship, say, in Galatia? Would there be a couple of overseers and a few deacons to help with the widows and poor and collect alms? Would the same overseer(s) prepare and deliver a message each week and decide which travelling philip-esque evangelist to invite to stir up a few days of "revival"?

I also wonder if each fellowship was cookie-cutter in structure. Was a fellowship in Corinth similar in structure to a local fellowship in Galatia? - considering, of course, that Paul had planted both?

Re: - posted by KingJimmy (), on: 2006/12/9 11:19

I think it is important to emphasize that the first-century churches were Christ centered. That is, they recognized Jesus Christ alone as head of the church. Now, I know the doctrine of the headship of Christ is confessed universally today. However, practically speaking, Christ is far from being the head of any church I know.

Since Christ is the head of the Church, the first-century Christians saw it as being controlled by Him. He was the one that made the decisions. He was the one that gave the Church vision. He was the one that gave the Church structure. Thus, according to 1 Cor 14, when the Church assembled together, potentially any number of believers might contribute to the services. Thus, at any moment, and one after the other, one might prophesy, another might stand up and sing, and yet another might stand up and teach.

And why didn't they have an "order of service" as it is commonly called? Because they didn't know of any such thing! Instead of looking unto a single person or team of people to tell them what to do and when they could perform their ministry, they looked unto Jesus for direction of what was next on the agenda. Thus, while each assembly might have a lot in common with the last assembly, no two were ever the same.

And with Jesus being the head of the Church, each believer was free to develop the ministry God had given them without first having to seek if it was "ok" with the pastor if they could do such a thing. After all, it's not any single man here that decides if a ministry fits the "vision" of that particular Church, rather, it is Christ alone that makes that decision. For Christ alone is the head of the Church.

Where elders/pastors come into play in regard to this is to help oversee the individual lives and ministries within the Church, and help them to grow and be all that Christ has called them to be. Thus, elders must be "apt to teach." For to help an individual abound in the life Christ has given them, instruction will be needed. This does not mean elders will week after week deliver 45 minute expository sermons. Much of this real instruction will occur one-on-one. They may very well end up preaching sermons every time the church assembles. But if they don't, no big deal. A younger believer could be just as prone to stand up and teach during each assembly as an older brother.

In all things remember, Jesus Christ is the head of the Church!

Re: - posted by PaulWest (), on: 2006/12/9 11:45

Quote:
-----And with Jesus being the head of the Church, each believer was free to develop the ministry God had given them without first having to seek if it was "ok" with the pastor if they could do such a thing. After all, it's not any single man here that decides if a ministry fits the "vision" of that particular Church, rather, it is Christ alone that makes that decision.

Yes, brother. This is just how I envision it too. It seems like it's way it should be - 100% Spirit-led with Christ as the absolute head and each service conducted in anticipatory faith and with spontaneous messages, tongues, interpretations, prophecy, exhortation albeit done in order and tested, yet without delegating the headship of Christ to one, all-authoritative pastorhead who sets the tone for each service.

Who can tell what God will do or say or through whom He'll say it? As far as I'm concerned, a yielded vessel is a yielded vessel. Of course, Paul lays out directives in 1 Tim. 3 concerning moral stipulations and novices in teaching positions running the risk of falling into pride, but this doesn't imply that God hasn't spoken through the novice; it implies the novice getting puffed-up *because* God has used him. But someone has to call the shots and either forbid or allow certain people to minister the flock. And I believe this should fall on a group of men, and not one federal spokesman, organizer, and climate-setter for the moving of God.

I mean, in most congregations today the people basically *look* to the pastor as God's exclusive spokesman for the fellow

ship, and they sit there like newly hatched birds in a nest with their beaks wide open, waiting for some PhD to chuck them the weekly worm.

Re: - posted by mamaluk, on: 2006/12/9 11:47

Quote:
----- I gave up the title over 30 years ago.

There is no evidence that any of the 'functions' of apostle, prophet, evangelist, or pastor/teacher were ever used as titles during the apostolic period.

As regards the slide into priestcraft and hierarchy, there are signs already in John's reference to Diotrephes 3John 9:28. I wrote to the church, but Diotrephes, who loves to have the preeminence among them, does not receive us. Diotrephes was a 'first-place-lover' and the little cameo shows plainly that he was a control=freak. This was probably the essence of those who wanted a structured pattern; it is much more easy to control.

There is no evidence in the NT for senior elders, teaching elder, first-among-equals, the pastor, or any of these structure labels.

The most obvious push towards the single-elder monarch of the local church is seen in the writings of Ignatius died c100-115 AD. The effort he puts into persuading folks to opt for a single-elder priest shows that at the time of the writing he had not won the argument.

Ron, what a testimony, praise God!! Super Amen!!

(Coming from you it's a testimony, on the other hand, if this comes from a lay person, one will be considered a trouble maker or envious.. you know.. :))

Re: - posted by lovegrace, on: 2006/12/9 12:49

Thanks folks for showing me the difference between the two Philip's.

Re: - posted by KingJimmy (), on: 2006/12/9 12:54

Let me further add that while I believe one does not have to seek an "ok" from "the pastor" to do a certain ministry, every believer should always be open to oversight from those who have such a ministry. They should not only receive good words of encouragement, but should also receive strong words of correction. Those who wish to be "independent" and receive nothing from anybody else are fools. We as the body are interdependent upon each other.

I'm not the biggest Watchman Nee fan, but he once said something along the lines of: "Those who are in authority seek out others in authority."

Re: Apostles today - posted by MattChenier (), on: 2006/12/12 3:28

The word apostle means "one sent." Even Christ is called an Apostle in I believe Hebrews 2. Not sure that's where. But I think so.

An apostle is a person whom God sends to establish a unique or special kind of move of the spirit. A person who has a true revival or church placed into them by the holy spirit and sent to give birth to that plan. An apostle is the most important part of the five fold ministry today, as they are the visionaries and driving force behind the great move of God. An apostle is the highest of authorities in the church. Clearly there is no reason that apostles shouldn't be in operation today.

Re: - posted by GraceAlone (), on: 2006/12/12 15:35

ehp 2:20

Re: - posted by KingJimmy (), on: 2006/12/12 18:09

Quote:

There is no evidence that any of the 'functions' of apostle, prophet, evangelist, or pastor/teacher were ever used as titles during the apostolic period.

Ron,

I've heard you say this before in prior discussions to this topic. Could you please clarify exactly what you mean by this. For I have in my head intro's like "Paul, an apostle to such and such church...."

Re: - posted by MattChenier (), on: 2006/12/12 18:26

Grace alone... there are still prophets.. and there are still apostles

Acts 13:1 Now there were in the church that was at Antioch certain PROPHETs and teachers; as Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, which had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul.

Acts 15:32 And Judas and Silas, being PROPHETs also themselves, exhorted the brethren with many words, and confirmed them.

Ac 21:8 And the next day we that were of Paul's company departed, and came (5627) unto Caesarea: and we entered in to the house of Philip the EVANGELIST, which was one of the seven; and abode with him.

Ac 21:10 And as we tarried there many days, there came down from Judaea a certain PROPHET, named Agabus.

This not only shows that the 5 fold ministry is not limited to the original 12 apostles, but also that there are other apostles than the original 12.

Re: - posted by GraceAlone (), on: 2006/12/13 13:49

It says in Eph 2:20 that our church is being built on the foundation of the prophets and apostles.

Yes, the church sends out missionaries but they are not given the same authority as the hand picked 12 apostles. Unto them was the foundation of the church- to write inspired scripture. If Christ hand picked you and you (Acts 1 "21 Â“Therefore, of these men who have accompanied us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, 22 beginning from the baptism of John to that day when He was taken up from us, one of these must become a witness with us of His resurrection.Â”) and you meet these standards then you can go ahead and claim that authority.

Notice that they only proposed two and one of them was not chosen. "And they proposed two: Joseph called Barsabas, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias."

Jehovah's Witnesses and Mormons claim that they have "Apostles still alive". Just think about it.