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LIBERTY BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

THE ATTITUDES OF LIBERTY LEADERSHIP
TOWARD THE MODERN DAY GIFT OF APOSTLE

A Thesis Project Submitted to
Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary
In partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree

DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

By

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LIBERTY BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

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ABSTRACT

THE ATTITUDES OF LIBERTY LEADERSHIP TOWARD THE MODERN DAY GIFT OF APOSTLE

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This project is an attempt to present the entire "Scripture-only" view as it pertains to the issue of modern day apostle. This will be accomplished by one presenting proponents' views with regard to this topic. Secondly, a doctrinal study of the term apostle will be utilized as it pertains to the New Testament usage. Additionally, church history will be discussed looking at views of the church fathers with regard to this topic. Third, interviews with the leadership of Liberty University will be conducted and conclusions drawn based upon their responses.

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

In recent years there seems to be an increase of those proclaiming to be modern day apostles. These men and women claim the office, along with its power, prestige and authority. Some are setting up “networks” of churches under their control and/or direction that are subject to their “authority” in spiritual and church matters. Others claiming apostleship are traveling evangelists, serving churches that accept their authority and/or doing ministry serving one church; usually a mega church with extensive influence. This raises some questions and concerns for Evangelical/Fundamental churches similar to the churches that have associated with Liberty University. These questions range from: “Is the office viable for today?” and “What should be my reaction to the influence of these apostles in their churches?” to “What should be the reaction of Liberty University to those who claim apostleship?”

This author first became aware of the topic on modern day apostles while conducting research for Elmer Towns, Dean, School of Religion, Liberty University in the course DMIN 910 (Church Growth I). While doing this research the author found a core of published information available on those claiming the office of modern day apostles, and their view disagreed with what he was taught at Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary

and with the practice held by churches associated with Liberty University and Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary. The author discovered that much of the material on modern day apostles quoted Scripture, but it seemed to be an unbalanced approach to Scripture. By this the author means the advocates are appealing to only a portion of Scripture. It seems they are self-interpreting Scripture from their pre-suppositions that they are apostles. Secondly, they are apparently not examining the historical foundation of the church fathers with regard to this topic. Thirdly, they are not looking at the New Testament interpretation of Scriptures in keeping with historic Protestant principles of interpreting Scripture. Thus, they are painting the picture by their own standards and for their own devices. However, they are not taking an anti-biblical position by what they are saying. They are using biblical terminology and using Scripture to fortify their position. For the most part, they are attempting to carry out the Great Commission and glorify God. But in doing so, they are doing it from a one-sided approach. They are making Scripture say what they want it to say about apostles, not what Scripture is teaching.

Nowhere is this greater evidenced than in the definition of apostle. These proponents are defining the term apostle in the general sense: i.e., **anyone sent by God is considered an apostle**. As evidence, they are saying the Holy Spirit has an apostolic ministry because the Holy Spirit was sent by God to minister in the hearts of believers. This definition is correct in a general sense, but not in a technical sense that defines this office. After this general definition has been established, these proponents then give a specific definition of apostle equating themselves with the twelve chosen by Christ. The qualifications of such an office would include sign-gifts, miracles, tongues, healing

powers, etc. They conclude that since they do these signs, they should be accepted as an apostle.

Statement of the problem

Anything in Christianity that is unbalanced and that goes unchecked can cause problems for those that follow its directions. This project will attempt to demonstrate that the modern day apostolic movement is unbalanced, even though its advocates apparently fulfill many good biblical results and are led by good people with intentions that seem spiritual. But the rationale behind this project is to provide information concerning modern day apostles that is both biblical and balanced. In other words to present a complete picture of Christianity and its intended principle of ministry that those who are advocating modern day apostles are leaving out. The Scriptures warn that many false teachers and prophets will come (Matthew 7:15), some will exhibit signs and gifts, and in doing so will lead away even the very elect if possible (Matthew 24:24).

If we leave the false view of apostleship unchallenged, there will be publications, books and periodicals that will present only a portion of the truth, possibly leading believers astray. The primary purpose of this thesis is to examine the modern day apostle in light of Scripture. Both Scripture and historical thought will be studied to establish the office of apostle. The history of the church that applies to modern day apostles will be considered. Also, the opinions of New Testament scholars on the office of apostleship will be examined to determine the evidence of apostleship from the day of Pentecost until now.

It is this author's belief that the data will show that the office of modern day apostle is not valid for today. The office of apostle ceased or died with the completion of the New Testament canon, again this apostleship refers to the technical use of the term. Granted in the general use of the term apostle, i.e., one being sent by God or one commissioned as an ambassador, is true in a general sense of all believers, but not a technical sense of a modern day office. So, in a general sense, all believers are apostles because all have been sent by God to fulfill the Great Commission. But, the technical definition applies only to the twelve. The twelve chosen by Christ were given sign-gifts i.e., such as miracles, tongues, and healing powers to be used in ministry, and these signs were verification of the message that they were bringing until the canon of Scripture was completed. For instance, the technical gift of prophecy is not a viable gift for today because everything that believers need to know about God and His world has been revealed from God in His Word. Everything that is needed to be known regarding God, the future and life is contained within Scripture. Since this is true, there is no need to have the technical gift of prophecy today. Those who claim to fulfill the modern office of apostleship continue to claim the technical gift of prophecy. This claim is found in the literature of modern day apostles, along with claims of miracles, tongues, interpretation of tongues and other manifestations of supernatural spiritual gifts as evidence of their spiritual authority.

With the appearance of material presenting this unbalanced position, there arises a great need to determine the attitudes of Liberty leadership to the office of modern day apostle. With this need in view, this research will be guided by the following five questions (each of the five are composed of several contributing questions):

1. What is being claimed by those who maintain they are modern day apostles?
2. What is the teaching and position of the New Testament and historical Christianity about apostles?
3. What is the response of the leadership of Liberty University to the modern movement of men claiming to be apostles?
4. What conclusions can be drawn from the leadership of Liberty University toward the modern day movement of those claiming to be apostles?
5. What conclusions can be drawn from this study about modern day apostles?

The above five questions will give direction to research and presentation of the results of this study. The answer to each question will formulate a different chapter in this project. Issues that fall outside the parameters of these questions will not be considered in this project.

Statement of Scope and Limitations

Other than the parameters of the questions asked above, this project will be limited in the following ways. First of all the project will appeal to Scripture for the basis of understanding of the office of apostle, and will study church history and the opinion of Liberty leaders to determine how they have interpreted Scripture. This project rejects any appeal to extra-biblical revelation, rational argument or pragmatic results. Because the leaders of Liberty University reject these as a basis for biblical doctrine and church principles, this thesis obviously could not appeal to these sources. It is the intent of this work to do a concise study of the Greek, the language in which the New Testament was written, for textual integrity. Second, this work will trace the history of the office of

apostle throughout the generally accepted presentation of church history and will not appeal to current presentations of church leaders by those who claim to be apostles. Third, it will limit its research about opinions concerning modern apostles to those affiliated with Liberty University. Interviews will be conducted to determine their response to the modern day movement. It is not the purpose of this project to give a definitive reflection of how all evangelical churches respond to the modern apostleship movement. It is rather the purpose of this thesis to present a systematic response of what the leadership of Liberty University feels with regard to this topic. The survey is an opinion poll about modern day apostles of selected leaders at Liberty University and will not gather information on the success, quality, problems or any other condition of their churches. The success of their churches is not the basis for accepting or rejecting modern day apostles, but rather, their view of Scripture is the key. The leaders were chosen because they are influential at Liberty University in forming opinions, attitudes, and strategy of ministry. The official doctrinal statement at Liberty University says nothing about this issue, nor does the Constitution, By-Laws or other theological documents. Also, because there are no ecclesiastical by-laws or organizational chart of a religious body above the University that determine polity about this matter, there can be no accurate audience to be surveyed to determine Liberty's opinion. The results will only be an opinion poll, not an accurate statistical analysis of the position held by the leaders of Liberty. But from their opinions, attitudes, and theological interpretation of Scripture, it is possible to determine Liberty University's attitude in this matter.

Review of Literature

Some books, articles, and magazines published today speak to the issue of modern day apostles. These publications are both general and specific in their approach. By general this author means that various publications will touch on this topic through a direct approach. These publications will consist mainly of books such as Bible dictionaries that will contain an explanation/definition of apostles. Also books/publications dealing with spiritual gifts will contain explanations of the gift of apostle. Falling under the general section, books dealing within the charismatic movement are included here, along with books on Church Growth. This general category however consists of books in favor of and against the office of modern day apostles. The following publications falling within the category that teach the gift of apostleship has ceased are chosen because they represent the historic interpretation of apostleship:

Cessationist Proponents

MacArthur, John F. Charismatic Chaos. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1992.

Tenney, Merrill C. Pictorial Bible Dictionary. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1967.

Vincent, Marvin R. Word Studies in the New Testament. Grand Rapids: Eerdmann Publishers, 1965.

Wuest, Kenneth. Wuest Word Studies. Grand Rapids: Eerdmann Publishers, 1966.

Specific books are those publications that speak directly to the issue of modern day apostles. This category consists of books, magazines, and articles that are devoted totally to this topic. This author has discovered that publications about this topic that are in favor of modern day apostles have been chosen because they best represent this position:

Proponents' Publications

Cannistraci, David. The Gift of Apostle. Ventura: Regal Books, 1996.

Eckhardt, John. Moving in the Apostolic. Ventura: Renew Books, 1999.

Wagner, C. Peter. Churchquake. Ventura: Regal Books, 1999.

_____. The New Apostolic Churches. Ventura: Regal Books, 1998.

_____. Your Spiritual Gifts. Ventura: Regal Books, 1994.

The Biblical Theological Basis for the Project

As the previous sections have shown, the issue of modern day apostles has its basis in biblical doctrine. This section will explain the importance of examining this issue from a biblical standpoint and the importance of examining any movement in light of the Scriptures. This will be accomplished by presenting passages of Scripture that call to our attention areas of concern regarding this topic. These areas include the rise of false prophets in the last days, motives of these false prophets and a proper method of scriptural interpretation:

But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, and bring on themselves swift destruction. And many will follow their destructive ways, because of whom the way of truth will be blasphemed. By covetousness they will exploit you with deceptive words; for a long time their judgement has not been idle, and their destruction does not slumber (II Peter 2:1-3, NIV).

Here false teachers are described as those presenting erroneous doctrine, not blatant, but subtle in its teachings. Furthermore, in their teaching they are misinterpreting Scripture, as taught in II Peter 1:20, "Knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation," and are driven by a false motive that lies behind their

teaching: II Peter 2:3 says, “By covetousness they will exploit you with deceptive words; for a long time their judgement has not been idle, and their destruction does not slumber.”

These issues of modern day apostles rest solely on the Word of God and how men are interpreting His Word (hermeneutics). As discussed above, publications in favor of modern apostles present a one-sided hermeneutic with regard to this topic, presenting a doctrine that is biblically unsound and not complete, not comparing Scripture with Scriptures, and representing a claim/doctrine that is not correct.

Scripture also warns believers that in the last days men will rise to positions of authority by doing great miracles (Mark 13:22). We must judge and interpret all that we see through the lens of Scripture. As men proclaim movements as biblically based truths, we must hold a proper hermeneutical method concerning all movements especially modern day apostles. As Peter warns us, these false doctrines and teachings will be slight deviations from a proper biblical view.

However slight these deviations might be, these “new doctrines” will produce false followers according to Scripture. Where Scripture does not speak, these leaders make their own words to be on par with Scripture. This is evidenced by their definition of apostles as well as their qualifications. Eckhardt in his book, Moving in the Apostolic presents a list of apostolic qualifications that are not grouped together in Scripture as a “list,” but rather are characteristics that all believers should possess. They are:

- A. gather-Matt. 12:30
- B. to impart – Rom. 1:11
- C. to mobilize
- D. to order – Titus 1:5
- E. to judge – I Cor. 5:3
- F. to reform – Heb. 9:10
- G. to build – I Cor. 3:10

- H. revelation – Eph. 3
- I. to father – I Cor. 4:15
- J. to lay a foundation – Eph. 2:20
- K. to initiate
- L. to budge
- M. to establish
- N. to pioneer
- O. to legislate – Acts 15
- P. to execute
- Q. to defend – Phil 1:17
- R. to oversee – Acts 1:20
- S. to invade
- T. to war – II Cor. 10:4
- U. to enforce – Titus 1:13
- V. to convert – Acts 3:19
- W. to train
- X. to ordain – John 15:16
- Y. to confront – Gal. 2:11
- Z. to finish – John 4:34¹

As Paul listed the qualifications in II Timothy for the office of pastor, deacon and elder, Eckhardt presents his list as the qualifications of an apostle. This raises questions: First, if this office were viable for today, would not God in His sovereignty provide us with a description of these qualifications? Secondly, is Eckhardt suggesting that his “insight” to the office of modern day apostles is as inspired as Scripture? As one can clearly, see this issue affects not only Scripture concerning our doctrine, but historical methods of hermeneutics as well.

Description of Methodology

The first chapter of this project will describe the approach the author will take in this study. The rest of this project will be broken down into four sections. The first section (Chapter Two) will look at what proponents of modern day apostles are

¹John Eckhardt, Moving in the Apostolic (Ventura: Renew Books, 1999), 96-98.

advocating. The following questions will be asked: What biblical picture are they painting and how are they presenting it? What are the qualifications of this office? What are they pointing to as a definition for modern day apostle? This section will also present their arguments in favor of the office of modern day apostles according to its proponents.

The third chapter of this project will contain an examination of Scriptures as they pertain to the biblical accounts of the apostles. Also, the opinions of church fathers regarding the office of apostle will be presented because they represent the position of historic Christianity. What did the First Century church think of this office? Did it cease after the original apostles died or does it continue today? In addition to the church fathers, New Testament scholars and their interpretations of the verses that point to the topic of modern day apostleship and office will also be examined.

The fourth chapter will contain interviews which will be conducted with the leadership of Liberty University.² These “spiritual leaders” of Liberty will be asked about their attitudes and opinions regarding the office of apostle, and if they feel that it is viable for today. If so, why? If not, why? What should be the alignment of Liberty University with those that consider themselves to be modern day apostles? Their interviews will be included in Chapter Four of the project. A summary drawn from their conclusions will be listed in Chapter Five.

The sixth chapter will serve as a resource reference for those wishing to understand Liberty University’s leadership views on this topic. This is not intended to be an all-

² Interviews will be conducted with Dr. Jerry Falwell (Co-founder and Chancellor of Liberty University), Dr. David Beck (Professor of Theology and Philosophy), Mr. Jonathan Falwell (Executive Pastor, Thomas Road Baptist Church and Board of Trustees), Mr. Mark Hine, (Vice President of Student Affairs and Board of Trustees), Dr. Robert Jackson (Vice President of Spiritual Life), Dr. Jim Moon (Board of Trustees and Co-

inclusive answer on this topic but a reference guide to those seeking information on this subject.

Summary

This author has demonstrated from information listed above the need not only to answer those claiming to be modern day apostles, but also the need to provide a reference/explanation concerning this issue as it pertains to the ministry of Liberty University. This will be accomplished through the examination of what proponents of the movement claim, looking at their definition of an apostle along with its rights and privileges. This will be accomplished not only through their theology but their methodology as well.

Upon understanding what the proponents believe concerning this topic, a balanced rebuttal will be presented. This section will include an investigation of the Hebrew and Greek use of the term apostle, church history, cessation of sign-gifts and interviews of Liberty University leadership. Based on these findings, a “reference guide” will be included for those wishing to understand this movement as well as Liberty’s position on the subject.

pastor with Dr. Falwell), Dr. Elmer Towns (Co-founder of Liberty University and Dean, School of Religion), and Dr. Harold Willmington (Dean, Liberty Bible Institute).

CHAPTER TWO

PROPONENTS' VIEWS OF APOSTOLIC SUCCESSION

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to examine what the proponents of the modern apostolic movement are stating. The intent of this chapter is not to refute any claims (see Chapter Three) but simply to spell out what these “modern day apostles” are advocating. With the number of advocates climbing, it would be impossible to include all those claiming apostleship here. This author has selected three of the most widely published and recognized advocates of this position to examine. They are:

C. Peter Wagner: Co-founder of the World Prayer Center in Colorado Springs, Colorado, and serves as coordinator of the United Prayer Track of the AD 2000 and Beyond movement. Wagner is a former professor at Fuller Theological Seminary and is a widely recognized leading authority in the fields of Church Growth and spiritual warfare. Over the years, Wagner has moved from a cessationist position to one that endorses modern day apostles. Wagner has authored more than 40 books.³

³ C. Peter Wagner, editor, The New Apostolic Churches (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 1998). Information taken from dust jacket of text

David Cannistraci: Co-pastor of Evangelical Christian Fellowship in San Jose, California. He is seen frequently on the *New Beginnings* telecast aired throughout California's Bay Area. Cannistraci holds a Doctor of Philosophy from the California Graduate School of Theology.⁴ He is recognized as an apostle by others who claim to be apostles, and his book The Gift of Apostle is recognized and quoted as an authority in its field.

John Eckhardt: Pastor and overseer of Crusaders Ministries in Chicago. Eckhardt travels the world teaching biblical truths to "perfect the saints" to do the work of Jesus Christ. He has authored 14 publications and produces a daily television and radio program.⁵ While Eckhardt has a large network of churches that look to him for apostolic authority, those following Cannistraci would probably not follow his leadership.

These three men will serve as the "cornerstones" regarding information concerning this movement. As this author seeks to explain their position, the following format will be followed. First, their explanation for the current need for this office will be explained. Secondly, their definitions of the term apostle will be given. Thirdly, their views of characteristics and/or evidence of apostolic authority will be explained and lastly their views of the duties of a modern day apostle will be discussed.

Current Need For Apostles

The primary need today in churches around the world according to all three men is the need for unity. Wagner states,

⁴ David Cannistraci, The Gift of Apostle (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 1996). Information taken from dust jacket of text.

⁵ Eckhardt, Moving in the Apostolic. Information taken from the back cover of text.

One of the most explicit Scripture verses about Church Growth is Ephesians 4:16, which says that the body of which Jesus is the head is 'joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body.' A formula for growth then is unity (joined together), plus gifts (every part does its share), equals growth.⁶

Here C. Peter Wagner stresses unity of the body as does Cannistraci, who stresses this unity through spiritual maturity. This maximum maturity is best reached under the guidance of an apostle. "The apostle is a central part of the manifold wisdom of God; not only to raise the church to maturity but to defeat the enemy and his plan to control the earth."⁷ Hence, by implication the church cannot reach its full maturity/unity until the office of apostle is restored and active within the body of Christ.

This unity/maturity is sought after for one purpose: The successful carrying out of the Great Commission. As traditional churches level off or show a decline in membership, apostolic churches have discovered a "new way" to carry out the seemingly impossible task of reaching the world with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Wagner states the following:

The new apostolic reformation is an extraordinary work of God at the close of the Twentieth Century, which is, to a significant extent, changing the shape of Protestant Christianity around the world. For almost 500 years Christian churches have largely functioned within traditional denominational structures of one kind or another. Particularly in the 1900s, but with roots going back for almost a century, new forms and operational procedures began to emerge in areas such as local church government, interchurch relationships, financing, evangelism, missions, prayer, leadership selection and training, the role of supernatural power, worship and other important aspects of church life. Some of these changes are being seen within denominations themselves, but for the most part they are taking the form of loosely structured apostolic networks. In virtually every

⁶ Wagner, 15.

⁷ Cannistraci, 129.

region of the world, these new apostolic churches constitute the fastest growing segment of society.⁸

As Wagner points out, traditional Christianity is not as effective as it once was in times past. The burden of the Great Commission requires a new view of “doing church.”

As Eckhardt explains,

Have you ever felt that what God has called you to do—or maybe what you secretly dream of doing for God and His Kingdom—is an impossible mission? Do you despair of ever seeing it accomplished? Is it truly hopeless? Or is there within the apostolic dimension an answer for you, as surely as there was for the original apostles?⁹

Here Eckhardt paints a dim picture of fulfilling the task at hand, the carrying out of the Great Commission. He points out that the only acceptable means to accomplishing this daunting task is “tapping” into the apostolic dimension. This point is further expressed by Eckhardt, “Many of the most prominent Protestant reformers also believed that the apostolic office was never designed to cease, it was intended to be a perpetual office throughout the Church Age”¹⁰ with the intention of producing unity and maturity within the body of Christ for the carrying out of the Great Commission.

The seemingly “new need” for apostolic ministry is really God’s desired intention for the church throughout history. So the new need is really an old provision for carrying out God’s desired plan for His church. Cannistraci places emphasis on this point, a returning to God’s design for His church stating that today this need is to “allow the Lord to stretch us and pull us together around the patterns of His Word” based on returning to the apostolic traditions of the past, “a biblical pattern that the whole body of Christ can

⁸ C. Peter Wagner, Churchquake. The New Apostolic Reformation is Shaking Up the Church As We Know It (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 1999), 6.

⁹ Eckhardt, 20.

¹⁰ Ibid., 30-31.

and must utilize.”¹¹ According to Eckhardt the church should have never moved from its apostolic recognition. “It is not the will of God for these (apostolic) offices to remain vacant. When they are vacant, the church will suffer because of the absence of the anointing.”¹² Thus God’s design was and is for the succession of the apostolic office to continue today. “The apostolic office has been vacant because of unbelief and tradition of the church, it is now being filled again by those chosen of the Lord.”¹³ Eckhardt believes that the office of apostle has laid dormant during the past 1000 years due to unbelief and tradition of the church. Now God is poised to use the office of apostle to bring about the fulfillment of the Great Commission to reality as the anointing work of the Holy Spirit moves in and brings back the office of apostle into the local church. “In the coming apostolic movement, the church will be the vehicle God uses to accomplish His will. The New Testament reveals that the church is the apple of His eye . . . The energized local church will play an indispensable role in the coming apostolic movement.”¹⁴ This “energized” local church centers around the gift of apostle. As Eckhardt states “. . . the commission of the church is apostolic, the church needs apostles to be able to fulfill it.”¹⁵

Why the need today for modern day apostles? According to Wagner, Cannistraci, and Eckhardt, it is to fulfill the Great Commission which has been neglected due to tradition and unbelief of this office by mainline Protestant churches. In order not to be overwhelmed and fearful of the task ahead, a resurgence of this office is needed within the church today. This resurgence will produce unity and maturity resulting in the effective

¹¹ Cannistraci, 36-37.

¹² Eckhardt, 31.

¹³ Ibid., 32.

¹⁴ Cannistraci, 175.

¹⁵ Eckhardt, 32.

completion of the Great Commission given to all the body by our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. "I believe that what God wants to do involves all of us, whether we are from charismatic, fundamental, or other backgrounds."¹⁶ Unity, resulting in everyone doing their part to carry the Gospel to all nations, is fueled by the modern day apostolic movement. This constitutes the need today for modern day apostles according to these men.

Definitions of Apostles

With the Great Commission at the basis for this need of modern day apostles, a better understanding of the Great Commission aids us in understanding the definition of an apostle. Eckhardt makes the following observations regarding the Great Commission:

1. The church was given a commission.
2. The commission is an apostolic commission.
3. This commission must and will be fulfilled.
4. Since the commission is apostolic, it will take an apostolic anointing to fulfill it.¹⁷

Since the Great Commission is apostolic and in need of apostles to carry it out to completion, a definition of an apostle must be discussed. A basic definition of an apostle is taken from the Greek word *apostolos*, meaning a delegate or ambassador of the Gospel, officially a commissioner of Christ (with miraculous powers), messenger, he that is sent."¹⁸ Here Eckhardt gives both the broad and narrow meaning associated with the term

¹⁶ Cannistraci, 19.

¹⁷ Eckhardt, 32.

¹⁸ Ibid., 23.

apostle. He further explains that “apostles are officers of the church. They are not only officers, but they have an important work. An officer is an executive, and executives have the authority to execute a commission,”¹⁹ in this case the Great Commission. According to the Greek, a broad definition of apostle would include anyone that is sent. This would include the Holy Spirit and Christ. “The Holy Spirit is an apostolic spirit. He is apostolic because he has been sent by the Father.”²⁰ Since the Holy Spirit was given/sent to all believers by Christ, thus His ministry is considered apostolic. Further the same can be said of Christ himself. “. . . God the Father has given an apostolic calling to His Son, Jesus Christ. Christ has generously demonstrated and distributed the calling to specific individuals who became apostles. God then imparts an apostolic spirit and calling through these apostles to the entire body of Christ as a reflection of His Spirit within them. This process is what will increase in these last days as a part of the apostolic movement’s influence. “As the needs of a lost world touch the heart of the Father, the Son will gift more and more apostles, who will in turn perfect an apostolic people to reach the world.”²¹ Thus the sending aspect of an apostolic ministry stems from the Father sending the Son who in turn sends the Holy Spirit to gift men in the apostolic ministry. Cannistraci further makes the distinction between “modern apostleship” and “unique apostleship.”²² He suggests that those who assume that the office and ministry of apostles, have failed to “differentiate between the original apostolic function represented in ‘the twelve’ and the perennial apostolic function”²³ that carries on today. He explains, “It is evident that the

¹⁹ Ibid., 32.

²⁰ Ibid., 24.

²¹ Cannistraci, 50

²² Ibid., 20.

²³ Ibid., 80.

twelve apostles hold a unique and authoritative position in the Kingdom. The existence of apostles beyond the number of twelve in the New Testament is equally clear . . . the confusion between the twelve apostles (who are unique and whose function is complete) and other apostles in the New Testament (whose function is assumed by some to be complete, but is not) has fueled the error of believing that the office has ceased.”²⁴ Thus, he maintains that an apostolic office is viable for the body today. Cannistraci gives a modern day definition of an apostle, “One who is called and sent by Christ to have the spiritual authority, character, gifts and abilities to successfully reach and establish people in Kingdom truth and order especially through the founding and overseeing of local churches.”²⁵ With this definition, Cannistraci points out that apostles hold the position as primary member (I Corinthians 12:28-30; Ephesians 4:11) as well as representing a foundational structure (Ephesians 2:20) to the church. Thus this unique office and function are “distinct from the other ministry gifts mentioned in Scripture and appear to possess a unique place, function and importance in God’s plan;”²⁶ namely that the Great Commission cannot be carried out and the church cannot continue to be built without the ministry of the apostle.²⁷

Likewise Wagner defines modern day apostleship by looking at the Greek meaning of the word. “*Apostollo* is a noun and the corresponding verb is *apostello*, to send. *Apostello* means to be sent with a particular purpose or with a specified commission from the one who does the sending. When this is done the “envoy has full powers and is the

²⁴ Ibid., 81-82.

²⁵ Ibid., 29.

²⁶ Ibid., 82.

²⁷ Ibid., 29.

personal representative of the one sending himThe ancient Greeks also used *apostelo* from time to time to indicate being sent out with divine authorization. This is what we are referring to²⁸ Wagner is in agreement with his counterparts with regard to the broad definition of the term, primarily of the one being sent. However, Wagner's contemporary definition of the gift of apostle carries much more meaning, pointing to the narrow sense of the term. "The gift of apostle is the special ability that God gives certain members of the body of Christ to assume and exercise general leadership over a number of churches with an extraordinary authority in spiritual matters that is spontaneously recognized and appreciated by those churches."²⁹ How this definition is carried out will be discussed later in this chapter as the function of a modern day apostle according to these men is discussed. However the stress placed here is on the use of the term authority, although the other men examined in this chapter do not include it in their definitions; in fact, Wagner recognizes this himself. He states, "A key word in my basic definition is 'authority'." I do not want to overstress this, but viewing an apostle through the grid of authority is essential. It helps us to avoid the mistake of confusing the gift of apostle with the gift of missionary."³⁰ It is not the intent of this paper to discuss the difference between these two gifts. However this quote is added by the author to demonstrate that Wagner, Eckhardt and Cannistraci have more in mind concerning the office of apostle and its modern day function than simply of one being sent. Wagner also, within the boundaries of his definition, touches on the availability of this gift today. He accomplishes this task by describing the difference between the gift of apostle and the office of apostle. Wagner

²⁸ Wagner, Churchquake, 104.

²⁹ Ibid., 105.

³⁰ Ibid.

states that “any office is the public recognition by the body of Christ that an individual has a certain gift and is authorized to minister that gift in what might be termed an ‘official capacity’.”³¹ This office might be viewed the same as the ordination of a pastor or the installation of deacons within a ministry. “This same concept should be applied to apostles,”³² according to Wagner.

This office with its rights and authority is gained in a number of ways:

1. God is the one who does the appointing, and recognizing that He has done so rests with the body of Christ.
2. Apostles are charismatic leaders. I (Wagner) am using the term “charismatic here not in the theological sense, but the sociological sense.

The term ‘charisma’ will be applied to a certain quality of an individual’s personality by virtue of which he is set apart from ordinary men and treated as endowed with supernatural, superhuman, or at least specifically exceptional powers or qualities. These are such as are not accessible to the ordinary person, but are regarded as of divine origin or as exemplary and on the basis of them, the individual concerned is treated as a leader.”³³

Such leadership as Wagner defines it cannot be generated within a corporate system, such as a denomination, but it must come from outside, namely, from God.

³¹ Ibid., 109.

³² Ibid..

³³ Max Weber, The Theory of Social and Economic Organization (New York: The Free Press, 1947), 358-59.

3. The Peter Principle – “in a hierarchy, every employer tends to rise to his or her level of incompetence.”³⁴ When you no longer get chosen for promotion, you have presumably reached your level of incompetence. “Apostles have the delegated authority to represent the Kingdom of God in a governmental, official authority given by men but a spiritual authority given by Christ.”³⁵ Thus their level of competence is that of an apostle, the church must recognize this and place them in their position upon recognition of this giftedness.

4. Validated by Fruit: The only way a fivefold minister’s calling can be determined is by receiving a revelation from God, training for that ministry and evidencing the fruit of that ministry.³⁶

As described by the above points, the office of apostle according to Wagner focuses on the authority given to that position. The author’s intent is to present the definitions of a modern day apostle as discussed by these men in this chapter. However a clearer definition can be gained by looking at the duties/functions of modern day apostles according to these advocates. Their function becomes the practical application of these definitions.

Duties/Functions of Modern Day Apostles

Much information is presented by each advocate in his respective primary work concerning the function and duties of a modern day apostle. Concerning this point each

³⁴ Peter J. Laurence, The Peter Principle (New York: Bantam Books, 1969), 7.

³⁵ Bill Hamon, Apostles, Prophets, and the Coming Moves of God (Shippensburg, PA: Destiny Image, 1997), 124. Quoted by C. Peter Wagner in Churchquake, 112.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 164, quoted in C. Peter Wagner, Churchquake, 112-117. This list is given by Wagner as evidence of ordination of those seeking the office of apostle. Wagner suggests that these four areas could apply to a pastor or deacon as well.

proponent will be looked at separately and then a comparison and contrast will be presented. This section is of utmost importance in understanding the scope and depth of this issue. It is here that the definition is explained in and through the practical application of the office of a modern day apostle. Definitions are words of explanation, while functions of this office are where the truth of the position is clearly seen. This section serves only to inform the reader what these advocates are teaching. The teaching of Eckhardt will be examined first to determine the functions of this office.

Eckhardt, before moving into specifics, presents a few “necessities” of an apostle. He states, “It is the responsibility of the apostle to release and stir-up the apostolic dimension in every believer through teaching, preaching, prophesying and the laying on of hands.”³⁷ Eckhardt further explains that “sent ones do more than evangelize, the sent ones preach, teach, prophesy and do the works of Jesus.”³⁸ According to Eckhardt, apostles primarily do the works of Christ, specifically teaching, preaching, prophesying and evangelizing the world with the message of Christ. Eckhardt, however, never specifically explains the “releasing” aspect of this office. In addition to the aspects listed above, Eckhardt lists other duties of the modern day apostle, both personally and corporately. “Apostles are concerned with the form of the church. When the form is not according to the Word of God, the apostle will discern it, and preach, and teach the Word to bring the church back into God’s perfect form.”³⁹ Again the function of teaching and preaching God’s word is stressed as well as authority over the church or churches. Eckhardt does outline the duties of a modern day apostle. They are as follows:

³⁷ Eckhardt., 24.

³⁸ Ibid., 22.

³⁹ Ibid., 34.

A. To gather. The apostolic anointing is a gathering anointing. Apostles gather people for the purpose of teaching, training, and mobilizing them to fulfill the purposes and plans of God. They have the charisma to attract people for the purposes of the Kingdom. “He who is with me is against me, and he who does not gather with me scatters aboard” (Matthew 12:30).

B. To impart. Apostles have an ability to impart spiritual graces to the saints. This impartation enables the saints to fulfill their calling and destinies (see Romans 1:11).

C. To mobilize. Apostles have the ability to stir up and mobilize the army of God. People need to be gathered and mobilized to fulfill the Great Commission (no Scripture given for this function by Eckhardt).

D. To order. Apostles bring order and government to the church. The apostolic anointing is a governing anointing. Government is necessary to facilitate the flow of God’s power and anointing (see Titus 1:5).

E. To judge. Apostles bring judgement and correction to the church. They issue sentences and verdicts against false teaching and incorrect behavior (see I Corinthians 5:3).

F. To reform. Apostles are reformers. They bring the necessary change to the house of God. Apostles are raised up during times of reformation (see Hebrews 9:10).

G. To build. Apostles are wise master builders. The apostolic anointing is a building anointing. Apostles help build strong churches. They have been likened to general contractors; they are responsible for overseeing the construction of the house of God.

- H. To bring revelation. Apostolic ministry is a ministry of revelation. Apostles bring insight to the body of Christ concerning the plans and purposes of God (see Ephesians 3).
- I. To father. Apostles are spiritual fathers. They restore the principle of fatherhood to the church (see Malachi 4; I Corinthians 4:15).
- J. To lay foundation. The apostolic is a foundational anointing. Apostles lay foundations in the lives of God's people, preparing them for the coming moves of God. Without apostolic ministry, people lack the proper foundation to grow properly (see Ephesians 2:20).
- K. To initiate. Apostles initiate new moves of God. The apostolic anointing is an activating anointing. Apostles are catalysts. This gift helps release the other gifts in the church (no Scripture reference given by Eckhardt).
- L. To bridge. Apostles are raised up during seasons of transitions. They provide bridges necessary for the church to transition from the old to the new (no reference given by Eckhardt).
- M. To establish. Apostles help establish truth, revelation, churches and new moves of the Spirit. To establish means to bring into being on a firm or permanent basis (no reference given by Eckhardt).
- N. To pioneer. Apostles are pioneers. They keep the church moving into new territories, both naturally and spiritually (no reference given by Eckhardt).
- O. To legislate. As officers of the church, apostles legislate. They issue orders and Kingdom decrees for the church (see Acts 15).

P. To execute. Apostles have a unique ability to execute the plans and purposes of God. To execute means to carry out, perform or do. This anointing is absolutely necessary to fulfill the Great Commission (no reference given by Eckhardt).

Q. To defend. Apostles are defenders of the faith. They defend the truth. They defend the church from outside attacks and infiltration by the enemy (see Philippians 1:17).

R. To oversee. The apostle is also called a “bishoprick” (see Acts 1:20, KJV). To be a bishop means to oversee. Apostles oversee churches.

S. To invade. Apostles invade new territories. This is a militaristic mantle. They have the ability to penetrate hostile environments with the message of the Kingdom (no Scripture reference given by Eckhardt).

T. To war. Apostles are territorial warriors. They are spiritual commanders of the highest rank. “Warfare” is translated from the Greek word *strateia*, meaning “apostolic career” (see II Corinthians 10:4).

U. To enforce. Apostles are spiritual enforcers. They enforce Kingdom conduct, holiness and biblical standards of righteousness. To enforce means to put or keep in force, to compel to obedience (see Titus 1:13).

V. To convert. Apostles convert people to the laws and culture of the Kingdom. They turn people from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God (see Acts 3:19; 26:18).

W. To train. Apostles train and educate ministers. They develop leadership (no Scripture references given by Eckhardt).

X. To ordain. Apostles ordain and set in place qualified leadership (see Titus 1:5). This includes selection and confirmation. Apostolic ordination releases fruitfulness (see John 15:16).

Y. To confront. Apostles confront false teaching, witchcraft, and immorality, anything that will keep the church from fulfilling its purpose. The apostolic anointing is a confrontational anointing (see Galatians 2:11).

Z. To finish. Apostles are focused on finishing. They have an anointing to execute, complete and fulfill the prophetic plans of God (see John 4:34).⁴⁰

These twenty-six duties are the responsibility of the apostle according to Eckhardt. The apostle will be effective and used of God mightily in all ministry endeavors. Eckhardt summarizes these duties by saying, "When an apostle faithfully executes his duties, the people who have been birthed into the Kingdom and disciplined by his ministry will be faithful 'epistles' to all men, reflecting the apostolic dimension in such a way that they will be effective in the ministries to which God has called them."⁴¹

At this point Eckhardt moves into the duties of the apostle in the apostolic church. The first of these duties is what Eckhardt calls the "apostolic dimension." This is defined as "the measurement in length, width, and thickness. It is the extent, range, scope or weight of a thing."⁴² This apostolic dimension applies to the apostolic church as the primary way to measure the "apostolic anointing that is flowing through an individual

⁴⁰ Ibid., 96-98. This long quote is a summary of the functions of an apostle by Eckhardt. This reference appears as it does within the text. If no Scripture is listed, then none was given by the author.

⁴¹ Ibid., 99.

⁴² Ibid., 101. Apostolic dimension according to Eckhardt is the area in which the church should seek to operate.

believer or corporate assembly.”⁴³ At this junction, Eckhardt believes that the identifying aspects or characteristics of the apostolic ministry are found in the apostolic dimension. This apostolic dimension, according to Eckhardt is determined through the following:

1. The law of impartation. The apostolic anointing is transferable, meaning it can be transmitted from one person to another . . . when the Lord ascended He divided His mantle into five parts. He gave the apostolic mantle to some (not all). He gave His prophetic mantle to some (not all). He gave His evangelistic mantle to some (not all). He gave His pastoral mantle to some (not all). He gave His teaching mantle to some (not all).⁴⁴

If the church receives all five dimensions by being exposed to the anointed ministry gifts, it can manifest Christ to the world because Christ’s fullness is seen through all five combined gifts.

2. Accessing apostolic grace.⁴⁵ There are two ways a local church can access apostolic grace according to Eckhardt. “The first and primary way is to have an apostle as the senior elder (pastor) of the local church . . . when the senior elder is an apostle, there will be a consistent flow of the apostolic anointing that will cause a strong apostolic dimension to be present in the local church.”⁴⁶ Eckhardt states further that “not all senior pastors are apostles and they don’t need to be.”⁴⁷ However, senior pastors need the “apostolic dimension to operate effectively . . . therefore the second way for a local church

⁴³ Ibid., 101.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 105.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 106.

to access apostolic grace is to be in relationship with an apostle.”⁴⁸ In summary, Eckhardt feels that for the local church to operate at its intended level, the church must be in operation with and subject to the apostolic anointing that is gained through the relationship with an apostle. This is more than a relationship of acquaintance as Eckhardt explains, “There must be a strategy, a course of action that will result in accessing the grace that results upon the apostolic office. This can include fellowship, conferences and other means to draw from the anointing upon the apostles with whom pastors are in covenant.”⁴⁹ Thus, the law of impartation is in effect and operating within the local church.

3. The church at Jerusalem is viewed by Eckhardt as the ultimate prototype for all churches, for all time. “The church of Jerusalem was first in time, place, order and importance.”⁵⁰ The reason being that the church of Jerusalem had the presence of the twelve apostles, causing a “strong apostolic dimension”⁵¹ in this Jerusalem ministry. As a result the characteristics/duties of this “first” church must be examined, studied and applied today. This aspect is essential to Eckhardt’s theology, thus each will be listed as they appear in the text (again this is not intended to be rebutted here, that will be reserved for Chapter Three). These twelve points are based on Acts 2:42-47.

1. Apostolic Doctrine. The believers continued steadfastly in the apostle’s doctrine. Apostolic teaching is foundational and needs to be in the life of every believer. Apostolic churches are known for sound doctrine based on the Word of God. Apostolic people will be people of sound doctrine.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 105.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 106.

⁵¹ Ibid.

2. Fellowship. This is the Greek word *koinonia*, meaning partnership, participation and communion. The apostolic dimension causes strong participation from believers in gathering together and fellowship.

3. Breaking of Bread. These were communion services. The Lord's Supper was a vital part of this church.

4. Prayers. Prayer meetings were also a vital part of this church. The apostolic anointing releases a strong dimension of prayer into the local church.

5. Fear. This is the reverential fear of the Lord Great fear is another distinguishing mark of apostolic ministry.

6. Signs and Wonders. This is the miracle dimension of apostolic ministry. Signs and wonders were a part of this apostolic church.

7. Unity. The believers were together and had all things in common. Oneness of purpose and mind was characteristic of the church of Jerusalem.

8. Giving. There was a giving spirit of the church at Jerusalem. This was the result of great grace being upon them all (see Acts 4:33-35). The needs of every believer were met as a result of the apostolic dimension.

9. Continuing Daily. They continued daily with one accord in the temple. They worshiped together regularly at the temple, and they met in small groups for communion.

10. Gladness. Great joy, including thankfulness, was characteristic of this church. The spirit of gladness was strong in Jerusalem. Apostolic churches will have a strong Kingdom aspect of joy in the Holy Spirit (see Romans 14:17).

11. Praise. Strong praise is released through the apostolic anointing. Apostolic churches will be centers of praise and celebration. Praise in an apostolic church will be instrumental in pulling down strongholds. Through praise, kings are bound with chains and nobles with fetters of iron (see Psalms 149:8).

12. Favor. The whole city was favorable toward them. "Favor" is the Greek word *charis*, meaning the divine influence of the heart. God gives apostolic churches favor in their cities, regions or nation.⁵²

4. Signs and Wonders. This duty of the apostolic church is again a very important part of the modern day apostolic ministry. Here Eckhardt presents seven characteristics of an apostolic church as found in the book of Acts. They are:

1. Signs and wonders reveal God's approval upon ministry (Acts 2:22).
2. Signs and wonders are a mark of an apostolic church (Acts 2:43).
3. Signs and wonders release God's people to minister in boldness (Acts 4:30, 31).
4. Signs and wonders touch the common man (Acts 5:12).
5. Signs and wonders follow a sent one (Psalms 105:26, 27; Acts 7:36).
6. Signs and wonders attract people (Acts 8:13).
7. Signs and wonders give testimony to God's Word (Acts 14:3).⁵³

⁵² Ibid., 108-09. This footnote covers the twelve characteristics of the Jerusalem church according to Eckhardt. It appears here as it does in the text. This is an important aspect of Eckhardt's theology as it pertains to the modern apostolic movement.

⁵³ Ibid., 111. This list is presented as it appears in the text.

According to Eckhardt “the Lord bears witness to the apostle’s ministry through signs and wonders (see Hebrews 2:4).”⁵⁴ To further emphasize this aspect of an apostolic ministry Eckhardt continues, “A valid ministry must have the Lord’s approval and witness, and signs and wonders validate a true apostolic ministry.”⁵⁵

In summary of Eckhardt’s position one must notice the power and authority that is given to the modern day apostle, both through office (corporate) and function (personal) as carried out in his ministry. Eckhardt places great importance on the signs and wonders of an apostle as evidence of said calling.

Next, this author will present the understanding of the modern day apostle according to Dr. David Cannistraci. The views expressed here comes from Cannistraci’s primary work on the subject: The Gift of the Apostle. The author here will attempt to summarize not the entire text as it relates to this office but rather those sections that relate to the duties of the modern day apostle. However, one additional aspect will be examined here that was not mentioned in Eckhardt’s work: characteristics of “false apostles.” First, however, the duties of a modern day apostle according to Cannistraci.

Cannistraci begins by listing seven demands that define apostles. This is essential as it leads to the requirements of this office and how they are applied in practical ministry. They are:

1. *Apostles are required to have a definite and personal call from God in Jesus Christ . . . this is essential.*

⁵⁴ Ibid., 112.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

2. *Apostles are required to have a special intimacy and acquaintance with Jesus Christ.* In I Corinthians 9:1, Paul qualifies himself as an apostle by citing his contact with Christ: “Am I not an apostle? Am I not free? Have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord?” Clearly, personal acquaintance with Christ was considered a requirement for apostleship among the twelve (see Acts 1:21-25). Although today’s apostles are of a different category, we can be sure that intimate knowledge of Christ is vital for fruitfulness in apostolic ministry (see John 15:4,5).

3. *Apostles are elders and must meet the biblical qualifications of an elder.* A person cannot be an apostle if moral and spiritual requirements set forth for overseers in Scripture are not met (see I Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9; I Peter 5:1-4).

4. *Apostles are fivefold ministers and must function as such.* The work of a valid apostle will always be in the areas of equipping, training and leading others into mature ministry.

5. *Apostles are required to have the recognition and confirmation of peers.* Other apostles must recognize a person as an apostle before apostolic ministry can be entirely legitimized (Galatians 2:9; Acts 13:1-3).

6. *Apostles must have specific fruit to which they can point to demonstrate their apostleship . . .* it is an actual ministry that can be measured in the tangible terms of established churches, spiritual children in the ministry and penetration of the Gospel into targeted areas.

7. *Apostles must maintain their apostleship by complete submission to Christ, or they will fall from apostleship and lose their office as did Judas (Acts 1:25).*⁵⁶

At this point Cannistraci explains the vehicles that an apostle uses to carry out the various functions of the office. He presents these aspects before moving to specific duties of the office. The first of these vehicles is “vocal ministry.” “Apostles used their mouths to share and communicate. They spend hours teaching, preaching and prophesying. Apostolic work is verbal work, and the apostle needs a ready mouth.”⁵⁷ This is based on Ephesians 6:19 where Paul emphasized that the Ephesians pray that he may open his mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the Gospel.

Secondly, Cannistraci suggests a “written ministry.” “The apostles distributed epistles and messages to their churches when they could not be there personally, keeping in touch through paper and ink (Acts 21:25; Galatians 6:11; I Peter 5:12; I John 2:21). Some of these communiqués are the Scriptures we use today. Although the Scriptures are complete, apostles still need to write down their lasting record of important truths for the benefit of others.”⁵⁸

After establishing the above as the vehicles that apostles use to carry out their ministry, Cannistraci then moves to the practical side of apostolic ministry. The points listed here are lengthy and lend to the “doing” aspect of this office. The author’s intent is

⁵⁶ Cannistraci, *The Gift of Apostle*, 90-91. The qualifications are close to a minister and that only a few major points separate them from “false teaching.” Because these points are so close, that is why we don’t completely exclude them. Sometimes it is a definitional difference. Other times, it is a major difference, as in Pensacola and Toronto.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 99.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 99-100.

to quote as much as possible concerning this side of the modern day apostle's ministry. Cannistraci begins this discussion by stating that apostles need to be "planting churches."⁵⁹ He states "apostles plant local churches because these churches are the building blocks of the Kingdom. As they plant, they are responsible for imparting the faith and laying a proper foundation for dynamic growth (Ephesians 2:20). Apostles are church planters (Acts 13:4-14:26). This is the aspect of the apostolic function that is most easily recognized as perennial."⁶⁰ Here Cannistraci mentions the idea of apostolic succession seen through the concept of church planting. This involves more than the points of beginning a church. It also involves the spiritual realm as well: "the work of planting a local church involves penetration into new territory . . . as apostles plant new churches, they must also serve as able pastors and evangelists to win souls and bring people to maturity in Christ."⁶¹ These church plants are not placed in arbitrary locations but following the example of the New Testament, apostles are placed in "strategic city centers, not remote places."⁶² He further states, "the modern apostle needs to follow the forms of the apostles of the First Century, laying proper foundations, reaching the unreached and concentrating on strategic centers of population."⁶³

As churches are planted the next duty is explained as, "overseeing and strengthening churches."⁶⁴ Cannistraci states, "apostles carry a deep love and concern for their churches . . . it must be nurtured and protected to ensure its survival . . . apostles

⁵⁹ Ibid., 100.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Ibid., 100-101.

⁶³ Ibid., 101

⁶⁴ Ibid.

guard their harvest, frequently checking up on the converts in an effort to see them established in Christ.”⁶⁵ As churches are planted and established in major locations throughout the world, the apostle’s attention is directed at the form and function of the churches. This major responsibility requires that the apostle possess certain spiritual gifts. These gifts are “grace for structuring and administration required to handle the needs of a growing assembly. A strong pastoral ability will help to protect and lead the sheep. Apostles will have the mantle of teacher as well, for they are concerned about proper doctrine, and want truth established with precision (see Acts 2:42; 15:1-31).”⁶⁶ As the apostle continues to plant and oversee his churches, the need for proper leadership becomes the focus.

The third responsibility of an apostle according to Cannistraci is just that, the developing of leaders. “A great portion of the apostle’s time is spent in establishing new leaders (see II Timothy 2:22).”⁶⁷ This is carried out so that “the guarantee of continuing increases in the apostles harvest”⁶⁸ is secure. This is likened to a “fathering” relationship. “Apostles must serve as fathers and teachers, producing spiritual children.”⁶⁹ The purpose of this is to provide the apostles with those that can assist them in the apostolic work. In addition Cannistraci states that “apostles will be concerned about supplying local church pastors, elders, deacons and workers to fully support the house of God.”⁷⁰ The underlying aim however is not for the churches to develop an overdependence of the apostle, “for they know they will not stay in one place forever.” The apostle’s aim however is “to

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 101.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

establish a successful process of discipleship whereby strong people are set up to serve the church when the apostle leaves for another place of planting.”⁷¹

The fourth responsibility of the apostle thus becomes ordaining ministries. “Once apostles have poured themselves into faithful servants, they will set these servants into church offices.”⁷² This includes the ordination of elders and deacons to minister in the respected churches. This is carried out according to Cannistraci in the following manner:

Apostles may assemble a prophetic presbytery to lay hands on those who are being ordained. Together, this team of ministers will impart spiritual gifts to the candidates (Romans 1:11; I Timothy 4:14; II Timothy 1:6), along with accompanying prophetic words (I Timothy 1:18). Ordination is a solemn responsibility and calls for adequate preparation through fasting and prayer (Acts 14:23).⁷³

The fifth responsibility then becomes supervising and coordinating ministries.⁷⁴ This is accomplished by the apostle taking on a “ministry manager”⁷⁵ role. This requires that the apostle be able to “act as an administrator, utilizing people to get things done . . . matching people to places and needs.”⁷⁶ This aspect cannot be done alone as the “apostle will have frequent need of faithful representatives who can fix problems and fill positions.”⁷⁷ Secondly this work requires the “supernatural grace of God upon the apostle’s life”⁷⁸ to fulfill this duty and all that it requires. Cannistraci stresses that “administration is essential here . . . skills related to delegation, oversight and proper

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Ibid., 102.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

accountability”⁷⁹ are needed for the ministry to succeed. Thus supervising any coordinating ministries is of the utmost importance to the apostolic office.

The sixth responsibility is that of “managing crisis.”⁸⁰ Apostles must be understood primarily as problem solvers, as apostolic work is filled with them. These problems include “economic crisis, leadership issues and violations of proper practice and conduct that will require the attention of the apostle.”⁸¹

The last of the apostle’s duties is the “networking with other ministries.”⁸² This aspect is based on the meeting of the apostles during the Jerusalem council. It is here that an example is seen of the “importance of collegiality in ministry.”⁸³ This particular aspect is of such importance that any apostle that would “separate himself and avoid fellowship with other ministries is manifesting poor character and should be considered suspect.”⁸⁴ Ministry is in need of all of her members, using their gifts to be effective for the Kingdom, “causing a spirit of cooperation and unity.”⁸⁵

It is at this point that Cannistraci explains the functions of apostles as it relates to their authority relative to their office. Five functions are listed:

First, apostles ordain order (I Corinthians 7:17, 11:34, 16:1).⁸⁶ Cannistraci explains “apostles have been given real authority to govern and influence everything

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Ibid., 103.

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Ibid., 155.

from doctrinal questions to practical issues of living for God.”⁸⁷ The key aspect here is to govern and influence everything pertaining to the church and its functions. Nothing is left outside of the apostle’s authority concerning order in the church.

Secondly, this authority allows apostles to settle doctrinal questions (Acts 15:1, 2, 6).⁸⁸ Again the Jerusalem meeting is the example. “The apostles convened in Jerusalem out of need for doctrinal clarity.”⁸⁹ Apostles operating today are urged to act in a similar function to establish “doctrinal harmony in God’s Word and unity among themselves.”⁹⁰

The third function is that apostles make decrees (Acts 16:4).⁹¹ As the apostles in Jerusalem reached unity on doctrine, decrees were sent out to the churches. Cannistraci explains that these decrees were “specific ordinances (literally dogmas) relative to the church and its members. If apostles ordain order, this order is communicated through the use of decrees.”⁹² These decrees in the modern apostolic movement have binding implications in the churches under the apostle’s authority. “Everyone involved is obliged to flow with this decision so that progress in the church can continue.”⁹³ The implications of this aspect is far reaching and has serious application for the local church. These will be presented in the following chapter.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ Ibid.

The fourth function relative to authority explained by Cannistraci is that modern day apostles “set deacons and elders into their offices.”⁹⁴ Cannistraci again points to the example set of the early apostles and their role in the birthing of the church. “Apostles initiated such occasions and were on hand for them, possessing the authority from God to impart release for service and recognition by God to those specially selected.”⁹⁵

The fifth and last duty of apostolic authority is that the “apostles delegate authority to sub-apostolic leaders.”⁹⁶ The apostle needs local overseers to handle the on-going work of God. Cannistraci believes that these men in the early church carried the “title of bishop for their oversight of multiple congregations.”⁹⁷ This was utilized as a mentoring program for future apostles. “Evidently such responsibility was a perfect source of training for men as they became apostles”⁹⁸ Thus, the authority of a modern day apostle flows to those that God has called into this ministry, establishing apostolic succession.

The duties as described by Cannistraci above place great value on the “workings” of the early church. Examining how the first apostles operated and functioned and applying these same principles today, “. . . we must investigate the principles that guided the apostles of the First Century and replicate these in our century. We must be willing as a movement to practice the principles of interdependent cooperation, voluntary submission, local autonomy and mutual accountability.”⁹⁹

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ Ibid., 155-156. Cannistraci does not give many details here concerning this function. See Chapter Eleven of his work for a summary and a distinction between offices.

⁹⁶ Ibid., 156.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ Ibid., 157.

After establishing the duties of the apostle relative to authority, Cannistraci describes the “manifestations of supernatural apostolic power.”¹⁰⁰ Cannistraci explains briefly the origin of this power, “clearly, supernatural power, which comes from God through the Holy Spirit, indwells the believer.”¹⁰¹ The working of the Holy Spirit is released in the apostolic ministry through “prayer, praise, and worship, those activities that involve us in His presence. Intimate relationship with Christ is the foundation for modern manifestations of supernatural power.”¹⁰²

The first of these manifestations, “apostles supernaturally attract large audiences.”¹⁰³ The office of apostle is not a quiet, behind the scenes ministry. This ministry/office is very public and “out in the open.” Cannistraci states, “. . . the supernatural anointing of the apostle, in the right setting, will often attract large groups of people.”¹⁰⁴ In referring to the early church, he explains that in Scripture whenever multitudes gathered, it was due to a demonstration of supernatural power.¹⁰⁵ “Simply put: miracles attract multitudes”¹⁰⁶ This is the key according to Cannistraci to pulling disinterested people together for a Gospel presentation. The apostle of today must use this supernatural aspect to attract multitudes of people, both saved and unsaved.

The second of these manifestations of supernatural outpouring in the modern day apostle is, “God uses apostles to supernaturally impart through the laying on of

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 163.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 162.

¹⁰² Ibid., 163.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid. 164.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

hands.”¹⁰⁷ Based on Romans 1:11, “I long to see you, that I may impart to you some spiritual gift, so that you may be established,” Cannistraci suggests that the modern day apostle should partake of this characteristic for supernatural results. Further in Acts 8, Philip’s Samaritan work produces converts who in turn were recipients of the Holy Spirit through Peter and John laying on of hands. These are given by Cannistraci as a few examples to be followed.

Cannistraci’s feeling on this manifestation is clear, “The laying on of hands is prominent throughout the New Testament. It always speaks of the impartation of supernatural power.”¹⁰⁸ Jesus directed His disciples to do this (Mark 16:18) and according to Cannistraci was a foundational doctrine in the early church, as was repentance and Resurrection (Hebrews 6:1-2). Modern day apostles will utilize this manifestation for “blessing, healing, deliverance, ordination and impartation within the church. It is a needed practice today.”¹⁰⁹

Thirdly, “apostles possess a supernatural spirit of Revelation.”¹¹⁰ This aspect is an extremely important part of the apostle’s ministry and function according to Cannistraci. Because of the implications of this aspect, large sections will need to be quoted to communicate its meaning. Cannistraci again looks to the example of the original apostles in Scripture. He states, “Apostles in Scripture also experienced the supernatural manifestation of the Spirit of revelation, along with its power, they received truth from God, delivered it to the saints and taught the saints to experience it for themselves.”¹¹¹

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 165.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

Cannistraci points to II Corinthians 12:1-7 and I Corinthians 11:23 as Paul speaks to this subject. The “special” revelation received by the early apostles consisted of: “visions (Acts 10:9-22; 18:9-10; II Corinthians 12:1 and the entire book of Revelation) . . . word of knowledge (Acts 5:3) and many apostles moved in the supernatural prophetic gifts at times as well (I Timothy 1:18; II Timothy 1:6).”¹¹² This revelation was the vehicle that was used to write the New Testament Scripture. This is because of “their ability to receive revelations from the Spirit of God.”¹¹³ This brings Cannistraci to this conclusion:

Whether the apostles were receiving revelation in various ways, communicating what they had received or teaching believers to experience the same thing, one thing is clear. The apostles in the Bible move in supernatural revelation from the Holy Spirit, and depended upon it for success in ministry. Although the canon of Scripture is unchangeable and complete and today’s apostles are not authorized to write their revelations in the form of Scripture as did their counterparts the prophets, they are nonetheless authorized by pattern and example of the First Century apostles to receive supernatural revelations if they are consistent with Scripture.¹¹⁴

The fourth aspect/duty of a modern day apostle as it relates to supernatural power is, “apostles exercise supernatural command over sickness.”¹¹⁵ This aspect of the apostle should not come as a surprise to anyone “given the example of the great apostle Jesus”¹¹⁶ of healing the lame, blind and deaf. This aspect is of great value, as such displays of God’s power attract multitudes. This is done to “aid the apostles in their tasks of mass

¹¹² Ibid., 166.

¹¹³ Ibid. 164.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 166-167.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 167.

¹¹⁶ Cannistraci (based on his definition) earlier in this work points to Christ as the predominate apostle. An apostle is one sent out, an ambassador. Christ was sent by God the Father for the salvation of men thus giving Him an apostolic ministry.

evangelization by revealing the love of God in a practical way.”¹¹⁷ Noticing that mass conversions took place after supernatural miracles were performed, Cannistraci looks at specific actions of Christ, Peter, John, Paul and Barnabas. This serves another function as well. “Supernatural power helps to validate and authenticate the ministry of an apostle.”¹¹⁸ Cannistraci feels that if more were in favor of supernatural power within the church, the church would experience the same results of the original apostles: seeing multitudes coming to Christ.

Fifth, “Apostles demonstrate supernatural power over demons.”¹¹⁹ Within the book of Acts, Cannistraci, pinpoints four examples of the early apostles’ work against demons. These passages are the following:

Also a multitude gathered from the surrounding cities to Jerusalem, bringing sick people and those who were tormented by *unclean spirits*, and they were all healed (5:16, emphasis added).

For unclean spirits, crying with a loud voice, came out of many who were possessed and many who were paralyzed and lame were *healed* (8:7, emphasis added).

Now it happened, as we went to prayer, that a certain slave girl, *possessed with a spirit of divination* met us, who brought her masters much profit by fortune-telling. This girl followed Paul and us, and cried out, saying, “These men are the servants of the Most High God, who proclaim to us the way of salvation.” And this she did for many days. But Paul, greatly rebuked her in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her *and he came out that very hour* (16:16-18, emphasis added).

So that even handkerchiefs or aprons were brought from his body to the sick, and the diseases left them and the *evil spirits went out of them* (19:12, emphasis added).¹²⁰

¹¹⁷ Cannistraci, 90-91.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 168.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰ Ibid., These verses appear here as they do in the text. Cannistraci uses these to show the supernatural power of the apostles in Acts, thus claiming their usage today.

These encounters produced physical and spiritual healing. This manifestation will play itself out in the modern apostolic movement as the ministry moves forward and clashes with the powers of darkness. “Apostles will be attacked by darkness, and they will respond with apostolic anointing and power.”¹²¹ This will depend on the geographical location of the apostle’s ministry. Cannistraci explains, “Most likely in the United States and in other western cultures the wicked spirits that drive the growing New Age movement . . . in eastern cultures other kinds of battles may emerge.”¹²² Whatever the supernatural battle may be, the apostles of today will claim victory as they have been given power and authority to such work by Jesus (Luke 10:19).

The sixth manifestation is that “apostles release supernatural judgement against wickedness.”¹²³ Looking at two examples from Scripture, Cannistraci explains this manifestation. “When these men of power were confronted with sin that challenged God and had to be supernaturally answered, they responded with displays of power and judgement that were awesome and somewhat unsettling to consider.”¹²⁴ The two examples are found in Acts 5 and Acts 13:8-11, both showing God’s swift and exacting judgement on wickedness and sin. As Peter presided over Ananias and Sapphira’s situation as recorded in Acts 5, God brought death upon them. Elymas was smitten with blindness in Acts 13 through the judgement of the apostle Paul. This aspect of apostolic ministry is due to the fact that “some sin is so heinous that God brings immediate

¹²¹ Ibid., 165.

¹²² Ibid., 169.

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

judgement. In at least these two cases, God used an apostle to decree His sovereign judgement on sin.”¹²⁵

The seventh and last manifestation of apostolic power according to Cannistraci is that “apostles manifest supernatural power to raise the dead.”¹²⁶ This aspect of apostolic ministry is often overlooked according to Cannistraci. “Not every apostle in the New Testament is on record as having raised the dead. We cannot ignore the fact, however, that both the apostle Paul and the apostle Peter raised people from the dead.”¹²⁷ This ministry was given to the apostles through Christ, “Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out demons. Freely you have received, freely give (Matthew 10:8).”¹²⁸ Cannistraci points to this manifestation as a clear indication of authentic ministry and feels “. . . I personally believe we will be hearing much more of this kind of power . . .”¹²⁹ as we move into the final days.

In summary of the above seven points, Cannistraci firmly believes that apostolic succession has and is occurring to certain called individuals and the church body today. He believes this is evidenced through the numerous references made to the work of the twelve apostles found in the book of Acts. Any and all manifestations of supernatural power performed by these early apostles are an example, a blueprint of activities and “wonders” that the modern day apostles should expect to reproduce within their ministry.

At this point Cannistraci includes a section on what a false apostle will practice. This is included here as a negative example of what a modern day apostle is not. False

¹²⁵ Ibid., 170.

¹²⁶ Ibid.

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

¹²⁹ Ibid.

apostles can be determined by their actions and conduct. “Their false practices are extensions of their false characters. Scripture reveals many practices that characterize false apostles . . .”¹³⁰ The listing of a few of these false practices are listed:

1. Secrecy and mystery in their doctrines and lives instead of openness (Galatians 2:4-5). “Keeping secrets” is a good indication that something is wrong.
2. A spirit of bondage or control of others instead of promoting true liberty (Galatians 2:4-5).
3. Manipulation through flattering words instead of speaking the truth in love (Romans 16:18, Ephesians 4:15).
4. A sexually-seductive influence of women instead of purity and respect (Matthew 23:14, II Timothy 3:6).
5. Deception and pretense instead of honesty and integrity (Matthew 7:15, 24:11).
6. False miracles borne out of a demonic empowerment instead of true miracles by the power of the Holy Spirit (Matthew 24:24).
7. Superstitions, false philosophies and carnal thinking instead of the mind of Christ and heavenly wisdom (Colossians 2:8, James 3:15).
8. Empty traditions and lifeless symbolism instead of meaningful worship (Colossians 2:8, 18).
9. Penetrating the local church with their message instead of penetrating society with the Gospel (Acts 20:29, Jude 4).

¹³⁰ Ibid., 138.

10. Detracting and drawing away from the local church and toward themselves instead of building it up and drawing people to Christ.¹³¹

The third and last of these proponents of the modern apostolic movement to be examined is C. Peter Wagner.

Wagner, who is considered an expert in the field of Church Growth, believes apostolic reformation is the new revival for the church. Even though a majority of his work focuses on the “networking” of apostolic churches and how they should interact with one another, he does give further explanation and insight into the office of apostle. In his primary work on the subject, entitled, Churchquake, Wagner answers five questions concerning the apostolic office.

The first question addressed by Wagner centers around the specifics of who is an apostle. It is here that Wagner’s beliefs about modern day apostles is explained in detail. This section of Churchquake explains the gift of apostle, the difference between the apostle and missionary and the authority of the apostolic office.

Secondly, Wagner answers the question of “are there apostles today?”¹³² The information contained in this section is explained in this paper (see Churchquake, 104-107). Here Wagner discusses and refutes those that hold to a “cessationist” view. As Wagner explains, “They” (cessationists) hold the position that many of the spiritual gifts that were in operation in the First Century Church were designed by God so that their use would “cease” with the close of the apostolic age and with the completion of the New Testament canon of Scripture.”¹³³ Even though the gifts that are subject to this

¹³¹ Ibid. These ten points appear here as they do in the text.

¹³² Wagner, Churchquake, 107.

¹³³ Ibid., 107-108.

“cessation” vary, Wagner admits that the gift of apostle appears on most lists. Further, Wagner mentions that some feel the gift of apostle is available today, however the title should not be used. “Reinhold Ulonska, a German Pentecostal theologian, says, ‘If we understand that (apostle) means ministry and not so much the title we may say ‘yes’, there are apostles today’. . . . Today the title apostle seems to have a ring of glory and authority which true apostles would never claim for themselves.”¹³⁴ Felipe Ferrez and the Assemblies of God share this view with Wagner.¹³⁵

However, Wagner makes his position clear through the following statement, “I agree with Bishop Carlis Moody of the Church of God in Christ, who says, “Yes, there are apostles in the church today! They manifest extraordinary spiritual leadership, and are anointed with the power of the Holy Spirit to confront the powers of Satan, by confirming the Gospel by signs and miracles and establishing churches according to the New Testament pattern and doctrine of the apostles.”¹³⁶ In this section Wagner also explains the difference between the gift of apostle and the office of apostle. Wagner's beliefs on this were discussed in earlier pages.¹³⁷

The third question addressed by Wagner is “How important are apostles?”¹³⁸ After a brief explanation of the history of the church, Wagner proceeds to explain that apostles are unique. He explains, “It could be argued, quite convincingly, that the church has always had apostles, but they have not been recognized as such. Nevertheless, true as the assertion might be, once the apostles receive the recognition they deserve, the church is

¹³⁴ Reinhold Ulonska, World Pentecost (Autumn 1996), 17.

¹³⁵ Wagner, 108.

¹³⁶ Ibid., 109.

¹³⁷ See Churchquake for Wagner's explanations.

¹³⁸ Ibid., 110.

prepared to move to a higher level. This is what is happening in our day.”¹³⁹ In making this claim, Wagner turns to Eckhardt for support by quoting him. “There is no substitute for the apostle. The prophet, evangelist, pastor, or teacher cannot do what the apostle can do.”¹⁴⁰ In this much needed apostolic recognition comes a new level of “doing church.” Predictably, recognizing apostles and thereby bringing the church to a new level will stir up opposition in the invisible world.”¹⁴¹ Wagner states that this opposition is one reason that the body of Christ is slow to recognize the apostle today. For “a New Testament apostolic function fully deployed within the church today would significantly impact the dominion of darkness. Satan knows this, and I am sure all of Hell shudders at the prospect of a revitalization of apostles and apostolic people.”¹⁴²

In closing this section, Wagner quotes two men that align with his position. These are important quotes as Wagner uses them to support his claims. The first comes from Bill Hamon, a long-time proponent of the apostolic movement: “When apostles are restored in their fullness, it will activate many things. It will cause many prophecies concerning the end times to start coming to pass at an accelerated rate. The apostle is the last of the five-fold ministries to be restored.”¹⁴³

The second quote comes from John Kelly, an apostle who oversees Antioch churches and their ministries: “We live in a critical hour. There needs to be a demonstration in this generation of the ministry of the apostle with miraculous, prophetic power and world-changing productivity. When the apostles begin to arise by the

¹³⁹ Ibid., 111.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

¹⁴² Ibid.

¹⁴³ Hamon, Apostles, 31.

thousands, we will be able to take the nations for Jesus Christ. The harvest cannot be brought in apart from this foundational office.”¹⁴⁴

The fourth question presented by Wagner is “How does an apostle gain authority?”¹⁴⁵ The answer to this question is the means to removing “a larger number of the doubts that some continue to harbor regarding the validity of true apostolic ministry . . .”¹⁴⁶ It is here that Wagner aims to make us align with his theology pertaining to the modern day apostle. He starts this section explaining “self-appointed apostles.” Wagner claims that many attempting to dismiss this office and giftedness do so by using the forementioned designation, “self-appointed apostles.” Wagner explains it this way: “the implication is that the so-called apostolic office has no basis other than an internal personal desire for an imposing title or for undue power.”¹⁴⁷ In this rise of the modern day apostle, Wagner points to God as the source of appointing and equipping of the modern day apostle, pointing to I Corinthians 12:28, which says, “And God has appointed these in the church: first apostles, second prophets, third teachers”¹⁴⁸ In presenting this Wagner makes the following argument, “If we are going to label apostles as ‘self-appointed’ we might as well do the same with teachers, but for some reason we are not inclined to do that.”¹⁴⁹ Thus God is the one who does the appointing and anointing in the work of the modern day apostle.

¹⁴⁴ John Kelly, informational packet from Antioch Church Ministries, n.p., n.d.

¹⁴⁵ Wagner, 112.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., 113.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

It is at this point that Wagner sets forth a few key concepts regarding how apostles receive their authority. First, “apostles are charismatic leaders,”¹⁵⁰ second the “Peter principle,”¹⁵¹ and third, apostolic authority is validated by fruit. According to Wagner, the fruit must be accompanied by a word of knowledge or revelation from God concerning the apostle’s calling. Wagner utilizes a quote from Bill Hamon to back his belief, “The only way a five-fold minister’s calling can be determined is by receiving a revelation from God, training for that ministry and then evidencing the fruit of that ministry.”¹⁵² This idea of extra-biblical revelation is further illustrated through the “sacred consecration service of his friend Luciano Padilla, Jr. to the office of apostle.”¹⁵³ Wagner relates the event as follows:

Four bishops from other churches presided at the service and consecrated Luciano as an apostle. Their first question to the elder representing Padilla’s congregation was “Do you have a word from the Lord?” This is in line with Bill Hamons’ statement that the apostolic calling should first come through receiving a revelation from God.¹⁵⁴

Thus a revelation from God about the apostle must be received in order to confirm his fruit. The purpose here is not to confront this concept but merely to state Wagner’s position. A rebuttal to these various claims will be addressed in the following chapter. Nevertheless, extra-biblical revelation is the key component to recognizing the apostle’s ministry.

¹⁵⁰ See work for Wagner’s explanation of this key concept.

¹⁵¹ See work for Wagner’s explanation of this key concept.

¹⁵² Hamon, 73-74.

¹⁵³ Wagner, 114.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., 116.

The fifth and last question answered by Wagner states, “What are the qualities of a genuine apostle?”¹⁵⁵ One quality that is suggested by Wagner is “godly character.”¹⁵⁶ “Although the New Testament does not have a specific list of personal qualifications for an apostle, the qualifications for bishop clearly apply.”¹⁵⁷ According to Wagner these are the same qualifications as found in I Timothy 3:2-6. Further, the character trait of genuine humility is also needed by the modern day apostle. This “genuine humility is one of the chief characteristics of an apostle” as evidenced by Jesus’ statement in Matthew 20:25-26, which says, “whoever desires to be great among you, let him be your servant.”¹⁵⁸ Here a parallel is drawn between the authority of an apostle and the amount of humility that they must possess. “The more authority, the more intentional humility is called for.”¹⁵⁹ As apostles become servants to their people, or at best perceived by their followers as servants, authority is released because the followers believe that every decision the apostle makes will be for their ultimate benefit.”¹⁶⁰

In addition, apostles are “parents.”¹⁶¹ As new apostolic networks form, the apostle becomes the father or parent of this new family of believers. Wagner finds support for this view in Leo Dawson of Morning Star International. Dawson makes the following statement, “a spiritual DNA that is shared among those in our particular ‘family’ of churches, the father of the apostolic family, is seen as imparting his spiritual DNA to those joined to him, and those joined to him see themselves as sharing both a common history as

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., 117.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., 118.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., 119

¹⁵⁹ Ibid.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

¹⁶¹ Ibid., 119-120.

well as a common destiny.”¹⁶² These spiritual parents in turn provide opportunity to their spiritual children through four services. These are:

1. protection
2. role modeling
3. correction (accountability)
4. empowerment¹⁶³

Lastly, Wagner says that “true apostles are holy.”¹⁶⁴ Of this area Wagner makes the following observations:

- A. Apostolic character, a prerequisite for being recognized as an apostle, has caused them to rise above the pack.
- B. They are not proud or boastful.
- C. Recognize that, by God’s grace, they must be an example in their godliness and holiness of every day life.¹⁶⁵

Summary

This chapter has been an attempt to explain the position of those advocating the office of the modern day apostle. With the increasing number of proponents, it was necessary to include in this discussion three of the most widely published and recognized advocates of this position: Eckhardt, Cannistraci and Wagner. These men served as the cornerstone for information concerning this topic.

¹⁶² Ibid.

¹⁶³ Ibid., 120.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid., 121.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid.

First, this author has explained the current need for apostles as explained by these men. Wagner suggested that a “formula for growth is unity (joined together) plus gifts (every part does its share) equals growth.”¹⁶⁶ Cannistraci builds upon this idea of unity under the guidance of an apostle. He states, “The apostle is a central part of the manifold wisdom of God, not only to raise the church to maturity but to defeat the enemy and his plan to control the earth.”¹⁶⁷ Thus the need for modern day apostles according to these men is to fulfill the Great Commission which has been neglected due to the tradition and unbelief of this office by mainline Protestant churches. In order for the body of Christ not to be overwhelmed and fearful of this task, a resurgence of the office of the apostle is necessary. This resurgence will produce unity and maturity resulting in the effective completion of the Great Commission. Unity of believers, resulting in everyone doing their part to carry the Gospel to all nations, fuels the modern day apostolic movement.

Second, a definition of the term apostle was examined according to its usage by all three men. A general definition was explained along with a specific or primary definition. Eckhardt provides us with both the general and its specific usage. He states, “*Apostolos*, meaning a delegate or ambassador of the Gospel, officially a commissioner of Christ (with miraculous powers), messenger, he that is sent.”¹⁶⁸ Upon this “sending,” when done, the “envoy has full powers and is the personal representative of the one sending him . . . being sent out with divine authorization.”¹⁶⁹ Thus, according to these men a general definition (one being sent), and a specific definition (sent with miraculous powers) have been

¹⁶⁶ Wagner, 15.

¹⁶⁷ Cannistraci, 129.

¹⁶⁸ Eckhardt, 23.

¹⁶⁹ Wagner, 104.

explained. Further, each proponent's understanding of the office of apostle and its practical implications has been explained.

This brings the third section of examination, the duties and functions of the modern day apostles. It was here that the practical application of this office was discussed in length. This section is of the utmost importance in understanding the scope and depth of this issue. It is here that the definition is explained in and through the practical application of this office. Definitions are words of explanation, while duties and functions of this office are the truth of this issue is clearly seen. The first understanding of the duties and functions of this office was presented by Eckhardt.¹⁷⁰ In looking at Eckhardt's ideas on the duties/functions of the modern day apostles, it is important to notice the power and authority that is granted this position. This can be seen through both the office (corporate) and function (personal) as it is carried out in the apostle's ministry. Further, Eckhardt places great importance on "signs and wonders as evidence of one's calling.

Next, an understanding of these duties/functions was presented according to Cannistraci.¹⁷¹ It is here that Cannistraci explains in detail the functions of the modern day apostle. A majority of Cannistraci's focus rests on drawing comparisons between the apostles of the New Testament and those of today. His feeling is that any privilege bestowed or utilized during the First Century is viable for today (i.e., sign-gifts, tongues, healings, raising from the dead and revelation). One area that sets Cannistraci apart from Eckhardt and Wagner was his inclusion of what a false apostle would practice.¹⁷²

¹⁷⁰ See pages 25-33 of this work.

¹⁷¹ See pages 33-47 of this work.

¹⁷² See pages 47-49 of this work.

Third, Wagner's understandings of apostolic function were presented.¹⁷³ It is here that Wagner presents and answers five questions concerning the modern day apostle. Wagner's focus is on the authority granted these apostles as they do the work of the ministry. In addition, Wagner refutes those who would hold to "a cessationist view" of sign-gifts as denying them their position and authority within the church. Even though each proponent holds to extra-biblical revelation or "words of knowledge," Wagner sees this as a key indication of one's function and calling.

As demonstrated throughout this chapter, these proponents believe that the gift of apostle, with all of its signs, wonders and authority, is available for today. Further, they believe that the office of apostle, with authority over numerous churches and pastors, currently exists. However, these proponents present only half of the picture as it pertains to this issue. It is here that the focus changes to present the other half of this issue.

¹⁷³ See pages 49-59 of this work.

CHAPTER THREE

ANSWERING PROPONENTS OF THE OFFICE OF MODERN DAY APOSTLES

Introduction

It is this author's intent to address some of the key issues raised in the preceding chapter. This will be accomplished through the discussion of five key points raised by Wagner, Eckhardt and Cannistraci concerning this issue. It however is not this author's intent to expose every belief that is in error, but rather to look at these four areas as a means to present a full picture of the modern day apostle question. This examination will be accomplished by looking at the meaning of the word apostle as it appears in the New Testament. Secondly, an examination of a definition of the gift of apostle will be discussed in light of the usage both in the general and specific sense. Third, a review of the First Century church and its teachings will be presented. Finally, a biblical qualification of an apostle will be presented pointing to a cessationist understanding.

New Testament Usage of the Term Apostle and Qualifications of the Office.

One cannot find any fault in the desire of Eckhardt, Wagner and Cannistraci in wanting to see the Great Commission fulfilled through the unity of the body of Christ.

However, in expressing this desire they have taken the general sense of the term apostle (one sent forth) and given it the specific definition. In doing so, none of these men pursue the word “apostle” any further than a general definition. Thus this section will attempt to examine, in detail, the word “apostle” and its New Testament usage and the biblical qualifications for claiming its authority.

Gerhard Kittel, in his work, Bible Keywords, presents an in-depth study of the word “apostle.” Of this term he writes, “the word ἀποστολος (apostolos) occurs in the New Testament 79 times, apart from a few secondary readings characteristic of Luke (i.e., Luke 9; Acts v.34); Matthew, Mark and John each have it once; Paul 29 times, including four occurrences in Ephesians, once in Colossians and five times in the Pastoral Epistles; Luke 34 times, 28 in Acts and six in the Gospels, I Peter and Jude each one; II Peter twice, Revelation three times.”¹⁷⁴ In making this distinction, Kittel points out that Paul and Luke account for four-fifths of the examples of the word and provide the majority of the material for studying this word.¹⁷⁵

Based on this information, Kittel presents five key points of the term apostle that shed light on its meaning in Scripture and the implications that would follow. These points are as follows:

First, Kittel states that “the term “apostle” never means in the New Testament the act of sending or the business involved, but is always the designation of a man who is sent as an ambassador, and indeed an authorized ambassador.”¹⁷⁶

¹⁷⁴ Gerhard Kittel. Bible Keywords, translated by J.R. Coats and H.P. Kingdom (New York: Harper & Row, 1950), 25.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid., 25-26.

Secondly, this is seen in the relation between the Greek term apostle and the word Shaliah of Rabbinic Judaism. Of this relationship Kittel states, "The complete identity of ἀποστολος (apostolos) with Shallah is shown at John xiii, 16: the Greek word here simply represents the Jewish term and legally describes the valid representation of another person and his business."¹⁷⁷ Based on this comparison a conclusion can be drawn that "the sender is greater than the one who is sent."¹⁷⁸ Thus, the emphasis is on the commissioning ambassador, not the ambassador himself. The ambassador is under the jurisdiction of the one who sent him and in fact acquired his position solely from the one over him.

Apostolos in corresponding to Shallah also means "the one who is commissioned by a community."¹⁷⁹ This is evidenced in II Corinthians viii, 23, where Paul applies this usage to the believers who provided gifts to those at Jerusalem. "In this case 'apostle', having to do with expressions of love is not only a legal, but also a religious term."¹⁸⁰ Thus, moving to the term as it pertains to the spiritual aspect of its New Testament usage. It is important, however, to understand the relationship of these two terms as it pertains to the legal aspect mentioned above. For it is here that we understand the root meaning of the term.

Of the specific New Testament usage, Kittel makes the following observations,

Apostles are the bearers of the New Testament Gospel. First of all, the name is borne by the circle of the Twelve (the number is maintained after the disappearance of Judas, Acts i, 26; I Corinthians, xv, 5), the sender here

¹⁷⁷ Ibid., 26.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., 27.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid.

is of course Jesus. The twelve appear here as “apostles” who constitute a limited collegium, beside which another body, that of elders, can take its place (Acts xv, 2, 4, 6, 22; xvi, 4).¹⁸¹

Thus, apostles were the first sent by Christ to carry the Gospel message to the world. As to authority, in lieu of apostolic representation, a body of elders could “stand in” for the apostle and in essence perform his function. Further explanation is given by Kittel,

Apostle is the title given to the first Christian missionaries or their leading representatives, and also to men who always belonged to a wider circle of disciples. It is at this point of understanding a distinction must be drawn between ‘levels’ or the twelve and these wider groups. It is just at this point that we see the difference between these men and the first group. If there is no difference in designation, no reference to a wider and a narrower circle, then ground of this must be found in the apostleship itself, which is common to both and can be nothing else than encounter with the risen Christ and the reception of a commission from him himself.¹⁸²

This is evidenced “that in spite of the naming of Barnabas (I Corinthians 9, 5), James, Junias and Andronicus as apostles, *apollos* is never so designated . . . nor is the name applied to Timothy . . . he is called brother (II Corinthians 1; Colossians 1; Philemon 1), slave of Christ Jesus (Philippians I, 1) and even God’s fellow worker (I Thessalonians iii, 2); but these are not equivalents of the title of apostle.”¹⁸³

Thus, commissioning by the risen Christ becomes the designation factor between these border groups of apostles and the original twelve. Paul’s qualifications become satisfied by meeting with the risen Christ in I Corinthians 9:1 and 15:8. Here the key factor becomes apparent between the specific sense of the term and its general meaning. Kittel explains it this way:

¹⁸¹ Ibid.

¹⁸² Ibid., 28.

¹⁸³ Ibid., 28-29.

What has just been stated means that the apostolate is not an office created by a community or a synonym for its leaders, but an appointment of Jesus creating the church. For that reason the apostles rank with the Old Testament prophets (Ephesians ii, 20, iii, 5), whose office became a preparation for the coming of Christ on the ground of their having been sent.¹⁸⁴

Of these apostolic qualifications, concerning the specific meaning, John MacArthur adds: “The qualifications for that apostleship were having been chosen directly by Christ and having witnessed the resurrected Christ (Mark 3:13; Acts 1:22-24). Paul was the last to meet those qualifications (Romans 1:1).”¹⁸⁵

Leslie Flynn in the book Nineteen Gifts of the Spirit presents seven aspects/conditions that were unique of the apostles that carried the title and gift in the specific or primary sense.

1. They had been with Jesus from the beginning. Based on Acts 1:21, 22 as Peter listed the qualifications for replacement of Judas.

2. They had a personal call from Christ. Christ chose the twelve “that they should be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach” (Mark 3:14). He commissioned them, “as my Father sends me, even so I send you” (John 20:21).

3. They were witnesses of the Resurrection (Acts 1:22).

4. They laid the doctrinal foundation of the church (John 14:26, 16:13). The major fulfillment of this promise was the New Testament revelation inspired by the Holy Spirit. Later-century Christians admitted to the sacred canon only those writings which they knew emanated from the apostolic circle, or from their close associates such as Mark,

¹⁸⁴ Ibid., 29.

¹⁸⁵ John MacArthur, Jr., The MacArthur New Testament Commentary: Ephesians (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1986), 141.

Luke, and James, the brother of Jesus. The test of New Testament canonicity was apostolicity.

5. They laid the structural foundation of the church. This involved the use of the keys (Matthew 16:18, 19) in opening the door of the Gospel to Jesus (Acts 2:38-41), to half-Jewish Samaritans (Acts 8:14-17) and to Gentiles (Acts 10:44-48). The church was built upon the foundations of the apostles and prophets (Eph. 2:20).

6. They had power to work miracles. After Pentecost, “many wonders and signs were done by the apostles” (Acts 2:43). Three chapters later we read, “and by the hands of the apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the people” (5:12). Another three chapters later we are told “that through laying on of the apostle’s hands, the Holy Ghost was given” (8:18). The purpose of this miraculous power was to authenticate the apostolic witness (II Corinthians 12:12; Hebrews 2:4). A major segment of the church holds that when the apostles died, the sign-gifts diminished dramatically or disappeared.

7. They will one day sit on 12 thrones judging the 12 tribes of Israel (Luke 22:29, 30). Also their names will be inscribed on the 12 foundations of the New Jerusalem (Revelation 21:14). The apostles were unique in these ways. The word apostle had an official usage limited to the twelve (Acts 9:27, I Corinthians 15:7). No one of a later generation could meet their qualifications. Thus there could never be any such thing as apostolic successors. The office could not be repeated nor transmitted. When the apostles died, the office of apostleship died with them. Those who made false claim to

this office were called liars (Revelation 2:2).¹⁸⁶ Thus according to Flynn, the specific or primary sense of the term apostle applies only to the twelve.

Park Miller also echoes this viewpoint. He states, “. . . that the apostleship was a temporary office in the church is evident from the requirements for this office, Acts 1:21, 22.”¹⁸⁷ Of these specific requirements, Miller writes the following:

An apostle must have been with Jesus from the beginning, so that he could be a first-hand witness of what Jesus had said and done. It was necessary also that he should have continued with Jesus until his death and Resurrection, so that he might witness to these two great facts in life and ministry of Jesus.¹⁸⁸

Upon making this observation, Miller makes the following conclusion,

The apostleship, therefore, could not be a permanent office in the church, but the twelve constitute the nucleus of the organization at the beginning of the New Testament church. Paul was the special apostle to the Gentiles. While he had not followed with Jesus from the beginning, he received his Gospel message directly from Christ, and through his vision of Jesus on the way to Damascus became a witness to his Resurrection (I Corinthians 9:1; 15:1-10; Acts 9:1-9).¹⁸⁹

Marvin Vincent lists the qualifications for the apostolic office in the primary sense of the term as follows, “The distinguishing features of an apostle were, a commission directly from Christ: being a witness of the Resurrection: special inspiration: supreme authority: accrediting by miracles: unlimited commission to preach and to found churches.”¹⁹⁰

¹⁸⁶ Leslie Flynn. 19 Gifts of the Spirit: Which Do You Have? (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1974), 39-40.

¹⁸⁷ Park Hays Miller. The New Testament Church: Its Teaching and Its Scriptures (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press, 1939), 28.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid., 28-29.

¹⁹⁰ Marvin Vincent. Word Studies in the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing, 1965), 389.

As we have seen through the writings of Kittel, MacArthur, Flynn, Miller, and Vincent, there exists a difference between the specific/primary sense of the term apostle and its general meaning. As to the general meaning of the term, MacArthur, Miller and Flynn supply relevant information,

The term apostle is used in a more general sense of other men in the early church, such as Barnabas (Acts 14:4), Silas and Timothy (I Thessalonians 2:6), and a few other outstanding leaders (Romans 16:7; II Corinthians 8:23; Philippians 2:25). The false apostles spoken of in II Corinthians 11:13 no doubt counterfeited this class of apostleship, since the others were limited to thirteen and were well known. The true apostles in the second group were called "messengers (*apostoli*) of the churches" (II Corinthians 8:23), whereas the thirteen were apostles of Jesus Christ (Galatians 1:1; I Peter 1:1).¹⁹¹

Here MacArthur states the distinction between the primary and general meaning of the term, the qualifications as mentioned above. However, MacArthur mentions some aspects that were the same between these two "classes" of apostles,

Apostles in both groups were authenticated by signs and wonders and miracles (II Corinthians 12:12), but neither group was self-perpetuating. In either sense is the term apostle used in the book of Acts after 16:4. Nor is there any New Testament record of an apostle in either group being replaced when he died.¹⁹²

This author recognizes this to be an argument from silence. This is used to illustrate the point of current discussion, not as proof. Even though MacArthur believes that the gift and office of apostle ceased, as mentioned above, the church must recognize and honor the ministry that was wrought through them,

From its inception of Pentecost the church has been indebted to the apostles, through whom Christ established the fullness of New Testament doctrine (see Acts 2:42). Those uniquely called and empowered men recorded God's final revelation as He revealed it to them . . . both apostles

¹⁹¹ Ibid., 141.

¹⁹² Ibid.

and prophets have passed from the scene (Ephesians 2:20), but the foundation they laid is that on which all of Christ's church has been built.¹⁹³

Likewise, Miller points out that a secondary sense of the term apostle also existed.

"The term apostle was sometimes used in a less technical sense in the New Testament, the word having in these instances the ordinary sense of 'one sent'. Thus it is applied to Barnabas (Acts 13:3 and 14:4, 14)."¹⁹⁴ Both "classes" according to Miller shared various functions within the First Century church,

. . . the apostles were primarily teachers, for they had been with Jesus and learned of him, and they were witnesses of the Resurrection. They were able to pass on to others the teachings of Jesus, to tell of his life and ministry, and to witness to his Resurrection. So the church, as it began its ministry, was organized first for its primary task of teaching under the leadership and direction and authority of the apostles.¹⁹⁵

Further duties attributed to the apostles according to Miller are,

The worship of the church and the administering of the sacraments were also under the direction of the apostles . . . called the people to repentance and baptism . . . led in the observance of the Lord's Supper . . . had direction of the ministry of the word and the prayers.¹⁹⁶

Thus the very needs of the early believers/church were met through the ministry of both classes of apostles.

In further explanation of the general meaning of the term apostle, Flynn draws correlation between this and the gift of missionary. A majority today believe that the

¹⁹³ Ibid., 142.

¹⁹⁴ Park, 29.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid.

present day gift/office of missionary is equal to the general meaning of apostle. "The missionary gift is the continuing aspect of the apostleship."¹⁹⁷ According to Flynn,

The early ministry of the twelve apostles, the restricted and broader aspects of their office blended as they presided at the laying of the doctrinal and structural foundation of the first church at Jerusalem and its extension to Samaritans and Gentiles. As the record proceeds, their narrow, official function decreases.¹⁹⁸

As these ministry foundations were being laid, the focus of the gift of apostle, in the specific sense decreased. In essence, fulfilling the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20) dictates that the focus changes to the more general sense of the term.

No longer together, with the special mission fulfilled, they scattered to perform the broader, itinerant, missionary ministry, establishing congregations in regions beyond . . . doubtless, during the period covered by the last half of Acts, the dispersed twelve exercised the same missionary gift as Paul, making church-planting tours to various parts of the known world.¹⁹⁹

As the obedience to the carrying out of the Great Commission took place, the need for the specific usage ceased to exist. It is this theological viewpoint that we will discuss in the next chapter.

Cessationist Viewpoint Based on Gifts/History

It is of utmost importance to define this view with regard to apostolic ministry and the "sign-gifts" used. This section is not intended to be an exclusive discussion on sign-gifts and the ministry of such today, but rather to give a basic understanding of this viewpoint to explain the positioning of this theology. Dr. Elmer Towns in his work, Theology for Today makes the following observations concerning the continuation of

¹⁹⁷ Flynn, 42.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid.

sign-gifts: “The miraculous sign-gifts were present in the First Century to confirm apostolic revelation, but are no longer to be expected today.”²⁰⁰ Towns believes this to be true based on a principle that he terms the “scaffolding principle.” Of this principle he states, “When constructing a building, it is necessary to erect a scaffolding to aid construction. When the building is built, the scaffolding is removed. The sign-gifts were the spiritual scaffolding that God used as His authority to build the church.”²⁰¹ Thus these gifts were temporary and given for a specific purpose. “When the authority of the written Word of God was complete, God took the scaffolding down.”²⁰² Towns provides a list of the gifts that were part of the “scaffolding principle” or gifts that are no longer available today. These include “apostles, healing, tongues, miracles and the interpretation of tongues.”²⁰³

John Napier in his work, The Charismatic Challenge, echoes the same viewpoint,

The biblical evidence supports the position that the sign-gifts primarily authenticated the apostles and their appointed representatives (John 15:27; I Corinthians 9:1; II Corinthians 12:11, 12; Acts 2:43; 4:33; 5:12; Acts 8, 10, 19; Hebrews 2:3-4; Acts 6:8-10 (Stephen); Acts 8:5-8 (Philip); Acts 13:5-14:3 (Barnabas)).²⁰⁴

This is understood in a “post cross” viewpoint, for it was after the cross that the apostles became responsible for the church and its various functions. Napier states, “While Luke 10 and Mark 9:38-41 show that miracles were performed by those outside apostolic

²⁰⁰ Elmer L. Towns. Theology For Today, (Lynchburg, VA: Sunday School Heritage, 1994), 219.

²⁰¹ Ibid.

²⁰² Ibid.

²⁰³ Ibid., 220.

²⁰⁴ John Napier. Charismatic Challenge (Homebush, Australia: Lancer Books, 1991), 167.

circles, these passages do not establish the fact that such became the pattern after the Lord ascended into heaven.”²⁰⁵ Napier further states,

While some . . . insist that the apostolic office continues even today, there is no biblical foundation for such a position. The very fact that the apostolic passed off the scene indicates that some things which were common to Christianity as recorded in the Book of Acts ceased . . . when? . . . shortly after. Scripture was complete and the last living apostle died.²⁰⁶

Thus the office of apostle ceased with the completion of the New Testament canon.

This viewpoint is extremely important. “The entire controversy exists because the miraculous gift of the New Testament age did cease and did not occur for almost 1,900 years of church history and certainly have not continued in an unbroken line.”²⁰⁷ If the gift of apostle, in its primary sense and corresponding office are viable for today, the evidence for such existence is missing and/or lacking as recorded verification throughout church history. “Chrysostom, a fourth-century theologian, testified that if one was certain of their characteristics no manifestations are apparent.”²⁰⁸ If we say, as those that advocate the position of modern day apostles, that these sign-gifts are evidence of giftedness, and this evidence is no longer experienced in the church, then certain conclusions must be made. “To argue that the gifts faded away in the postapostolic church because of a failure to believe in miracles evades the facts of history and has no biblical support.”²⁰⁹

²⁰⁵ Ibid., 168.

²⁰⁶ Ibid., 45.

²⁰⁷ Thomas Edgar. “The Cessation of Sign-Gifts,” available from www.bible.org/galzxie/journals/sample/bibsac/8594/88d2, 2.

²⁰⁸ Ibid.

²⁰⁹ Ibid.

With this cessationist viewpoint, the burden of proof for the existence of modern day apostles and their corresponding gifts rests solely on these proponents. They “. . . must prove biblically that the sign-gifts will start up again during the church age and that today’s phenomena are this reoccurrence. In other words, they must prove that their experiences are the reoccurrence of gifts that have not occurred for almost 1,900 years.”²¹⁰ As we have seen from Chapter Two, the proponents simply cannot point to one area of Scripture as the guideline for this reoccurrence. Edgar points out this important aspect, “This must be demonstrated from Scripture; however, there is no biblical evidence that there will be a reoccurrence in the church of the sign-gifts or that believers will work miracles near the end of the church age.”²¹¹ However, the opposite is promised in Scripture,

. . . there is ample evidence that near the end of the age there will be false prophets who perform miracles, prophesy, and cast out demons in Jesus’ name (Matthew 7:22-23; 24:11; 24; II Thessalonians 2:9-12). During the church age there will be false leaders who fashion themselves as ministers of righteousness (II Corinthians 11:13-15). During the Tribulation period, there is no indication that believers, other than the two witnesses of Revelation 11:3-12 will perform miracles. Those performed by the two witnesses are exceptional, and their actions are comparable to those of Old Testament prophets rather than those of the apostles.²¹²

This brings us to the point of examination of the modern day movement with Scripture itself. For any phenomena to make a credible claim to be the same as the gifts and miracles of the apostolic age there must be great similarity between the claims and that of Scripture. It is not the author’s intent to discuss each “sign-gift” of the modern day

²¹⁰ Ibid., 3.

²¹¹ Ibid.

²¹² Ibid.

apostolic phenomena here. However, a brief similarity is warranted where the proponents of this movement use them as evidence for claims of the apostolic reoccurrence.

This author does not minimize or refute the workings of the twelve during the apostolic age. However, when a comparison is made between the apostolic ministry during the New Testament and today's reoccurrence, an "amazing lack of similarity" is evident. The following "sign-gift" comparisons are taken from Thomas R. Edgar's work The Cessation of the Sign-Gifts, they are as follows:

The Gift of Healing. The New Testament gift of healing is a specific gift to an individual enabling him to heal. It is not to be confused with healing performed by God in answer to prayer. New Testament healings include those with verifiable afflictions and handicaps such as the man who was crippled from birth (Acts 3:1-10). The healings were instantaneous,²¹³ complete and obvious to all. The man crippled from birth had never walked, but he was instantly able to jump and walk. The healings in the apostolic age never failed regardless of the faith of the recipient. They did not depend on direct physical contact (5:15). There were no preliminaries, i.e., healing meetings, or incantations. The healer merely stated to the individual, even when the individual was unaware of the intentions to heal (Acts 3:1-10). There is little correspondence between modern-day apostolic use of this gift and those found in the New Testament.

Exorcism of Demons. The miraculous ability to exorcise demons also needs to be differentiated from answers to prayer (James 5:14). The exorcisms in Acts concerned those clearly recognized as "possessed," including a girl with a mantic gift (Acts 16:16-

²¹³ Edgar here is focusing on those healings that were performed by the "laying on of hands" during the foundation of the Church. He is not referring to prayer for healing or the body's natural healing time.

18). They were clearly differentiated from those who were merely ill (5:16). They were not nebulous cases of emotional problems such as “personality meltdown,” frustration, tension, the “demon of worry,” the “demon of drugs or alcoholism,” as is often the case in alleged exorcisms today.

The New Testament instances of exorcism never failed, were without preliminaries, were instantaneous, were usually performed in public, often in masses, usually on unbelievers, and in the case of the mantic girl (Acts 16:16-18), apart from cooperation of the demonized. This is not to suggest that genuine cases of demon possession may not exist today. The point however is that merely claiming to exorcise demons gives no evidence that one is actually doing it.

Raising the Dead. Dorcas had been dead for some time when Peter, apart from fanfare, instantaneously raised her (Acts 9:40). The incident regarding Euthychus (20:7-12) concerns a boy who fell three stories and was dead. Paul, with no fanfare, pronounced him alive. In New Testament time with all the miracles, exorcisms, healings en masse, there are only these two low-profile incidents of raising the dead. This action was apparently rare even for the apostles. There is no reason to expect this today based on this observation. No modern-day, even though many are claimed, “raising from the dead” has been verified. Wimber refers to a man who fell, hit his head, was apparently unconscious for three minutes, and “came to” with a bump on his head. After Wimber and others prayed, the bump eventually went away. This is incredible, not as a miracle, but that anyone would consider this as a possible raising of the dead. Would anyone have been

convinced such a “miracle” that Jesus was the Son of God or that the apostles represented God?²¹⁴

As one can discern from the above, if the modern day proponents of this movement claim that “sign-gifts” verify the person as an apostle, they themselves point to the example of the twelve as evidence. Then reason stands that all aspects of the examples found in Acts, both methodology and outcome should be copied and similar results obtained. However, as pointed out in Chapter One these proponents simply point to the twelve and claim, “Paul did it, so can I,” ignoring the circumstances surrounding each event and the methodology used. Edgar draws the conclusion,

... gifts of today are not similar to the New Testament phenomena either in general perspective or in the details. There is no evidence to conclude that they are the same; there is every reason to conclude that they are not. The historical fact that the New Testament gifts ceased long ago and the fact that there is no historical link whatsoever between the phenomena and the New Testament gifts, require the same conclusion.²¹⁵

The only possibility for lending credence to the modern day apostolic movement is to produce direct statements from Scripture that the apostolic office will and should be present in the church today. “There is no specific biblical evidence such as this.”²¹⁶

This raises the issue of extra biblical revelation. There are only one two options according to Wayne Grudem. He states, “theologically there are only two positions concerning the issue in question. A Scripture-only principle supports a cessationist viewpoint concerning apostles, while a Scripture-plus principle supports the continuation

²¹⁴ Edgar, 4-5. The three sign-gift comparisons: healing, exorcism and raising from the dead are taken from this work.

²¹⁵ Ibid., 6.

²¹⁶ Ibid.

of apostles past the First Century.”²¹⁷ Of these two, “only the Scripture-only principle necessitates a closed canon. The Scripture-plus principle belies Scriptural authority and undermines Scriptural sufficiency.”²¹⁸ This of course is evidenced by Wagner himself when he states that a direct revelation (extra biblical) must be received by an ordination member before one can be recognized and placed into the office of a modern day apostle. This idea of Scripture-only principle verses the Scripture-plus principle becomes a hurdle of great importance. Richard Gaffin states,

Here is the matrix for the New Testament canon, for the emergence of a new body of revelation to stand along side what eventually becomes the Old Testament. So apostolicity, though not strictly a criterion on canonicity (several New Testament documents were not written by apostles); is undeniably the medium or matrix of canonicity. With this foundational role as witnesses, the apostles pass from the life of the church.²¹⁹

“Apostolic succession, therefore, is a contradiction in terms.”²²⁰

In his outstanding critique on David Cannistaci’s book The Gift of Apostle, John Crabtree quotes Charismatics, Pentecostals and those open to the resurgence of the apostolic office as recognizing the tension between these two principles,²²¹

Robert Saucy (open-but-cautious) is in reality more cautious than he is open to the miraculous gifts today. He is correct that the New Testament does not explicitly teach the cessation of certain gifts at a particular point in the experience of the church. His cessationist tendency is revealed when he argues that there are several lines of evidence that demonstrate that the miraculous phenomena experienced in the early biblical church are not standard for the life of the church throughout all time.

²¹⁷ Wayne Grudem. Are Miracles for Today? (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1996), 25.

²¹⁸ John Armstrong. The Coming Evangelical Crisis (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1996), 19-22.

²¹⁹ Richard Gaffin. A Cessationist View In, Are Miracles for Today?, ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1996), 44.

²²⁰ John Crabtree. “A Critique of David Cannistraci’s Understanding of the Gift of Apostle and the Emerging Apostolic Movement,” The American Society for Church Growth, vol. 10, Fall 1999.

²²¹ The quotes appear here as they are found in Crabtree’s work.

C. Samuel Storm (third wave) qualifies apostleship as an office, not a gift. He argues that if apostleship were a gift, it would be the only one in which a person would have to meet certain qualifications. The third wave position is sure that all the gifts are operative today, and their distinctive feature is that the church must expect God to use such gifts.

Douglas Oss (Pentecostal/Charismatic) agrees that those appointed to be apostles of Christ, to govern the early church, and to produce the infallible body of doctrine that came to be the New Testament canon, functioned in a unique, unrepeatable, foundational role in building of the church (Ephesians 2:19-22). Oss does want to hold to the inconsistent idea that somehow the notion of the cessation of the apostles can exist alongside the continuation of revelatory word gifts (tongues/interpretation, prophecy).²²²

“Apostolic succession in any form, therefore, is a contradiction in terms,”²²³

according to Crabtree. Even those that are inclined to align with this movement admit there is a “once for all” aspect of apostolic ministry. Crabtree summarizes this with the following,

At issue is the unique once-for-all status of the apostolate. There is a non-continuing presence of apostles in the life of the church. This complete foundational witness is preserved in the New Testament. To maintain a continuation of revelatory word gifts today is to stand in opposition of the canonicity of the New Testament in closed form.²²⁴

We have thus far looked at the terminology used in the New Testament as it relates to this issue. In addition, the theological view point has been explained along with certain gifts that these proponents claim as evidence for the office of apostle. These included healing, authority (exorcism), raising from the dead and extra-biblical revelation. Edgar sums up the rebuttal well when he states, “No matter how one tries to broaden the term

²²² Ibid., 52.

²²³ Ibid., 52-53.

²²⁴ Ibid., 53.

‘apostle,’ there is little doubt that apostles such as the Twelve and Paul did not continue.”²²⁵

History of the Church

In this section the author will present brief explanations of movements throughout the history of the church. It is not the intention to make this an exhaustive explanation of the history of “movements,” but rather to show that the issue of a closed canon verses open has been held by our predecessors. This is the true root of this issue, the authority of Scripture.

The apostolic church was characterized by spiritual vitality and apostolic authority. Certainly First Century Christianity was charismatic in the sense that these Christians used their spiritual gifts to build up the churches. These churches were not uniform in structure; however, deacons, elders, and bishops were emerging as common organizational features. The church was apostolic because it was built on the apostolic foundation.²²⁶

So as the church grew, the need for an infrastructure was delivered to the body by God through the writings of Scripture, i.e., elders and deacons. This infrastructure can be described as organizational development. Further, it was also a time of intellectual expansion as the apostles and the various leaders assumed the task of instructing the initial body in the practice of sanctification. During this time, two groups arose as challengers to the church with regard to revelation: “the Marcionites and the Montanists, or the minimalists and the maximists, respectively. Standing on the shoulders of some serious brokers of Gnosticism, Montanus tried to reform the church by emphasizing the direct

²²⁵ Edgar, 7.

²²⁶ Crabtree, 53-54.

guidance of the Holy Spirit.”²²⁷ Thus the canon and its authority became the major contribution of the church during this time in terms of authority.

During the medieval period of the church, we witness the rise of papal supremacy. “Traditional Roman Catholicism, however, failed to develop an adequate theology of spiritual gifts,²²⁸ resulting in a return to the heresies of Gnosticism and ‘marconite dualism.’”²²⁹ “The dualism²³⁰ in the west was fanatical, charismatic, and wildly enthusiastic”²³¹ resulting in the “concept of extended authority . . . which eventually gave rise to a dual source of revelation and authority: Scripture and tradition”²³² which birthed the Reformation church period. This was due to a “result of political, social, and cultural upheaval occurring in Western Europe during the Sixteenth Century, which resulted in the shift from the medieval world to the modern world.”²³³ It was during this time that “John Calvin introduced a second form of church government known as government by presbytery.”²³⁴ As a result Presbyterian as well as Reformed churches came to recognize two offices in the church, that of elders and deacons.

Theologians associated with the Lutheran and Reformed movement did little with the topic of spiritual gifts. “Both Calvin and Luther identified gifts with material blessings or talents, while Calvin was sure that the miraculous gifts had ceased with the death of the last apostle.”²³⁵ In contrast, the Anabaptist held that sign-gifts were being restored as

²²⁷ Ibid., 54.

²²⁸ Ibid.

²²⁹ Ibid.

²³⁰ Failed theology of spiritual gifts versus a return to Gnosticism created a dualism between Scripture and tradition.

²³¹ Ibid.

²³² Ibid.

²³³ Ibid.

²³⁴ Ibid.

²³⁵ Ibid.

indication of the end of the world.²³⁶ “Luther, Calvin and Beza stood in succession to earlier writers such as Chrysostom, Augustine, Basil, Theodoret and others in their opposition to the charismatics of their day.”²³⁷

Of these key figures in church history,

Luther was against the principle of extended authority. Calvin was against the view that the church conferred authority on Scripture, arguing that the authority of Scripture is intrinsic. The Anabaptists were literalists and looked for the plain meaning of Scripture. Arminius relied on an evidential approach to Scripture. It was Wesley's hermeneutic method that opened the way for a dynamic view of Scripture.²³⁸

The modern church can be “characterized by a breakdown of biblical authority.”²³⁹ The primary agent bringing about this breakdown of biblical authority was inclusion of reason into the equation. “The Enlightenment shifted the focus of authority away from Scripture and the church to reason.”²⁴⁰ During this period the “orthodox theologians . . . responded to Descartes’ Cartesian methodology by emphasizing the doctrine of inerrancy, which became the guarantee of biblical authority.”²⁴¹ Criticism of Scripture was prompted during this age of reason, thus authority was being destroyed as never before. Divine Scripture was lowered to a mere human book.

²³⁶ For further information see Williston Walker. A History of the Christian Church (New York, NY: Charles Scribner and Sons, 1959), 326-332. Not all would hold to this statement. Anabaptists gained their name from the practice of believer's baptism. Various sects arose out of this movement that focused and held to different aspects of the faith. One such sect was led by Melchior Hoffman who instilled a fanatical apocalypticism in his followers.

²³⁷ Ibid.

²³⁸ Ibid., 54-55.

²³⁹ Ibid., 55.

²⁴⁰ Ibid.

²⁴¹ Ibid.

The late Nineteenth Century saw the holiness movement come into fashion.

The Pentecostal movement was birthed around the turn of the Twentieth Century. From this Pentecostal birth many siblings have been produced.

The Pentecostals emphasized mainly the gifts of tongues and healing. Neo-Pentecostalism, or the Charismatic movement, began with the formation of prayer groups within Protestant and Catholic churches. The Charismatic movement spun off the “signs and wonders movement” (Wimber 1970s-1980s), the prayer movement (1980s-1990s) and the apostolic movement (1990s-to present).²⁴²

The apostolic movement, or modern day office of apostle, sets its sights on the gift of apostle as it appears in the New Testament to fortify their position. The question remains, “is there such a thing as a gift of apostle?” Is it functioning in the world today? The proponents of this movement say, “Yes,” as clearly indicated in Chapter Two of this work. They reach this conclusion based on many factors: a faulty hermeneutic, dissimilar comparisons with the apostolic age and a dependence on extra-biblical information. Thus we may conclude that these proponents take a Scripture-plus principle viewpoint with regard to this subject.

Summary

Throughout this chapter, this author has attempted to present the “entire picture” of the modern day apostle question. The term apostle was examined as it appears in the New Testament. The Scripture-only qualifications and the sign-gifts that are used as evidence for the apostolic office were discussed. This was accomplished by comparing a few sign-gifts with today’s usage and their New Testament practice. Finally the question of biblical

²⁴² Ibid.

authority was raised. It is either the final word on faith and practice, or it is not. The church cannot function with this question leaning both ways.

Although the proponents of modern day apostles' desire to see the "Great Commission" carried out and a true unity exist within the body through each member using their giftedness, they simply cannot prove their claims biblically. Thus, they must extend beyond Scripture, establishing a dangerous precedent. The key to any issue that the church faces rests with the Word of God. We must seek the truths of Scripture according to God's principles, not our desires. Crabtree sums up this issue perfectly,

Standing in the First Century and looking to the future of the church, the Bible projects a church that is organized around bishops, elders, presbyters, pastors, and deacons. Looking back at the church, apostles did not continue to operate past the First Century.

The Biblical, exegetical/hermeneutical, theological, and historical evidences suggest that there is no gift of apostle. Apostles in the narrow sense were gifts given to the church. These men exercised miraculous sign-gifts and were part of the foundation of the church. In the broad sense these people acted as missionaries and associates to an apostle. Since there is no gift, it cannot continue. Likewise, because of the nature of the apostolic office it cannot continue either.²⁴³

We must conclude, based on a Scripture-only theology, that the office of apostle, with all its rights, authority and privileges ceased with the close of the New Testament canon. No other conclusions can be drawn without moving outside the parameter Scripture.

²⁴³ Ibid., 57.

CHAPTER FOUR

INTERVIEWS WITH LIBERTY UNIVERSITY LEADERSHIP

Introduction

The following leaders of Liberty University were chosen based on their length of service at Liberty University and the level of influence that each man has. Level of influence falls under two categories. First, with regard to the student body and second, concerning the amount of influence over formation of policies at Liberty University. Each person chosen affects either the students or policy at various levels. They are:

Dr. Jerry Falwell, Co-founder, Chancellor, Liberty University; Pastor, Thomas Road Baptist Church, Lynchburg, Virginia. Dr. Falwell was chosen based on his influence with the students as well as his founding of Liberty University. Dr. Falwell currently addresses the student body twice a week in Convocation and is the major spiritual influence on campus.

Dr. David Beck, Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs, Dean of Graduate Studies, and Professor of Philosophy, Liberty University. Dr. Beck has served at Liberty University since 1978. Dr. Beck has a wide range of influence based on his positions with both the policymakers and the students of Liberty University.

Mr. Jonathan Falwell, Board of Directors, Liberty University; Executive Pastor, Thomas Road Baptist Church, Lynchburg, Virginia. Mr. Falwell's influence is primarily one of policymaker within the Liberty University structure.

Mr. Mark Hine, Vice President of Student Affairs, Liberty University. Mr. Hine works with students on a daily basis. He is responsible for every aspect of students' involvements outside of Liberty University classrooms. Mr. Hine also has influence over policy-making decisions.

Dr. Robert Jackson, Vice President for Spiritual Life, Liberty University. Dr. Jackson is responsible for the spiritual development of the student body at Liberty University.

Dr. Jackson has deep influence with the students and oversees the campus pastors' outreach and training.

Dr. Jim Moon, Board of Trustees, Liberty University; Co-Pastor, Thomas Road Baptist Church, Lynchburg, Virginia. Dr. Moon is influential in the area of policy development for Liberty University.

Dr. Elmer Towns, Co-founder of Liberty University; Dean, School of Religion, Professor of Systematic Theology, Liberty University. Dr. Towns has served at Liberty University since 1971. Dr. Towns has deep influence at Liberty University in many ways, primarily with the spiritual and theological development of Liberty University students. Dr. Towns teaches undergraduate courses, seminary courses and in the Liberty Bible Institute. As Dean of the School of Religion, Dr. Towns also has influence over policy of Liberty University.

Dr. Harold Willmington, Dean, Liberty Bible Institute; Professor of English Bible, Liberty University. Dr. Willmington has served at Liberty University since 1972.

Criteria for these interviews are as follows: First, a set of questions was prepared in advance and utilized with each person chosen. The questions are as follows:

1. What is your definition of an apostle?

2. What is the biblical basis for an apostle?
3. Do you believe there are biblical apostles functioning in the church today?
(Circle one) Yes, Perhaps, Uncertain, Probably not, No.
4. Do you believe there is a biblical basis for those who currently claim to be an apostle?
(Circle one) Yes, Perhaps, Uncertain, Probably not, No.
5. Do you feel that God could bless those in ministry who call themselves apostles, even though they wrongly use the designation? (This question involves those who believe in the fundamentals of the faith and they are honestly attempting to carry out the Great Commission).
(Circle one) Yes, Perhaps, Uncertain, Probably not, No.
6. Do you feel that God would reject a person who uses the designation of apostle because of his unbiblical nature?
(Circle one) Yes, Perhaps, Uncertain, Probably not, No.
7. If you feel God could use them, to what effect would God use them?
8. A person who wrongly uses the gift of apostleship does what damage to the church?
9. What do you feel is the motivation of those who use the title apostle?
10. Do you feel that Satan would motivate someone to wrongly use the gift of apostleship?
(Circle one) Yes, Perhaps, Uncertain, Probably not, No.
11. Do you feel that Satan motivates most of those who use the title of apostle?
(Circle one) Yes, Perhaps, Uncertain, Probably not, No.
12. Certain ones who claim to have the office of apostleship also claim to exercise the gifts of apostles such as tongues, healing, miracles, slain in the Spirit, etc. Do you feel the outward exercise of these manifestations verifies their claim?
(Circle one) Yes, Perhaps, Uncertain, Probably not, No.
13. If the gift of apostle is not biblical, how do you explain the extraordinary existence of sign-gifts that are manifested by them?
14. Would you allow a person who claims to be an apostle to do ministry in your church?
(Circle one) Yes, Perhaps, Uncertain, Probably not, No.

15. Would you accept an invitation to minister on an inter-denominational platform with a person who claims to be an apostle?
(Circle one) Yes, Perhaps, Uncertain, Probably not, No.
16. Would you accept a new member into your church by transfer of letter from a church that is pastored by a person who claims to have the gift of apostle?
(Circle one) Yes, Perhaps, Uncertain, Probably not, No.
17. Should Liberty University accept students from a church pastored by a person who claims to have the gift of apostleship?
(Circle one) Yes, Perhaps, Uncertain, Probably not, No.
18. Should Liberty University accept money from a church pastored by a person who claims to have the gift of apostleship?
(Circle one) Yes, Perhaps, Uncertain, Probably not, No.
19. Should Liberty University have employees who are members of a church pastored by a person who claims to have the gift of apostleship? Staff? Faculty? Executive?
(Circle one) Yes, Perhaps, Uncertain, Probably not, No.

Second, each question was not covered with each person interviewed. Questions from the survey were chosen based on position and of expertise. However, some of those interviewed answered all questions. Third, any extra information not relevant to the topic at hand was not included in this work. Fourth, each interview has been edited for English and grammatical construction and fifth, extra questions were given when asked or seemed appropriate. The interviews are as follows:

Dr. Jerry Falwell

Co-founder, Chancellor Liberty University, Pastor, Thomas Road Baptist Church,
Lynchburg Virginia

Interviewer (Int.): What is an apostle?

Jerry Falwell (J.F.): I believe an apostle is not only an original disciple within the group of the twelve, but one who also literally witnessed the Resurrection of Christ in person.

An apostle had all the powers that are uniquely apostolic, such as healing the sick, raising

the dead, whatever was quoted in the New Testament. There are many disciples of Christ from the time of the beginning of the ministry of Jesus until now. I do not believe any apostles are living today and I do not believe any apostles have lived since. The final apostle died in the First Century.

Int.: With that statement of saying that none existed since the First Century, can you say a little bit as to why you would take that view of the stoppage of the gift?

J.F.: I believe in Corinthians that which is perfect has come, that which is imperfect will be gone away. The reference is to what constitutes the credentials of the servant of God. In the beginning of the church, there was no written Bible as we know it now. In order to prove their credentials, the early disciples/apostles performed miracles. Today we have the written Word of God and the indwelling Holy Spirit and the anointing of the Holy Spirit to help us teach, preach, read, and study the Bible. We have the conscience conviction that this is the Word of God and as long as I preach this Word of God, I will be God's anointed servant. I know Billy Graham doesn't have to raise the dead today to be considered a man of God, or a preacher of the Gospel, or an anointed one.

Int.: With some of the advocates for the modern day apostles, what a lot of them are doing is taking the general definition of apostle, which is one being sent, and applying it to themselves in the specific definition. What would you believe to be their motivation for taking the title and then having the specifics of that being applied to their ministry?

J.F.: I think many of these men are sincere and actually believe they have an apostolic gift. You shouldn't think of yourself in such an elevated way that it might be difficult for you to justify your claim. I do not believe that any person that is truly, physically dead has ever been raised from the dead through the ministry of another person. I believe that

many who appear to be dead or for whatever reason were medically dead, were in reality resuscitated. If there were an apostle today or the last century or the century before, they would have had the power that Paul and the apostles had. All they would need to do is raise one, genuinely, certified person to life with the medical and scientific witness of other persons. But that has not happened. When these modern day apostles say that they have raised people from the dead, it is always in some distant country in a situation where no one else was there to certify the fact that the person was genuinely dead before being raised. Something so dramatic as the raising of a dead person to life, if in fact it truly happens, would absolutely be general knowledge worldwide in an instant. With the communication technology that we have today, it would be the simplest matter to get one single instance of such a happening on the record. It has not happened and will not happen.

Int: With regard to some of the other gifts such as healing and tongues, what portion of those would be motivated by Satan? If it is not coming from God, is it peer pressure, or do you think that some of it is motivated by Satan?

J.F.: I would be very careful about describing the gifts to the influence of Satan. I think that certainly there would be persons out there who are motivated by and inspired by Satan. I think I have met one. I think most of the emotional and extraneous spiritual phenomenon, i.e., healing, tongues, etc. are done by sincere people. I believe some people really do get healed through prayer. I do believe that some people really do have the anointing of God as intercessors. Whenever our church anoints with oil and prays to heal the sick, we trust the Lord to do that healing. My problem is not with divine healing, my problem is with a person who claims that he himself has the power to heal on a regular

basis. There are probably some whose singular ministry has been praying for the sick and whom God has blessed and honored and as a result many have been healed. But for that person to be looked on as a healer, even if I wish that could be so, I think that brings honor to the person rather than God, which should be downplayed. . . . It (healing) shouldn't be advertised and should not be something that we market. We preach the Gospel and the Gospel is the power of God unto salvation. There is nothing wrong with advertising that I am going to preach the Gospel because we know that God can and will save all who believe. But we do not know that God will heal all who believe, otherwise no one would ever die. Sometimes it is the will of God for a sickness to bring about death. We will all be sick at some point in our lives, whether it is a heart failure, stroke, or one of a thousand other things. But we do not know that God will heal everyone. It is wrong then, in my opinion, to advertise a man as a divine healer and to give people false hope with a great spectacle to come to get a laying on of hands for healing. This should be done very quietly and sincerely if it is biblical. We do our anointing with oil in a private room, a hospital room or the church with four, five, or six of our elders and pastors and the person who is being anointed. We sit down and talk about it in advance. The modern day healing industry without a doubt gives most credit to the healer, not the Divine Healer. But I want to say that I do believe many are healed in some of those meetings because of their sincere belief in God and I am careful not to criticize persons who do this on a large scale because some of them I believe are sincere. But I think they take it to an excess and I think it hurts the cause, more than help. I have watched some of the proponents more recently Benny Hinn, and look at what they do. Each one of them takes it (healing) a level higher and it will not be very long before in order to get the attention of the unlearned

public, raising the dead will be the emphasis rather than healing the sick. That will be the focus. And that will cause, by necessity, some fraudulent things and events that will try to top the previous one. For example, some healers have used an electronic device to receive the names and conditions of the persons approaching them and that makes it appear that he has supernatural contact with God because the healer predicts or reveals the name of the sick person and the sickness. This type of thing will ultimately bring great damage to the cause of Christ.

Int: Let me switch gears to discuss the theological issues of a person claiming the gift of apostle and their relationship with Liberty University. Would you allow a person that claims the office of apostleship to be a minister at Thomas Road?

J.F.: No, I would not.

Int.: Would you minister on an inter-denominational platform with a person that claims to be a modern day apostle?

J.F.: As a national figure I am often on a platform with Catholic priests and Jewish rabbis, Pentecostals, Prime Ministers, and Arminian theologians. The answer is that I would go wherever my message would not be restricted and my appearance is not assumed to be an endorsement. Yes, I would minister with them.

Int.: Would you accept a transfer believer into Thomas Road Baptist Church who comes from a church that claims apostleship?

J.F.: It would depend on the person. Our counselor would interrogate a person to be sure they had a true salvation experience and that they have been baptized for the right purpose in the correct biblical motive of immersion.

Int.: Should Liberty accept students from churches pastored by a person who claims to be an apostle?

J.F.: Liberty University is a liberal arts university and through the years we have accepted students from every background as long as they are committed to abiding by the Liberty Way, the behavioral standards of the University. We have on campus today five students from the West that are Muslims. Two of them have come to Christ since they have come here. We have had at least two Hindus in the past 29 years who have come to Christ while here. Originally, we accepted them on the basis that they would not proselytize and they would follow our standards on our campus. We have had Jewish students, we have a number of Roman Catholics. The Assembly of God denominations are heavily represented on this campus. They are welcome as long as they stay committed to abiding to the Liberty Way. In 29 years it has never been a problem to us because 95 percent of the student body are evangelicals, born-again young people who see this as an evangelistic opportunity on the campus.

Int.: And of course you have a great faculty.

J.F.: The faculty here are all committed, born-again Christians. We do not discriminate in race, gender, ethnic background or church background in the hiring process of the faculty, staff, and administration. Faculty candidates must commit to our doctrinal statement. The students come here because of the high profile nature of Liberty University and myself. This includes our doctrine, standards of living and educational objectives. There may be a point where if we get overwhelmed by non-believers, then we may have to re-think this policy.

Int.: Any final thoughts or comments that you would like to add to the interview

in closing?

J.F.: I think this is the greatest day of all days for the church. I believe we are going to see God's work expand in great ways as we get closer and as we approach the coming of the Lord. I think it will be manifested in the salvation of souls. I have never said that I believe that tongues is of the Devil. I have never said that. I believe that a lot of saved people speak in tongues. If in fact some of those people are as genuine as can be, that is alright, but apart from the Scriptures, tongues reflect a shallow and unnecessary approach to Christianity because we have a sure Word of God today. However, at Pentecost, all nations of the world heard the Gospel in their own language from persons who had never studied their language. It wasn't an unknown tongue, it was a foreign language and they all heard it in their own language and they believed in Christ. Today, I can't imagine with the ability we have to learn foreign languages and with the Internet and all that is available to translate foreign languages, why God would immediately give a foreign language to a person who has not studied it. We have never had that happen in modern times. A missionary moves to a foreign field and learns the language before beginning to speak their language. It would be unreasonable for me to think that there are millions of saints who have done cross-cultural ministries because God gave them a foreign language by a miracle. To my understanding, not one has ever spoken a foreign language without studying it.

Dr. Dave Beck

Professor of Theology and Philosophy, Liberty University

Interviewer (Int.): What is your definition of an apostle?

Dave Beck (D.B.): An eyewitness of the resurrected Christ and heard his teachings.

Int.: Should Liberty University accept students from a church pastored by a person who claims to be an apostle?

D.B.: Yes.

Int.: Should Liberty University accept money from a church pastored by a person who claims to have the gift of apostleship?

D.B.: Yes.

Int.: Should Liberty University have employees who are members of a church pastored by a person who claims apostleship? Staff? Faculty? Executive?

D.B.: Staff, I am not sure. Faculty, no. Executive, no.

Mr. Jonathan Falwell

Board of Directors of Liberty University, Executive Pastor of Thomas Road Baptist Church, Lynchburg, Virginia.

Int.: What would be your definition of an apostle?

Jonathan Falwell (J.F.): I think that I would have to say that there are two basic definitions. First, of course, would be the scriptural sense, which is pretty straight forward who the apostles are in the Bible. As far as modern day, that is a difficult question. I would just say simply that it (apostle) is a person who has been called of God who is walking with God, in the will of God, carrying out the work that God has set him out to do, and doing it in a powerful way with the Holy Spirit. There really isn't a clear cut answer for something like that.

Int.: Eckhardt, Wagner, and Cannastraci are advocating that an apostle is not considered one sent with authority in a missionary sense. They are advocating the sign-gifts, raising

from the dead, and have extra-biblical revelation. An apostle in one sense is a bishop over churches. With that kind of qualification, they are almost on par with the twelve that saw Christ. In that sense, do you feel that the gift of apostle is available for today?

J.F.: I would say that in that sense of the term, no. I think that an apostle is someone that we have certainly read about in the Scriptures, and in looking at it from a specific Scriptural stand, I would say that an apostle is not someone that would be in our realm, in our sphere today.

Int.: Certain ones, who claim to have the gift of apostle, would claim to use the sign-gifts, i. e., miracles, tongues, and raising people from the dead. Do you feel that these exercises verify their claim? If they are doing those sign-gifts, are their claims valid? Are their different workings coming from God, or are they motivated by Satan?

J.F.: I think there are two elements there. I think there certainly is a Satanic issue. Also, I think some people out there involved in this type of thing are fraudulent. Number one, if they are coming from a fraudulent standpoint, then certainly there are some Satanic forces at work, whether that person is intending that or not. There are some very decent and good people who are involved in this realm. I think you have that situation, especially with healing. But, tongues is an easy issue to determine because in the very nature of it, no one understands whether that is a manifestation of God working through them or whether it is just an emotional outburst. There is no way to determine if their manifestation is valid. Obviously, the scriptural standpoint is needed. And of course, when interpretations are given, those are somewhat subjective too.

I believe that healing is something that is happening today, but not in a sense of what you are describing. Obviously, we pray for people that are sick and they are

sometimes healed. Yes, I think God is doing that. Now, I don't believe that the healer who walks up and touches someone, and knocks him or her down, that God is working through that person. I am certain there are situations in the Benny Hinns, Oral Roberts, and those type of healers, where people have been healed who have had hands laid on them. I certainly think that a work of God happens in answer to prayer, but I don't think it is any manifestation through that healer's actual touch or supernatural ability or authority to do so.

Int.: Now let's switch to more practical things with the church. Would you allow a person who claims to be an apostle to do ministry in your church?

J.F.: No. I don't think so; however, it depends because there are some people in certain diversified settings that would consider themselves to be ministering in an apostolic setting. In the nature of their ministry, they are involved but the word apostle is not used in the same sense you defined. That type of thing would be open for discussion.

However, there are people that God could speak through and use. But no, we would not allow someone to come in and claim to be doing sign-gifts and that type of thing. No, because Thomas Road Baptist Church does not believe that there are apostles today. We certainly would not bring someone in who would promote or utilize apostolic authority in this setting.

Int.: Would you minister on an inter-denominational platform with a person who claims to be an apostle?

J.F.: Yes. You have heard Dr. Falwell say, "I would preach in Hell if they promise to let me out." From hearing him, watching him and learning from him through the years, I would certainly do the same thing. I believe that there are settings, if we were allowed to

go and preach to heathen lost people, we would do it in a heartbeat. Why would we not go to speak to a group, who is involved in tongues, healings, and that type of thing, the same Gospel that we do to heathens?

Int.: Would you accept a transfer believer into your church from another church whose pastor is a person who claims apostleship?

J.F.: Yes, and we have. We have done that.

Int.: Should Liberty University accept students from a church whose pastor is a person who claims apostleship?

J.F.: I think so. Obviously there are questions that are asked, interviews that are undertaken. The very nature of the application at Liberty University asks specific questions about those types of things. But, here the church takes the same position, we wouldn't necessarily sit down and ask someone, "Do you believe in tongues? . . ." before we would let them in the church. But, we would ask them to read our doctrinal statement and agree to it when they join our church.

Int.: Should Liberty University accept money from a church pastored by a person who claims apostleship?

J.F.: Yes, and again I go back to a previous answer. We have through the years received donations from people who were as liberal and as heathen as you can imagine. Because they believe in and enjoy supporting what we are doing, we accept their contributions; like in athletics. They do not have to agree with our theological stances. There are people out there who are Christians, but with a different set of doctrines. Again, we allow them to support our program. I don't believe that there is any double standard or any lowering of the bar when we do that.

Int.: Should Liberty University have employees who are members of a church pastored by a person who claims to have the gift of apostleship? In your answer, explain any difference between staff, faculty, and executive.

J.F.: First of all, there is one question that you have to throw into the mix and the question isn't really an issue to you, but legally there are some issues. As far as what you can exclude, the Constitution says we can't discriminate on the basis of religion. So there are some legal issues here. However, by the very nature of Liberty's program itself, we have a specific set of doctrines that we ask certain groups to adhere to I think it is imperative that the executive and administration, not only understand and agree, but strictly adhere to the doctrinal statements of Liberty University and Thomas Road Baptist Church. It is important to keep the institution on track of where we want to be and where we want to go. Faculty must agree with the same doctrinal statements. Now, I am assuming that there are some faculty members that probably wouldn't be completely in line with where we are on this issue. But, I think that there is certainly wisdom in staying with our doctrinal standards. Depending on the position, there are staff positions where it would be important for that person to fall inline. I think there is some leeway in custodial and maintenance positions and those types of service positions. I would love to have 100 percent of our staff sitting at Thomas Road, but I know it can't happen.

Mr. Mark Hine

Vice President of Student Affairs, Liberty University

Interviewer: (Int.): Should Liberty University accept students from a church pastored by a person who claims to have the gift of apostleship?

Mark Hine (M.H.): Yes, we currently accept students from a variety of churches. We accept students who don't even know the Lord as Savior, so to put a ban on a student coming from a church of this nature would be a mistake. It is our hope that the unsaved students would hear the Gospel and accept Christ. Likewise, students coming from a church like this would get an education and perhaps change their mind on this issue after hearing a true and accurate interpretation of Scripture. I would say Liberty University probably would and should accept students like that.

Int.: Should Liberty University accept money from a church pastored by a person claiming to have the gift of apostleship?

M.H.: If I were in a position to make a decision, I probably would say no. I don't know of a church of that nature that would want to give us funds.

Int.: Should Liberty University have employees who are members of a church who is pastored by a person claiming to have the gift of apostleship? That would include staff, faculty, executive, you can break it down.

M.H.: Again, I would say depending on the position. No faculty, absolutely not. Staff, yes. Any administration type position, i.e., student affairs, deans or anything like that, I would say no. A leadership position where the person would have a platform to present that issue and lead people who come here, definitely not. Even, if we were hiring resident assistants, which are scholarship positions, and we knew that they came out of this background, I would say they probably should not be working in a leadership position. There is too much of a chance for division and discord.

Int.: Would you allow or do you think Liberty University personnel should minister on the same platform with a church or organization that would advocate modern day apostles?

M.H.: It would depend on what the platform was presenting. If for instance it was a pro-life effort, I think we would join hands with everyone to save the unborn. If it was a conference on missions, I would say no. If it was a political action or moral issue, then we would join hands with everyone. If it was of a religious or church related nature, I think not.

Dr. Robert Jackson

Vice President for Spiritual Life, Liberty University

Interviewer (Int.): What is your definition of apostle?

Robert Jackson (R.J.): My definition of apostle is somebody who ministered with Christ personally during the beginning movement of the church. They were a very exclusive group of people, meeting with Christ in a personal way, being with him physically on earth and received a special mandate to go and build the church. I have the same mandate, but I don't have it from a person (Christ) who walked with me in a physical sense. Paul is probably the exception in the sense that he did see Christ.

Int.: What is a biblical basis of an apostle? Is it just to see Christ as you mentioned before?

R.J.: Well, not just see Christ, but being a devoted follower of Christ, having a special mandate from Christ, being in the circle of Christ. The apostles are clearly defined in the New Testament. I would say there are no apostles outside the group who followed Christ who were known as apostles. In other words, I don't think apostles are alive today.

Int.: Are they functioning in the church?

R.J.: No.

Int.: Do you believe that there is a biblical basis for those who currently claim to be an apostle?

R.J.: I would say that they think they have a biblical basis, I just disagree with it.

Int.: Do you feel that God could bless those in the ministry who call themselves an apostle, even though they wrongly use the designation?

R.J.: Yes. Particularly if they are focused on Christ. If their central focus is lifting up Jesus Christ, God could use them. I think God uses a lot of different people and a lot of different doctrines. Absolutely.

Int.: With that being said, do you feel that God could reject their ministries because they use the wrong definition of apostle?

R.J.: Depends if their emphasis is wrong. If they are not emphasizing redemption through Christ, then they are making the message more oriented towards the gift and the miraculous signs. Yes, I think it adds fallacy to their ministry.

Int.: Since you feel God can use them, to what effect do you feel God could use them?

R.J.: Whatever God wants to do.

Int.: A person who wrongly uses the gift of apostleship does what damage to the church?

R.J.: It depends on how they use it wrongly. If they just believe in it, but put themselves under the authority of Christ, I think their damage could actually be minimal. If they use it in a way that is extreme, my view of extremist, then I think they make the church a circus, which adds shame to the cause of Christ.

Int.: What do you feel is the motivation of those who use the title of apostle?

R.J.: I think a lot of them have pure motivation because they really do believe Scripture teaches such a thing. I think some of it is self-serving in putting attention on themselves. I would be hesitant to judge a man's heart. I think by the fruits you know them.

Int.: Do you feel that Satan could motivate someone to wrongly use the gift of apostleship?

R.J.: I think Satan would try to motivate any of us to do anything that discredits Christ. So, yes, that could be possible. But, I wouldn't say that is the motivation by all that claims to be an apostle.

Int.: Certain ones who claim to have the office of apostle also claim to exercise the gift of an apostle, such as tongues, healings, miracles, etc. even as extreme as raising from the dead. Do you feel the outward exercise of these sign-gifts verifies the claim?

R.J.: No, not at all. I don't think you could limit what Christ wants to do. If He wants to raise the dead, He can still raise the dead. It doesn't take the person with the gift of apostleship to do that either. I personally don't know anybody who has been raised from the dead. I have heard situations all around the world, but I have never met the person personally. Not that it hasn't happened, but just because it is happening, that doesn't necessarily mean that he is an apostle. In fact, Scripture says that there will be such signs in the end times that even the elect will be deceived. So, there will be big miracles at some point in history where a lot of people will be deceived thinking it is of God when it is not.

Int.: Would you allow a person who claims to be an apostle to do ministry in your church?

R.J.: It would depend on the person and how they exercised it. There would be instances and certain situations where I would say yes in the same way I have used Mike McIntosh from the Calvary Chapel movement (he doesn't claim to be an apostle), but his doctrinal stance is much, much different than Liberty's. He came in and was a great blessing to Liberty University because he was willing to limit his freedom, not cause problems, and talk about common things that dealt with Christ. I would be hesitant though to use someone who claims to be an apostle.

Int.: Would you minister on an inter-denominational platform with a person who claims to be an apostle?

R.J.: Absolutely. I would minister anywhere, as long my message was not limited and it wasn't demeaning to Christ.

Int.: Would you accept a transfer believer into your church from another church that is pastored by a person who claims to have the gift of apostle?

R.J.: Yes.

Int.: Should Liberty University accept students from a church that is pastored by a person who claims to have the gift of apostle?

R.J.: Yes.

Int.: Should Liberty University accept money from a church that is pastored by a person who claims to have the gift of apostle?

R.J.: Yes.

Int.: Should Liberty University have employees who are members of a church pastored by a person who claims to have the gift of apostle?

R.J.: As long as the employee is willing to limit their freedom and stay within the bounds of the policy and guidelines of Liberty University, yes.

Int.: And that goes with faculty, staff, and executive?

R.J.: I would make a distinction in some of the faculty positions, especially in our Religion department. I believe we are incredibly Baptist in doctrine. We have to stay true to that if we are going to be who we are. So the Religion faculty and seminary faculty should be right down the lines to our doctrinal statement. Broader than that, it would depend on the position. In the administrative staff, the cabinet level, I would think it would be very important to pick those people who are down our doctrinal line. That position is too influential throughout the body, but I am not opposed to using them in other positions. In fact I have had people in wide ministries working for me that came from Pentecostal backgrounds and that never caused one problem because they limited their freedom. Plus, they didn't believe all the doctrine at the church they were in. I think you have to deal with that situation on an individual basis. If the person ever starts stressing their doctrine over the common unity of the body by putting himself outside the realm of the policies and guidelines of Liberty University, then we should not allow that. It is something you have to monitor. I think Christian culture makes a difference. If it (Pentecostal manifestation) goes on in my services, we don't allow it. We would call people in and tell them they must limit their freedom. Not that we are trying to talk them out of it, we just don't believe that it is relevant for today. There are teachers here who would probably believe in tongues in some contexts. In a culture across the East, where no one knew the language, God chooses some to present the Gospel and He made it

possible to do that with tongues. I do not discount that happening today, but I don't think this topic is relevant here.

Dr. Jim Moon

Board of Trustees, Liberty University, Co-Pastor, Thomas Road Baptist Church,
Lynchburg, Virginia

Interviewer (Int.): What is your definition of an apostle?

Jim Moon (J.M.): One who witnesses.

Int.: What is the biblical basis for an apostle?

J.M.: One who was commissioned and sent. They were also given special gifts such as the ability to heal.

Int.: Do you believe there are biblical apostles functioning in the church today?

J.M.: No.

Int.: Do you believe there is a biblical basis for those who currently claim to be an apostle?

J.M.: No

Int.: Do you feel that God could bless those in ministry who call themselves an apostle, even though they wrongly use the designation? (This question involves those who believe in the fundamentals of the faith and they are honestly attempting to carry out the Great Commission).

J.M.: Perhaps, God will honor His Word regardless.

Int.: Do you feel that God would reject a person who uses the designation of apostle because of his unbiblical nature?

J.M.: Yes.

Int.: If you feel God could use them, to what effect would God use them?

J.M.: I don't feel that He would.

Int.: A person who wrongly uses the gift of apostleship does what damage to the church?

J.M.: He is living a lie and brings reproach upon himself because he has no Scriptural basis.

Int.: What do you feel is the motivation of those who use the title apostle?

J.M.: Lack of good training. They are Charlatans who use it.

Int.: Do you feel that Satan would motivate someone to wrongly use the gift of apostleship?

J.M.: Yes.

Int.: Do you feel that Satan motivates most of those who use the title of apostle?

J.M.: No.

Int.: Certain ones who claim to have the office of apostleship also claim to exercise the gifts of apostles such as tongues, healing, miracles, slain in the Spirit, etc. Do you feel the outward exercise of these manifestations verifies their claim?

J.M.: No.

Int.: If the gift of apostle is not biblical, how do you explain the extraordinary existence of sign-gifts that are manifested by them?

J.M.: Manifestation by the power Satan uses.

Int.: Would you allow a person who claims to be an apostle to do ministry in your church?

J.M.: No.

Int.: Would you accept an invitation to minister on an inter-denominational platform with a person who claims to be an apostle?

J.M.: Uncertain; only if they wouldn't restrict what I would preach.

Int.: Would you accept a new member into your church by transfer of letter from a church that is pastored by a person who claims to have the gift of apostle?

J.M.: Probably not, I would require some personal discipleship before accepting them.

Int.: Should Liberty University accept students from a church pastored by a person who claims to have the gift of apostleship?

J.M.: Yes.

Int.: Should Liberty University accept money from a church pastored by a person who claims to have the gift of apostleship?

J.M.: Yes.

Int.: Should Liberty University have employees who are members of a church pastored by a person who claims to have the gift of apostleship? Staff? Faculty? Executive?

J.M.: No.

Dr. Elmer L. Towns

Co-founder, Liberty University; Dean, School of Religion, Liberty University; Professor of Systematic Theology

Interviewer (Int.): What is your definition of an apostle?

Elmer Towns (E.T.): An apostle can be defined in two ways. Generically, which is a (broad term, means anyone who is sent by Jesus Christ to do the work of Jesus Christ). In that sense, we are all apostles of Christ. But in a second sense, an apostle is a technical phrase. A technical phrase means it is limited by the parameters of the New Testament.

In Acts 1, there were two criteria to be an apostle. First, it was someone who continued with the Lord since the baptism of John; I think that means someone who is called personally by Jesus Christ to follow Him. Second, an apostle had to have seen Jesus after the Resurrection, i.e., to be a witness of the Resurrection. Therefore, technically there are no apostles living today.

Int.: What is your biblical basis for an apostle?

E.T.: I believe the biblical basis is the Scripture I mentioned before in Acts 1. There are those who have stretched the definition beyond the Bible, but I believe we can only designate an apostle by what is mentioned in Scripture, we cannot go beyond Scripture.

Int.: Do you believe there are biblical apostles functioning in the church today?

E.T.: No.

Int.: Do you believe there is biblical basis for those currently claiming to be an apostle?

E.T.: I have talked to people who have claimed to be an apostle, and they claim to be an apostle because they do the work of an apostle, i.e., signs, wonders, some of them have even claimed to have raised the dead. Also, they believe in a broad interpretation of the phrase apostleship, i.e., those who are called of God to do their work, and those who have been with Jesus Christ. Basically, they have “spiritual” criteria to be an apostle, but I think they have stretched their interpretation beyond Scripture. When they do so, they are no longer tied to a literal interpretation of Scripture, i.e., a literal hermeneutic. Rather they are now looking for a mythical or spiritual basis for apostleship.

Int.: Do you feel that God can bless those in ministry that call themselves apostles even though they wrongly use the definition?

E.T.: Yes, I believe God's blessing is upon these men as long as they preach the content of the Gospel and teach the content of Scripture. Most preach the Gospel and people are saved. They teach the Scriptures and people are edified. They are honestly attempting to carry out the Great Commission and God has blessed them. I call this the *doctrine of blessability*. This means God blesses what a person gives to Him. God can only bless the content of Scripture and God uses people according to their usability, i.e., God uses people according to their conformity to biblical criteria. God has blessed some who call themselves apostles because they carry out His purpose in faith, hope, and love. Because of people's great faith in love, God blesses them. Because of their great hope in the future and in what God can do for them, God blesses them. Because of their great love for people, God blesses them. Obviously, faith, hope, and love cannot be stretched beyond a person's commitment to the fundamentals of the faith. I believe that the doctrine of blessability is tied to a correct core of Bible doctrine, i.e., the fundamentals of the faith.

Int.: Do you feel that God would reject a person who uses the designation of apostle because of his unbiblical nature?

E.T.: Not necessarily. God would not necessarily reject a person because he uses an unbiblical designation of apostle. God will look at a man's heart, and look at his commitment to Scripture, and use him accordingly. Some of the questions of those who call themselves apostles are problems of terminology. Most of what they call criteria for apostleships, I see as criteria for an elder, i.e., I Timothy 3:1-4. God uses them according to their meeting New Testament criteria. The problem is with a few areas, i.e., signs, revelations and assuming human leadership over churches. Can God use them when they

step out of line in these areas, but meet most other biblical criteria? Probably yes, when they meet other biblical criteria.

I believe God uses those who baptize babies—I disagree with that proposition—but God uses a man who baptizes babies, even though the baptism of babies is unbiblical. The blessing of God overrides the incorrect practice. Also, I believe God blesses those who are Arminian in theology—I am a Calvinist—but God blesses those who preach one can lose his/her salvation, when their total thrust is carrying out the Great Commission.

Int.: If you feel God could use them, to what effect would God use them?

E.T.: I believe God could use them, according to their usability. Even though they are wrong on their view of the gifts of apostles, and it does not greatly hinder them in ministry, God can use them. In contrast to that, those who believe in the correct use of terminology are not always effective for God. It takes something more than correct use of a title for God to bless a man, just as it takes more than a man's wrong use of a title for God to withhold God's blessing.

Int.: A person who wrongly uses the gift of apostleship does what damage to the church?

E.T.: I believe the damage is reflected in three or four areas. First, they are using a non-biblical criteria. Ultimately, the damage may be that they may stretch the criteria of apostles to include other areas in Scripture. Second, they may take unto them an authority that is not biblical. Because they think they are an apostle, they may think they can act like one of the actual apostles such as Peter or John, and they might feel that what they write is at a higher level of authority or what they preach is at a higher level of authority. I

can see some people actually believing they can be a part of the forgiveness of sin process by wrongly holding some of the verses applied to Peter, i.e., Matthew 16 and 18ff.

Int.: Do you feel that Satan would motivate someone to wrongly use the gift of apostleship?

E.T.: Probably not, although it could eventually happen. Probably, the greater problems will happen in the third generation of apostleship. This present generation (those who are the first to call themselves apostles) seem to act with caution. It's the third generation that frightens me.

Int.: Do you feel that Satan motivates most of those who use the title of apostle?

E.T.: Probably not.

Int.: Certain ones who claim to have the office of apostleship also claim to exercise the gifts of apostles such as tongues, healing, miracles, slain in the Spirit, etc. Do you feel the outward exercise of these manifestations verifies their claim?

E.T.: No. I do not believe that tongues, healing, miracles, or slain in the Spirit, etc. is a criteria to be an apostle. When it comes to the doctrine of tongues, I believe what is called the scaffolding view of tongues. When a contractor is contracting a building, a scaffold is placed to help in the construction of the building. The scaffolding is never permanent, only temporary to help in the construction of the building. When the building is finished, the scaffolding is taken down. I believe God gave tongues and other sign-gifts to help in the building of the church. These sign-gifts were the authority that gave credibility to the message of Christianity until the Word of God was written. When the Scriptures were completed, the Bible became the final authority. I believe that tongues was an authority to the Gospel speaker before the Bible could be quoted as the authority of God. However,

when the Bible was put in place, tongues and other sign-gifts were no longer needed. As a result, I believe these gifts have passed out of existence. Therefore, you could call me a cessationist.

Int.: If the gift of apostle is not biblical, how do you explain the extraordinary existence of sign-gifts that are manifested by them?

E.T.: I believe that God has blessed some people who call themselves an apostle, and they seem to even evidence “sign-gifts.” However, I do not believe these are sign-gifts, and I question some of their manifestations. God still answers prayer, and in answer to prayer, some heal the sick. What appears to be a sign-gift is an answer to prayer. I believe those people who claim to be apostles wrongly interpret the hand of God upon their life and they wrongly interpret their answers to prayer as “sign-gifts” that supposedly qualify them as apostles. What God does for them, they wrongly interpret to be a miracle or a sign-gift when in fact it is just the work of God that is done for many people who would never call themselves an apostle.

Int.: Would you allow a person who claims to be an apostle to do ministry in your church?

E.T.: Perhaps

Int.: Would you accept an invitation to minister on an inter-denominational platform with a person who claims to be an apostle?

E.T.: Yes.

Int.: Would you accept a new member into your church by transfer of letter from a church that is pastored by a person who claims to have the gift of apostle?

E.T.: Yes, however, I would want to talk to the person to determine whether their commitment is to my church, if their commitment is to the doctrine of my church, and if they are willing to submit to the authority of my local church. However, if their commitment is still to the former church and the “apostle” from which they have come, then I would not take them into my church.

Int.: Should Liberty University accept students from a church pastored by a person who claims to have the gift of apostleship?

E.T.: Yes.

Int.: Should Liberty University except money from a church pastored by a person who claims to have the gift of apostleship?

E.T.: Yes.

Int.: Should Liberty University have employees who are members of a church pastored by a person who claims to have the gift of apostleship? Staff? Faculty? Executive?

E.T.: Yes. However, if a person came from a church pastored by one claiming to be an apostle, they would have to understand that first, they could not communicate their doctrine on campus while they are working for Liberty, nor could they use their job to disseminate their doctrine. Second, the person would have to pledge their allegiance to Liberty University in the area of leadership it has over the person. If the potential employee would not pledge their allegiance to Liberty University, I would say we should not hire them. However, I do not believe Liberty University should hire someone in the School of Religion who is a member of such a church, nor should Liberty University have a person who is a pastor of such a church teach at Liberty University. What I feel about the faculty criteria, I also feel about the executive.

Dr. Harold Willmington

Dean, Liberty Bible Institute; Professor of English Bible, Liberty University

Interviewer (Int.): When you think of the term of apostle, what comes to your mind?

Harold Willmington (H. W.): There are the twelve apostles and then there are a few extras, such as Barnabas, Paul, and probably James, the half- brother of Jesus. The early followers of Christ were considered charter members of the early church in the book of Acts.

Int.: But, in a general sense of the term, the proponents of apostleship are using this general definition to support their claims. They look at Christ as an apostle, then they claim to be apostles by the same basis. They quote the Great Commission as evidence that Christ is sending us, so we are all apostles in a general sense. Using that as a basis for their view of apostleship, they go to claim that tongues, healings, etc., are the criteria for their being an apostle, just as the original 12 were apostles.

H.W.: I don't think this view is correct, according to Acts, chapter 1, the first requirement is that an apostle would have seen the resurrected Christ. I think that is one of the reasons why Paul saw Christ when he was saved. One of the requirements was to see the resurrected Christ. For example, I think this church (TRBC) was started in 1956 with 35 charter members. There have been thousands of members added since that time. I came in 1972 and I joined right then and I could say that I wanted to be a charter member too but that didn't happen. The charter members were only a select few. Likewise, I think these were only twelve apostles, and the patriarchs, these included Peter and Paul as the foundation of the church. Once the foundation is laid, then you can't lay another

foundation. The foundation that present-day believers build upon is the one built by the apostles and prophets (Ephesians 3:20).

I have heard that C. Peter Wagner is using the title Apostle I would say it is a matter of semantics. I simply would not agree that he is an apostle. An apostle in a general sense includes us all, but by definition, in a limited definition, only the original 12 are apostles.

An apostle is an ambassador, there are probably other meanings attached to it, so that is not the only meaning. An apostle is one sent forth with authority. Since today's believers are built on the apostles and the prophets, and the original apostles are the foundational stones, can these people come up centuries later and add to the foundation? The answer is no.

Int.: Do you feel that God can bless those in ministry that call themselves and minister by the designation apostle?

H.W.: I think God blesses all of us despite ourselves. That's like asking, "Can God bless an Arminian, an Arminian that claims a person can be lost, saved, then lost and saved again? Sure, God can bless them, but I don't think the Bible teaches Arminianism. Could God bless an Amillennialist? Well, obviously he has blessed R. C. Sproul. He blesses D. James Kennedy (these men are amillennialists). I don't think the Bible teaches an amillennialist position, so I think God blesses us despite ourselves.

Int.: With that being said, to what extent do you think God can use those who claim to be apostles?

H.W.: I don't know. Again, it's a case of honest interpretation of a passage. And I cannot say unless we know the exact meaning of a passage. God can bless a person 90

percent. God looks upon our heart and if our desires and intentions are what they should be, He will bless us. God has a sense of humor, using any of us to the full extent of our abilities.

Int.: So, motive in some cases is more important than theology?

H.W.: Are you asking if motive is what makes the engine run? I don't think that. No, I don't think anything is more important than theology, but theology is not enough. Jesus said to know the truth, it will make you free, but the truth has to be acted upon. I agree with those who say that many theologians sit, soak, and sour. They become like the Dead Sea. They take in all this information, but there is no outlet there. Some of the driest, probably most unspiritual men that ever lived have been some of the most knowledgeable Greek and Hebrew theologians. All they are interested in is what the Greek and Hebrew said. At the beginning, you have to know the truth and know all the principles of Christian living. So no, I certainly would not say motivation is definitely more important than theology. Theology is the absolute essential, that's the beginning, and then you act upon that.

Int.: Do you think that a person who uses the gift of apostle is doing any damage to the church today?

H.W.: There might be a little confusion created there.

Int.: One of the things that is on the rise is men and women, using Ephesians 4:11, saying God has given them the gifts of apostles and prophets. They are setting themselves up as the final authority over churches in all spiritual matters. Do you feel that Satan could motivate someone to wrongly have that designation so that they have that kind of authority over churches?

H.W.: I think that it could happen, but I cannot judge the motives of such a person. I have said concerning one gift, “I do not think that the gift of tongues is for today.” Then I give the reasons why I don’t think tongues are today. Then, there appears a person who speaks in tongues. Now why are they speaking in tongues? I cannot honestly say, I do not know their heart. I think there are a number of reasons why they are doing what they are doing. Some will say, “Well, it’s all of the Devil.” And some of tongue-speaking is of the Devil, there is no doubt about that. But, it also might be peer pressure. But I think tongue-speaking is an unnecessary, attempt to get closer to God. It could be psychological. However, I don’t want to judge anyone. But I think I can safely say that this gift is not for today. Why they are doing it, I simply don’t know.

Int.: At what point, Dr. Willmington, do we not judge, but also balance that with “we know a tree by its fruit?” What are some of the things that maybe you do or how do you base that line between these two areas of not judging but also being able to look at the truth?

H.W.: The question has to be “Does the Scripture condemn this?” Is there uncontested evidence that this is wrong? Is speaking in tongues an honest interpretation concerning the gift of tongues and the gift of prophecy? The wrong interpretation would be these gifts continue today.

Int: In a practical ministry standpoint, would you think it would be acceptable to allow a person to minister in your church that uses the title of a modern day apostle?

H.W.: I would have to get his opinion on what an apostle is and does. Does he mean that he has an inherent authority over the congregation and over me as the pastor of that church? So if I am a pastor and shepherd of a church, and this guy shows up and claims to

be an apostle and wants to join my church or minister in my church, what would be his stance? If he wanted to have more authority than I have, I couldn't allow that.

Int.: As far as Liberty is concerned, do you think Liberty should accept financial resources from a person or a ministry of a church that is under the authority of a modern day apostle?

H.W.: Sure, I would urge him to give here. Yes, I would let him come and give money here.

Summary

In summary, it is important to note the unity that exists between those interviewed. Even though those chosen have different responsibilities within the University, an overwhelming picture of consistency is shown. These men influence the student body at Liberty University in different ways and at different levels. However, their hearts are knit together with regard to this topic, even though no specific doctrinal statement exists on this topic. This can be attributed to their position of Scripture—only, holding to the Scriptures as the final authority of faith and practice.

CHAPTER FIVE

RESEARCH CONCLUSION

Introduction

This chapter attempts to summarize the responses from those interviewed and presents a general conclusion concerning modern day apostles. Each person interviewed did not answer each question listed. Those interviewed answered questions that pertained to their area of influence within the University setting. Further, all of those interviewed did not fully understand the ramifications of the questions asked as the question may have fallen outside their area of influence. Where the questions did not require a “yes”, perhaps uncertain, probably not, or no response (questions 1, 2, 7, 8, 9, and 13), an overview summary will be given based on likeness of answer.

1. What is your definition of an apostle?

An apostle can be defined in two ways. The leadership of Liberty University generally believed that there were two definitions of an apostle. First, generically meaning anyone who is sent by Jesus Christ to do the work of Jesus Christ. In that sense, we are all apostles of Christ. But in a second sense, they felt an apostle is a technical phrase. A technical phrase means it is limited by the parameters of the New Testament.

There were two criteria for an apostle in Acts 1:22-24 and Mark 3:13. First, an apostle is someone who is called personally by Jesus Christ to follow him. Second, an apostle had to have seen Jesus after the Resurrection, i.e., to be a witness of the Resurrection.

Therefore, there are technically no apostles living today.

2. What is the biblical basis for an apostle?

Those interviewed believe the biblical basis is the Scripture mentioned in Acts 1.

There are those who have stretched the definition beyond the Bible, however those interviewed believe we can only designate an apostle by what is mentioned in Scripture, we cannot go beyond Scripture.

3. Do you believe there are biblical apostles functioning in the church today?

| Interviewed | Yes | Perhaps | Uncertain | Probably Not | No |
|-------------|-----|---------|-----------|--------------|----|
| Falwell | | | | | X |
| Beck | | | | | X |
| Falwell | | | | | X |
| Hine | | | | | X |
| Jackson | | | | | X |
| Moon | | | | | X |
| Towns | | | | | X |
| Willmington | | | | | X |

While all did not have the same reason, and some did not have any reason, the leaders came to the conclusion that they do not believe that the office and/or gift of apostle is functioning in the church today as during the New Testament times.

4. Do you believe there is a biblical basis for those who currently claim to be an apostle?

| Interviewed | Yes | Perhaps | Uncertain | Probably Not | No |
|-------------|-----|---------|-----------|--------------|----|
| Falwell | | | | | X |
| Beck | | | | | X |
| Falwell | | | | | X |
| Hine | | | | | X |
| Jackson | | | | | X |
| Moon | | | | | X |
| Towns | | | | | X |
| Willmington | | | | | X |

The interviewed agree that those who claim to be a modern day apostle stretch the Word of God to make their claim.

5. Do you feel that God could bless those in ministry who call themselves an apostle, even though they wrongly use the designation? (This question involves those who believe in the fundamentals of the faith and they are honestly attempting to carry out the Great Commission).

| Interviewed | Yes | Perhaps | Uncertain | Probably Not | No |
|-------------|-----|---------|-----------|--------------|----|
| Falwell | X | | | | |
| Beck | | X | | | |
| Falwell | X | | | | |
| Hine | | X | | | |
| Jackson | X | | | | |
| Moon | | X | | | |
| Towns | X | | | | |
| Willmington | X | | | | |

All those interviewed felt that God could bless those that call themselves apostles. This however was not due to the person himself, but the fact that God honors His Word regardless of mans' misconceptions and/or misinterpretations.

6. Do you feel that God would reject a person who uses the designation of apostle because of his unbiblical nature?

| Interviewed | Yes | Perhaps | Uncertain | Probably Not | No |
|-------------|-----|---------|-----------|--------------|----|
| Falwell | | | | | X |
| Beck | | | X | | |
| Falwell | | | X | | |
| Hine | | | X | | |
| Jackson | | | X | | |
| Moon | X | | | | |
| Towns | | | | | X |
| Willmington | | | | | X |

The majority were uncertain, largely due to the fact of not judging one's heart. God will look at a man's heart and use him accordingly. God blesses whom He chooses. However, Moon answered "yes" based on a person's knowing they are in error, thus God would reject them. While those that responded "uncertain" stated so, in not wanting to judge a man's heart, thus stating that a motive could not be known. Those responding "no" did so based on salvation comes from belief in Jesus Christ, not one's interpretation of Scripture.

7. If you feel God could use them, to what effect would God use them?

The overwhelming conclusion is that yes, God can use these men in a way that He chooses. Again the issue is the heart and the commitment to Scripture that a person has, not his interpretation of it. It takes something more than the incorrect use of a title for God not to use a man in fulfilling the Great Commission.

8. A person who wrongly uses the gift of apostleship does what damage to the church?

The majority of those interviewed felt that the following could occur as damage to the church:

- 1) The authority of Scripture questioned.
- 2) Turning people away from salvation and the church.

3) Authority being displaced away from the pastor, elders and deacons.

4) Messianic complex.

9. What do you feel is the motivation of those who use the title apostle?

Those interviewed were again together in their thoughts with regard to motivation of those who use the title apostle. Their response was one of balance between pure motivation and being self-serving. Pure motivation would consist of only wanting to see the Great Commission fulfilled. While a self-serving heart would claim the title of apostle for personal gain. All were quick to point out that we are not in a position to judge a man's heart. This is reserved for God and Him alone.

10. Do you feel that Satan would motivate someone to wrongly use the gift of apostleship?

| Interviewed | Yes | Perhaps | Uncertain | Probably Not | No |
|-------------|-----|---------|-----------|--------------|----|
| Falwell | | X | | | |
| Beck | | X | | | |
| Falwell | | X | | | |
| Hine | | | X | | |
| Jackson | | X | | | |
| Moon | | X | | | |
| Towns | | | | X | |
| Willmington | | X | | | |

While those interviewed wish to exhibit balance and recognize that God uses whom He chooses, they however felt that Satan could be the motivating factor behind this movement. Thus, Scripture must become the final authority as it pertains to this issue. If the possibility exists that Satan could be behind these men, then the urgency to understand this topic becomes essential.

11. Do you feel that Satan motivates most of those who use the title of apostle?

| Interviewed | Yes | Perhaps | Uncertain | Probably Not | No |
|-------------|-----|---------|-----------|--------------|----|
| Falwell | | | X | | |
| Beck | | | | | |
| Falwell | | | X | | |
| Hine | | X | | | |
| Jackson | | X | | | |
| Moon | | X | | | |
| Towns | | | | X | |
| Willmington | | X | | | |

The concerns of people again do not want to judge a man's heart. However, the feeling is that Satan probably has the ability to motivate someone to wrongly use the gifts/office of apostle.

12. Certain ones who claim to have the office of apostleship also claim to exercise the gifts of apostles such as tongues, healing, miracles, slain in the Spirit, etc. Do you feel the outward exercise of these manifestations verifies their claim?

| Interviewed | Yes | Perhaps | Uncertain | Probably Not | No |
|-------------|-----|---------|-----------|--------------|----|
| Falwell | | | | | X |
| Beck | | | | | X |
| Falwell | | | | | X |
| Hine | | | | | X |
| Jackson | | | | | X |
| Moon | | | | | X |
| Towns | | | | | X |
| Willmington | | | | | X |

The opinion of those interviewed do not hold to a succession view with regard to sign-gifts. All in principle would be considered cessationists, thus holding to the following:

- 1) They have rejected their claim.
- 2) We can't introduce them with the title.

- 3) We can't recognize the title.
 - 4) We must impose restraints when using them, requesting that the "apostle" would restrict their freedom while ministering within Liberty University's doctrinal stance.
13. If the gift of apostle is not biblical, how do you explain the extraordinary existence of sign-gifts that are manifested by them?

Those interviewed believe that God has blessed some people who call themselves an apostle, and they seem to evidence "sign-gifts." However, these are not sign-gifts. God still answers prayer, and in answer to prayer some of them heal the sick, but it appears to be a sign-gift. God blesses them, directs them and the "work of God" follows them. The people who claim to be apostles wrongly interpret the hand of God upon their life and the answers they get to prayer. What God does for them, they wrongly interpret to be a miracle or a sign-gift, when it is just the work of God that is done to many people who would never call themselves an apostle.

14. Would you allow a person who claims to be an apostle to do ministry in your church?

| Interviewed | Yes | Perhaps | Uncertain | Probably Not | No |
|-------------|-----|---------|-----------|--------------|----|
| Falwell | | | | | X |
| Beck | | | | | X |
| Falwell | | | | | X |
| Hine | | | X | | |
| Jackson | | | | | X |
| Moon | | | | | X |
| Towns | | | X | | |
| Willmington | | | | | X |

Of the “uncertain” responses, the interviewees would allow those claiming apostleship to minister in their church only if they would agree to limit their freedom and not advocate those beliefs. Otherwise the responses were “no.”

15. Would you accept an invitation to minister on an inter-denominational platform with a person who claims to be an apostle?

| Interviewed | Yes | Perhaps | Uncertain | Probably Not | No |
|-------------|-----|---------|-----------|--------------|----|
| Falwell | X | | | | |
| Beck | | X | | | |
| Falwell | X | | | | |
| Hine | | X | | | |
| Jackson | X | | | | |
| Moon | | | X | | |
| Towns | X | | | | |
| Willmington | X | | | | |

A majority of those interviewed would minister in situations where the platform is shared with those that hold different beliefs. The condition, however, is that those of differing beliefs would not control or limit what those interviewed would say.

16. Would you accept a new member into your church by transfer of letter from a church that is pastored by a person who claims to have the gift of apostle?

| Interviewed | Yes | Perhaps | Uncertain | Probably Not | No |
|-------------|-----|---------|-----------|--------------|----|
| Falwell | | X | | | |
| Beck | | | X | | |
| Falwell | | X | | | |
| Hine | | X | | | |
| Jackson | X | | | | |
| Moon | X | | | | |
| Towns | X | | | | |
| Willmington | | X | | | |

The overriding feeling is “yes.” Again with the condition of explaining the church’s doctrinal beliefs and making sure that the new member would be in agreement within the corporate body. Those interviewed felt this was important as the “new member” would seek opportunities to do ministry within the church. By stating the church’s doctrinal belief “upfront,” those interviewed seek to negate problems in the future.

17. Should Liberty University accept students from a church pastored by a person who claims to have the gift of apostleship?

| Interviewed | Yes | Perhaps | Uncertain | Probably Not | No |
|-------------|-----|---------|-----------|--------------|----|
| Falwell | X | | | | |
| Beck | X | | | | |
| Falwell | X | | | | |
| Hine | X | | | | |
| Jackson | X | | | | |
| Moon | X | | | | |
| Towns | X | | | | |
| Willmington | X | | | | |

All felt that Liberty University should be open to students of all denominations. However, the same policies of Liberty University apply to those of differing beliefs and those who entered Liberty University expected to abide by the Liberty Way.

18. Should Liberty University accept money from a church pastored by a person who claims to have the gift of apostleship?

| Interviewed | Yes | Perhaps | Uncertain | Probably Not | No |
|-------------|-----|---------|-----------|--------------|----|
| Falwell | X | | | | |
| Beck | X | | | | |
| Falwell | X | | | | |
| Hine | X | | | | |
| Jackson | X | | | | |
| Moon | X | | | | |
| Towns | X | | | | |
| Willmington | X | | | | |

Being a liberal arts college, Liberty University is open to accepting money from these churches or individuals representing these churches. The stipulation would be that the giving denominations would not exercise theological control over the University or its policies.

19. Should Liberty University have employees who are members of a church pastored by a person who claims to have the gift of apostleship? Staff? Faculty? Executive?

Staff

| Interviewed | Yes | Perhaps | Uncertain | Probably Not | No |
|-------------|-----|---------|-----------|--------------|----|
| Falwell | X | | | | |
| Beck | | X | | | |
| Falwell | | X | | | |
| Hine | | X | | | |
| Jackson | | X | | | |
| Moon | | | | | X |
| Towns | X | | | | |
| Willmington | X | | | | |

These would be positions of support in the University setting, i.e., janitorial, secretarial, bookstore, cafeteria and building maintenance. Of those interviewed, all felt that Liberty University should employ or be open to employing those from a church

pastored by an “apostle,” as these positions have no influence with the student body or University policy.

Faculty

| Interviewed | Yes | Perhaps | Uncertain | Probably Not | No |
|-------------|-----|---------|-----------|--------------|----|
| Falwell | | | | | X |
| Beck | | | | | X |
| Falwell | | | | | X |
| Hine | | | | | X |
| Jackson | | | | | X |
| Moon | | | | | X |
| Towns | | | | | X |
| Willmington | | | | | X |

Of those holding teaching positions within Liberty University, those interviewed felt strongly that they must adhere to the doctrinal position of Liberty University; as teachers hold a position of influence with the student body and help to formulate University policy through faculty Senate and curriculum design.

Executive

| Interviewed | Yes | Perhaps | Uncertain | Probably Not | No |
|-------------|-----|---------|-----------|--------------|----|
| Falwell | | | | | X |
| Beck | | | | | X |
| Falwell | | | | | X |
| Hine | | | | | X |
| Jackson | | | | | X |
| Moon | | | | | X |
| Towns | | | | | X |
| Willmington | | | | | X |

Those holding positions of formulating Liberty University policy as it relates to the student body (President, Student Life, Spiritual Life, etc.) and design and implement

University policy (President, Board of Directors, Vice President, etc.). All those interviewed answered “no,” as these positions have a dual influence at Liberty University.

Summary

In conclusion, a few general statements could be made from these interviews. First, none of these men interviewed believe that the gift or office of apostle is for today as described by the proponents. Secondly, the leaders of Liberty believe the “sign-gifts” were given for a specific time in the history of the church, and are not operative today. They do not deny the evidence of God working in today’s world, but the Liberty leaders believe those claiming apostleship have misinterpreted the expressions. Third, Liberty University would accept those coming from a church pastored by an apostle as both students and staff. Students would be expected to abide by the Liberty Way. Fourth, these leaders of Liberty University are not judging or holding contempt for those who advocate or hold this position. They accept them as ministers in the body of Christ but however are cautious, based on potential damage.

It is however important to recognize the unity of belief that exists between these various leaders of Liberty University. These men all ascribe the same doctrinal position, even though this topic is not explicitly mentioned in Liberty University doctrinal statement. Their rejection of modern apostles can be attributed to all these men holding a Scripture-only position with regard to all matters of faith and practice, and their rejection of experiences as a basis for doctrinal interpretation; thus any position that requires or advocates a Scripture-plus view point is not held by Liberty leadership.

CHAPTER SIX

INFORMATIONAL RESOURCE

Overview of the Issue

Recently there has been an increase of those proclaiming to be modern day apostles. Those that make this claim include all the power, prestige and authority that the gift and office provides. Some of these modern day apostles are setting up “networks” of churches that are subject to their control and/or direction. These churches are subject to their “apostolic authority” in all church and spiritual matters. Others claiming apostleship are traveling evangelists, serving churches that accept their authority and/or doing ministry within one church, usually a mega church with extensive influence. This increase presents some questions and concerns for evangelical, fundamental, conservative churches.

A. The need today for modern day apostles.

However before this issue can be answered, it is important to state that the desire of those advocating modern day apostleship do so with the intent of seeing the Great Commission fulfilled. This is accomplished according to these proponents, through unity of the body of Christ. These proponents believe that as “traditional churches” level off or

show a decline in membership, those under the direction of an apostle have discovered a “new way” to carry out the task of the Great Commission. C. Peter Wagner states,

The new apostolic reformation is an extraordinary work of God at the close of the Twentieth Century, which is to a significant extent, changing the shape of Protestant Christianity around the world. For almost 500 years, Christian churches have largely functioned within traditional denominational structures of one kind or another . . . new forms and operational procedures began to emerge in areas such as local church government, interchurch relationships, financing, evangelism, missions, prayer, leadership selection and training, the role of supernatural power, worship and other important aspects of church life. Some of these changes are being seen within denominations themselves, but for the most part they are taking the form of loosely structured apostolic networks. In virtually every region of the world, these new apostolic churches constitute the fast growing segment of society.²⁴⁴

As Wagner points out, the traditional church is not as effective as it once was, thus the burden of the Great Commission requires a new view of “doing church.” Other proponents of the modern day apostolic movement echo this sentiment,

Have you ever felt that what God has called you to do—or maybe what you secretly dream of doing for God and His Kingdom—is an impossible mission? Do you despair for ever seeing it accomplished? Is it truly hopeless? Or is there within the apostolic dimension an answer for you, as surely as there was for the original apostles?²⁴⁵

The intent for those claiming modern day apostleship, is the fulfillment of the Great Commission. One cannot find fault in the intent/desire with wanting to see the Great Commission brought to completion through unity of the body of Christ. However, good intention does not constitute proper theology. Intent is not enough to prevent error. The first of these errors concerns the definition and usage of the term apostle.

²⁴⁴ Wagner, Churchquake, 6.

²⁴⁵ Eckhardt, Moving in the Apostolic, 20.

B. Answer concerning the definition of apostle.

Proponents define the term apostle in the following way: “apostolos, meaning a delegate or ambassador of the Gospel, officially a commissioner of Christ (with miraculous powers), messenger, he that is sent.”²⁴⁶ In addition, “apostles are officers of the church . . . an officer is an executive, and executives have the authority to execute a commission.”²⁴⁷ Thus, these proponents have taken the broad or general sense of the term (one being sent) and have applied the specific or primary sense (power, authority, office) to their ministries. Thus by definition, apostolic succession has extended through history until today. Those who fail to recognize this, fail to “differentiate between the original apostolic function represented in ‘the twelve’ and the perennial apostolic function.”²⁴⁸ It is correct for these proponents to state that the term apostle means “one being sent.” However, when the definition is stretched to incorporate miraculous power, these proponents move outside of the proper biblical usage of the term to ‘prove’ their point. This is evidenced by the function and/or duties of a modern day apostle.

C. Duties of the modern day apostle.

Definitions are just words but the duties of the apostle are where the practical aspect takes over. Those that hold to the position that modern apostles are for today claim that any miraculous act that is recorded in the book of Acts should and can be accomplished today through their ministry. They claim that the church of Jerusalem is the prototype for all time, thus all the characteristics/duties of the Jerusalem church must be examined, studied and applied today. Some of these characteristics are: apostolic

²⁴⁶ Ibid., 32.

²⁴⁷ Ibid.

²⁴⁸ Cannistraci, The Gift of Apostle, 80.

doctrine, fellowship, breaking of bread, prayers, fear of the Lord, signs and wonders, unity, giving, gladness, praise and the favor of men.²⁴⁹ Of these characteristics, great importance is placed on signs and wonders. They (signs/wonders) reveal several things concerning the apostle and serve as evidence of the office and gift:

- 1) Signs and wonders reveal God's approval upon the ministry (Acts 2:22).
- 2) Signs and wonders are a mark of an apostolic church (Acts 2:43).
- 3) Signs and wonders release God's people to minister in boldness (Acts 4:30-31).
- 4) Signs and wonder touch the common man (Acts 5:12).
- 5) Signs and wonders follow a sent one (Psalm 105:26, Acts 7:36).
- 6) Signs and wonders attract people (Acts 8:13).
- 7) Signs and wonders give testimony to God's Word (Acts 14:3).²⁵⁰

As stated above, much credence is given to signs and wonders. One must assume that if a church/denomination holds that the sign-gifts (tongues, healing, words of knowledge and prophecy) ceased with the close of the New Testament canon, the opposite of the above points would hold true. If signs and wonders are not present then:

- 1) Does God not approve of the ministry?
- 2) It (the church) is not apostolic in practice.
- 3) Ministry cannot be done in boldness.
- 4) The church is not touching the common man.

²⁴⁹ Eckhardt, 108-109.

²⁵⁰ Ibid., 111.

- 5) The general term of apostle (one being sent) must not apply to these believers standing in direct opposition to the Great Commission that constitutes the need for apostles today.
- 6) The church will not attract people.
- 7) No testimony to/of God's Word is taking place.

These seven points when stated in opposite form simply are not true, either in scriptural principles or practical form. Concerning this issue, the proponents of the modern day apostolic movement are walking on dangerous ground. In addition, these men claim that the office of apostle also is viable for today, setting themselves up as "overseers" of a few churches, becoming the final authority of faith and practice. Again, this simply cannot be proven biblically. Nowhere in Scripture can a list be found that speaks to the qualifications of this office. God in His sovereignty has given us qualifications for pastors and deacons, however this apostolic office with its importance is not listed. Why? Simply because it is not meant for today. God's design is for pastors and deacons to be responsible for the church. Further, nowhere in the New Testament can we find an apostle urging the body to become apostles. Paul never encouraged Timothy to claim the office of an apostle, only that Timothy would set the example for his flock in words and deeds (II Timothy 1:4).

With this biblical evidence lacking, these proponents must turn to extra-biblical revelation to solidify their position. Simply, those claiming apostleship do so using a Scripture-plus principle while cessationists hold to a Scripture-only view. This thusly becomes the root of the issue: the authority of Scripture. This is the only way one can make the claim for modern day apostles and that is by relying on sources outside of

Scripture. Wagner states that when ordaining an apostle, one in the ordination group must receive a “revelation” or “word of knowledge,” concerning the candidate before proceeding.²⁵¹ This must be received as the New Testament canon simply does not support this activity. Once this is accomplished, the “decrees” of an apostle carry the same “weight” as Scripture.²⁵² This view of sign-gifts lacks biblical support as well as evidence throughout church history.

Although the proponents of modern day apostles’ desire to see the “Great Commission” carried out and a true unity exist within the body through each member using their giftedness, they simply cannot prove their claims biblically. Thus, they must extend beyond Scripture, establishing a dangerous precedent. The key to any issue that the church faces rests with the Word of God. We must seek the truths of Scripture according to God’s principles, not our desires. Crabtree sums up this issue perfectly:

Standing in the First Century and looking to the future of the church, the Bible projects a church that is organized around bishops, elders, presbyters, pastors, and deacons. Looking back at the church, apostles did not continue to operate past the First Century.

The Biblical, exegetical/hermeneutical, theological, and historical evidences suggest that there is no gift of apostle. Apostles in the narrow sense were gifts given to the church. These men exercised miraculous sign-gifts and were part of the foundation of the church. In the broad sense these people acted as missionaries and associates to an apostle. Since there is no gift, it cannot continue. Likewise, because of the nature of the apostolic office, it cannot continue either.²⁵³

We must conclude, based on a Scripture-only theology, that the office of apostle, with all its rights, authority and privileges ceased with the close of the

²⁵¹ Wagner, 114.

²⁵² Cannistraci, 155.

²⁵³ Ibid., 57.

New Testament canon. No other conclusions can be drawn without moving outside the parameter Scripture.

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