

Understanding Spiritual Authority

E-Book



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Dedication

I dedicate this book to the great company of Apostles and Prophets that God is bringing forth in these last days. May this book bring you wise counsel and inspire you to fulfill His destiny for the Church.

This book is dedicated to all those who are committed to “making ready a people”, preparing the way by restoring all things.

“For the time being He must remain out of sight in heaven until everything is restored to order again just the way God, through the preaching of his holy prophets of old, said it would be”

The message Bible Eugene H. Peterson

I am only one.
But I am one.
I cannot do everything,
But I can do something.
What I can do,
I ought to do.
And what I ought to do,
By the grace of God I will do.

Canon Farrar

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Introduction

This book deals with a subject with which I struggled for a protracted period of time, the very concept of spiritual authority and its function and application in the church and especially how its rule should regulate and impact the life of individuals that forms a part of this glorious institution.

This quest for knowledge and wisdom caused me to make one of the greatest discoveries of my life. This revelation is the discovery of God's governmental order and structures as made manifest in the reordered, kingdom, apostolic Church.

This awesome discovery led me into the glorious freedom of understanding that the order, values and principles of God are not designed to weigh me down or hamper my expressiveness, but to free me up for life and godliness.

I write in particular to the millions of Christians in various camps of theological and eschatological interpretations who will not come into the fullness of the purposes of God for their lives if they do not allow a major shift in their interpretation of church governance. I think of the many expressions of church that requires a shift in beliefs and

values in order to begin to function by the divine authority that is intended by God for it.

There is a model administration suitable for the manifestation of the power of God that must now be recovered and put into place to facilitate the greatest harvest of souls into the church.

Apostolic and prophetic rule is being restored to the church all over the world, yet many Christians does not as yet begin to understand the parameters of authority that is functional on their behalf in and through these governmental ministries, the instruments God has chosen to confound the realms of darkness and through which He has begun to make His rule manifest in the earth in Christ Jesus.



There are distinct differences between spiritual authority and traditional ecclesiastical authority.

To understand spiritual authority there are basic principles that need to be recognized.

And He began to tell the people this parable: A man planted a vineyard and rented it out to vine-growers, and went on a journey for a long time. And at the harvest time he sent a slave to the vine-growers, in order that they might give him some of the produce of the vineyard; but the vine-growers beat him and sent him away empty-handed. And he proceeded to send

another slave; and they beat him also and treated him shamefully, and sent him away empty-handed. And he proceeded to send a third; and this one also they wounded and cast out. And the owner of the vineyard said, what shall I do? I will send by beloved son; perhaps they will respect him. But when the vine-growers saw him, they reasoned with one another saying, this is the heir; let us kill him that the inheritance may be ours. And they threw him out of the vineyard and killed him. What, therefore, will the owner of the vineyard do for to them? He will come and destroy these vine-growers and will give the vineyard to others. And when they heard it, they said, May it never be! ¹

It should be evident to the casual reader of this passage of scripture that continued rejection of delegated authority will finally and ultimately end in the rejection of God Himself.



In reality, if we followed the same process, we would be seen as rebellious towards authority.

He who receives you receives Me, and he who receives Me receives Him who sent Me.²

Woe to you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs which on the outside

¹ Luke 20:9 - 16 (NAS)

² Math. 10:40 (NAS)

appear beautiful, but inside they are full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness.³

We note that the attitude and conduct displayed to the governmental servants of God will determine our own measure of vision and growth in spiritual truth. A tragedy, which is so often evident, is that man is prone to have a preference of receiving ministry directly from God rather than through His delegated representatives. The pattern of scripture is clear in this regard, God works through delegated authority in His Church and His Kingdom.

The now word of God to the Church is the restoration of father and son relationships, the highest order of interpersonal human relationships. Coupled with this order is the restoration of Apostolic and Prophetic authority in and towards the Church to perfect the saints and build them up to become a part of the body of Christ.

We are living in the most exciting time of the history of the Church, the apostolic, kingdom, fathering age.

³ Math. 23:29 (NAS)

Understanding Power and Authority

Let every person be in subjection to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God.

Therefore, he who resists authority has opposed the ordinance of God; and they who have opposed will receive condemnation upon themselves. For rulers are not a cause of fear for good behavior, but for evil. Do you want to have no fear of authority? Do what is good, and you will have praise from the same; for it is a minister of God to you for good. But if you do what is evil, be afraid; for it does not bear the sword for nothing; for it is a minister of God, an avenger who brings wrath upon the one who practices evil.

Wherefore it is necessary to be in subjection, not only because of wrath, but also for conscience' sake.⁴

There are several Greek words for power

The first word for power is Dunamis

I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile. *Rom 1: 16*

⁴ Rom. 13:1 - 5

The word “power” in this reference is the word “Dunamis” meaning “miracle-working power”. The gospel of Christ is the miracle working power of God unto salvation; it is the miracle working power that will bring healing, deliverance and restoration. How is this miraculous power made manifest?

Then the disciples went out and preached everywhere, and the Lord worked with them and confirmed his word by the signs that accompanied it. Mark 16: 20

The Lord confirms His word when it is preached by faith.

The second word for power is Ischus

They will be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the majesty of his power 2 Thes. 1: 9

The word “power” in this reference means “ability of force” or “strength”. When the Lord comes in glory, there will be ability, there will be force, and there will be strength. The “ischus” power shows forth the awesomeness of God.

The third word for power is Kratos

Who alone is immortal and who lives in unapproachable light, whom no one has seen or can see. To him be honor and might forever. Amen. (1 Tim 6: 16)

This is one of the doxologies of which there are quite a number including apostolic prayers depicting the dominion

of God. Although “kratos” means “power”, it denotes more specifically “manifested power” it is derived from the root word “kra”, which means “to perfect” or “to complete”.

The fourth word for power is Exousia

The seventy-two returned with joy and said, “Lord, even the demons submit to us in your name.” He replied, “I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven.” (Luke 10:17 –19)

The word denotes a freedom of action. The word is translated both “power” and “authority”. Jesus is teaching the seventy that when power is exerted under authority that it will deliver much fruit. Power is the ability to do something; authority is the legal right to use that power.

“Behold I give you “authority” to tread on serpents and scorpions and over all the “ability” of the enemy and nothing shall by any means hurt you”

When we have the authority of God in our lives, and we stand in submission to delegated authority, then we shall be people of authority when we stand in the presence of the enemy.

The apostle Paul describes to us what the ranking order looks like in the realm of darkness in Ephesians 6 regarding our weapons of warfare. I am convinced that the reason why we struggle to see power demonstrated in the

Church is because we do not as yet understand to value and importance of authority.

The centurion over 100 is a classical example of a person who enjoyed a wholesome revelation of authority. Jesus commended him for his faith and understanding of spiritual authority. In fact Jesus said, “I have not seen such great faith in all of Israel.” I submit to you, it takes faith to walk in submission in the church and the kingdom of God. It takes faith to please God.

Illustration:

I have the power to drive my car at any speed above the legal limit, but I do not have the authority to do so. The traffic officer will use his authority to stop my power.

In Romans 13:1-5, two words occur several times, *to subject* and *to resist*. Subjection means to stand under. It does not mean to be subjugated, to lie down and be trampled over. *To resist* means to stand against. *The former allows the rebel in us to die. The latter allows the rebel in us to grow.* In any given situation you and I have a choice to either subject ourselves to authority or to resist authority. The latter is really rebellion in a modest disguise. We need to understand that the kingdom of God is designed in such a way that rebels instinctively stand out in the crowd. The kingdom of God is that realm in which the wishes of the King are deemed as absolute law by its subjects.

This brings us to the principle of *the law of cause and effect* or *sowing and reaping*. Those that stand against

authority shall receive to themselves a judgment. Most of the time it is not directly from God, but judgment is brought upon themselves because of what they have committed. This is the principle of cause and effect. We have to understand that the kingdom of God is excluded to rebels and rebels are excluded from it. The scripture encourages us to judge ourselves, if we fail to do this, the leaders in the house of God must take up this responsibility, if they fail, the Lord will execute judgment

There are, however, genuine fears that can emerge at times concerning delegated authority. There is the fear of no authority and the fear of wrong authority.

This results in the lone ranger attitude or the Jesus and I syndrome.

The Fear of No Authority

Where there is an absence of authority towards us, other agents have access to our lives. Often, the field of life and *pasture for the flock* will be sown with every kind of seed. The end result in such a situation is that which became evident in the time of the judges.

'In those days there was no king in Israel; every man did what was right in his own eyes.'⁵

The Fear of Wrong Authority

Leadership may ask you to do something you don't want to do for reason of your personal value system or scope of

⁵ Judges 17:6

revelation. In an instance where you struggle with values my counsel is that submission absolute and obedience relative. Choose to respect the leader and submit to his leadership but excuse yourself from the fulfillment of the expectation.

This often results in greater pressure from the so-called top - that is, the person in authority to repress rebellion from beneath, which will result in insurrection and an attempt to overthrow those in authority. It is important, however, to understand that people who have an ear to hear what the Spirit is saying will willingly come into submission into spiritual authority because they see that it is what is evidenced within the Godhead. Authority, therefore, is not to bring them into bondage but into a glorious freedom. For those in authority should only be ministering what Holy Spirit instructs them.

But when He, the Spirit of truth comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for he will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, he will speak and He will disclose to you what is to come.⁶

⁶ John 16:13 (NAS)

Effective Authority

Authority has to be received, for it to be really effective. *'He who receives you receives Me, and he who receives Me receives Him who sent Me.'*⁷ A rebellious person will always seek to find fault with those over him so that he does not have to submit. People with a rebellious attitude never meet anyone good enough to warrant their submission. This is only, because in their own heart, they seek to lead. Let us look at the parable of the trees.

One day the trees went out to anoint a king for them. They said to the olive tree, 'Be our king.' But the olive tree answered, 'Should I give up my oil, by which both gods and men are honored, to go waving over the trees?' Next, the trees said to the fig tree, 'Come and be our king.' But the fig tree replied, 'Should I give up my fruit, so good and sweet, to go waving over the trees?' Then the trees said to the vine, 'come and be our king.' But the vine answered, 'Should I give up my wine, which cheers both gods and men, to go waving over the trees?'

Finally all the trees said to the thorn bush, 'Come and be our king.' The thorn bush said to the trees, 'If you

⁷ Math. 10:40

really want to anoint me king over you, come and take refuge in my shade; but if not, then let fire come out of the thorn bush and consume the cedars of Lebanon!' ⁸

To really be effective in authority, all those who carry it must themselves be under authority.

'But the centurion answered and said, Lord I am not worthy for You to come under my roof, but just say the word, and my servant will be healed. For me, too, am a man under authority, with soldiers under me: and I say to this one, Go! And he goes and to another, Come! And he comes, and to my slave, Do this! And he does it.'⁹

⁸ Judges 9:8 - 15

⁹ Math. 8:8-9

The Question of Authority

But how then would the Scriptures be fulfilled that say it must happen in this way?¹⁰

Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God. Consequently, he who rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves. For rulers hold no terror for those who do right, but for those who do wrong. Do you want to be free from fear of the one in authority? Then do what is right and he will commend you. For he is God's servant to do you good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword for nothing. He is God's servant, an agent of wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer. Therefore, it is necessary to submit to the authorities, not only because of possible punishment, but also because of conscience. This is also why you pay taxes, for the authorities are God's servants, who give their full time to governing. Give everyone what you owe him: If you owe taxes, pay

¹⁰ Math. 26: 54

taxes; if revenue, then revenue; if respect, then respect; if honor, then honor.¹¹

All things are created by the authority of God and maintained by it. Authority, therefore, represents God. The acts of God demonstrate His power but are involved in His authority. Watchman Nee said, 'Before a man can subject himself to God's delegated authority he must first meet God's inherent authority.' It is necessary for us to have an understanding of the authority of God. Submission to authority is the first requisite of the Gospel, confessing Jesus Christ as Lord.

That if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved.¹²

From the moment of new birth God is the one in authority over our lives. It is in this kingdom, under His rule that we find ourselves. He Himself tells us that those who will inherit eternal life are not those who say 'Lord, Lord' but never do the will of His Father.

Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.¹³

Whoever does God's will is my brother and sister and mother.¹⁴

¹¹ Rom. 13: 1-7

¹² Rom. 10: 9,10

¹³ Math. 7: 21

Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done.¹⁵

It is those who do the will of God that inherit eternal life. This then is the key to life - doing His will. Obedience to His will is the essence of the Christian life and is the prerequisite to the blessing of God.

But Samuel replied:

"Does the Lord delight in burn offerings and sacrifices as much as in obeying the voice of the Lord? To obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed is better than the fat of rams. For rebellion is like the sin of divination, and arrogance like the evil of idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the Lord, he has rejected you as king."¹⁶

When we came to know God, our authoritative relationship was turned around. King Jesus is now Lord - not the prince of this world. Today authority is being increasingly undermined in the world, and in many situations being overthrown by lawlessness. God is, however, working to a prescribed end, where the kingdoms of this world are going to become the kingdoms of our God (Revelation 12). Its authority is being conceded in many situations. He concedes no area of His rule of power and authority.

There are, therefore, two basic principles evidenced in today's world, which are diametrically opposed to each

¹⁴ Mark 3:35

¹⁵ Luke 22:42

¹⁶ 1 Sam. 15: 22 - 23

other. They are God's authority and satanic rebellion and lawlessness. These are not the principles of cause and effect. What we are able to say is, you cannot have God's authority and be a rebel.

The Sovereignty of God

All true authority is under God. His work is accomplished, not through acts of power but from His role as supreme authority. Every attempt to remove the authority of God is, therefore, an attempt to dethrone God Himself.

His authority in this world is apparent everywhere - in the home, school, streets, government, institutions, etc. Authority is evidenced everywhere. We live under authority, whilst more often than not we are unconscious of that fact. Tragically, in this world, people either do not understand who is in authority over them or they do not like to recognize that authority. Authority, however, is essential for life. Most people who show little interest towards authority over them have very little interest in being in submission of life and thus tend to live their lives under their own direction. As the song declares, 'I did it my way'.

As citizens in this world we are subject to all kinds of authority within our society. We find ourselves in everyday life under the authority of men and women, as well as knowing His supreme authority towards us. Because of this we are faced at times with complex, moral

and ethical questions due to the clash of societal and spiritual authority and values.

So they ordered them to withdraw from the Sanhedrin and then conferred together. "What are we going to do with these men?" they asked. "Everybody living in Jerusalem knows they have done an outstanding miracle, and we cannot deny it. But to stop this thing from spreading any further among the people, we must warn these men to speak no longer to anyone in this name."

Then they called them in again and commanded them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. But Peter and John replied, "Judge for yourselves whether it is right in God's sight to obey you rather than God. For we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard."

After further threats they let them go. They could not decide how to punish them, because all the people were praising God for what had happened. ¹⁷

It is therefore, imperative to know who or what is in authority over our lives.

To be in submission to authority according to the scriptures, means to be voluntarily and willingly subject to spiritual authorities established by God. This, therefore, will require obedience on our part to those we recognize as having authority over us. Let us not waver in stating that obedience is a foundational principle of life.

¹⁷ Acts 4:15 - 21

Authority has been misunderstood at different times due to its outworking and practice. The idea, however, that you can throw away the principles and practice of authority is ludicrous. Adjustment and understanding are required, not the removal of God-given commandments. Divisions and destruction in the church at present are due, primarily to attitudes of rebellion or the abuse of authority. Obedience, however, should always be the first reaction to God-given authority by all who belong to the redeemed community. This is first evidenced in the attitude before the action.

Restoration, if it is to mean anything, is bringing about not something new, but a re-emphasis of that which has been before coupled with greater clarity and revelation. Restoration in God's heart gives fuller understanding of that which is known and neglected. We learn and mature in life as we accept God-given delegated authority. We will at different times show by our action or reaction whether we accept authority. Sometimes obedience or the act of obedience is apparent yet it is clear it does not proceed from a right heart or attitude. Therefore, to help us obey correctly, we have to have the working of the cross in our lives. Thus we will see the evidence of the spirit of obedience rather than the letter or law of obedience.

There is little doubt that the scriptures clearly teach that it is only obedient people who will enter into the fullness of salvation. The controversy of the universe will be answered by this question. Who will you have to rule over you? The Jews clearly made their decision concerning Jesus - "We will not have him to rule over us!"

The kingdom as we know is established through obedience.

Although he was a son, he learned obedience from what he suffered and, once made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him
...¹⁸

Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for your brothers, love one another deeply, from the heart.¹⁹

We are witnesses of these things, and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey him.²⁰

In the beginning God found two categories of created beings that refused to obey him:

- Satan, a created angelic being who brought about a heavenly rebellion.
- Man, who brought about an earthly rebellion. Thus we see the controversy of how this universe is to be governed was based on an attitude to authority.

This is still the case today, and although we understand that the authority of God was not accepted in these two realms initially, God did not withdraw His authority. Neither did He say that man was not responsible and accountable for his action.

¹⁸ Heb. 5: 8 - 9

¹⁹ 1 Peter 1:22

²⁰ Acts 5:32

We conclude in saying that the kingdom of God will only be established in the doing of the will of God. Jesus brought the will and rule of God to earth through obedience. He came to set up the kingdom of God on earth **your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.**

The gospel is the gospel of obedience in a personal and corporate sense - salvation for me personally yet salvation for us as a people. God is my Father personally and yet he is our Father corporately. God's purpose was summed up in His kingdom.

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.²¹

**Then I heard a loud voice in heaven say:
"Now have come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Christ. For the accuser of our brothers, who accuses them before our God day and night, has been hurled down."²²**

It is the will of God that His will is not only done by the individual but within the corporate body. In these days, therefore, it is imperative to understand that the word of God calls us to be an obedient people as well as being a people of faith.

Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for your brothers, love one another deeply, from the heart.²³

²¹ Math. 6:13

²² Rev. 12: 10

²³ 1 Peter 1:22

He will punish those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus.²⁴

But for those who are self-seeking and who reject the truth and follow evil, there will be wrath and anger.²⁵

Wherever we stand and encounter the authority of God we should obey as the old adage says, 'It is vain to obey a man. We should obey authority.'

²⁴ 2 Thes. 1: 8

²⁵ Rom. 2: 8

Jesus the Pattern

Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant and being made in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Therefore, also God highly exalted him, and bestowed on him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those who are in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth, that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.²⁶

In the days of His flesh, He offered up both prayers and supplications with loud crying and tears to the One able to save Him from death, and He was heard because of His piety. Although He was a son, He learned obedience from the things which He suffered. And having been made perfect, he became to all those who obey Him the source of eternal salvation.²⁷

²⁶ Phil. 2:5 - 11

²⁷ Heb. 5:7 - 9

God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world.²⁸

The only difference between the Father and the Son is in person. That is why the Son is able to declare 'the Father is greater than I.'²⁹ Jesus had to empty Himself of the glory of His divinity to obey as the Son of Man. Thus we see that obedience and submission is itself initiated by no less than the Son of God. He laid aside the authority He had with His Father and took up the mantle of obedience and submission. The key, therefore, to understand submission and obedience, is learned and understood through looking at the Son - namely Jesus. The key is exemplified in the words, 'He humbled Himself.'³⁰ We therefore see obedience and humility evident within the Godhead.

A divine principle is thus made clear. Through death or humility there is resurrection life or exaltation. The Bible says, 'unless a kernel of wheat falls into the ground and dies it abides alone'.³¹ This gives us a clear indication that the only way to reproduce is via the principle of death and resurrection. God is looking for obedience.

Heaven and Earth

²⁸ Heb. 1:1 - 2

²⁹ John 14:28

³⁰ Phil. 2:5 - 7

³¹ John 12:24

How you have fallen from heaven, O morning star, son of the dawn! You have been cast down to the earth, you who once laid low the nations! You said in your heart, "I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God; I will sit enthroned on the mount of assembly, on the utmost heights of the sacred mountain. I will ascend above the tops of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High." But you are brought down to the grave, to the depths of the pit.³²

You were in Eden, the garden of God; every precious stone adorned you: ruby, topaz and emerald, chrysolite, onyx and jasper, sapphire, turquoise and beryl. Your settings and mountings were made of gold; on the day you were created they were prepared. You were anointed as a guardian cherub, for so I ordained you. You were on the holy mount of God; you walked among the fiery stones, you were blameless in your ways from the day you were created till wickedness was found in you. Through your widespread trade you were filled with violence, and you sinned. So I drove you in disgrace from the mount of God, and I expelled you, o guardian cherub, from among the fiery stones. Your heart has become proud on account of your beauty, and you corrupted your wisdom because of your splendor. So I threw you to the earth; I made a spectacle of you before kings.³³

These passages speak of the rise and fall of Satan. The first passage indicates how Satan violated God's authority

³² Isa. 14:12 - 15

³³ Eze. 28:13 - 17

while the second passage emphasizes his trespass against God's holiness. He offended God's authority through rebellion, which was far more serious than offending God's holiness.

Secondly, He didn't find it with humanity.

And the Lord God commanded the man, "You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die."

Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God really say, 'You must not eat from any tree in the garden'? The woman said to the serpent, "We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, but God did say, 'You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.'"

"You will not surely die," the serpent said to the woman. "For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves.³⁴

³⁴ Gen.2: 16,17; 3:1 - 7

Man's fall was due to disobedience or rebellion to the word of God. In these scriptures we see that God placed all the created things on the earth and gave authority to Adam that he should have dominion over them. Yet, at the same time, God placed Adam under his authority that Adam might obey authority. Thus we see a principle of authority at the beginning, i.e., that the only one who is to have authority is one who is under authority.

Thirdly, God found obedience within the Godhead evidenced by His own Son Jesus the Christ.

Then he said, "Here I am, I have come to do your will." He sets aside the first to establish the second.³⁵

We see that the God, who became man, showed how to obey. He showed to us that man, step by step, could move forward in the purposes of God through obedience. Ultimately He could fulfill God's purpose and destiny for His life. It was through this perfect singular obedience to His Father that Jesus was able to achieve absolute authority for Himself and His fellow man. This resulted in God being prepared to exalt Him. He was exalted as a man.

Thus to have the same authority working for and through us we have to follow the steps of obedience as He did in His life. It is only through obedience to Him that we affirm His Lordship. The Father does not place any less value on our lives than He placed on that of Jesus in His development. At times this is not easy. Yet we learn the

³⁵ Heb. 10: 9

correctness of His counsel by doing it. He learned this likewise through suffering.

Although He was a son, he learned obedience from what he suffered...³⁶

Suffering called forth obedience from Him and obedience called forth suffering. It is interesting to note that He did not bring obedience here. He learned it as a man.

³⁶ Heb. 5: 8

Delegated Authority under Christ

It has to be understood that every Christian has the means of receiving orders directly from the King, due to the fact that the Holy Spirit dwells within each of us. Prayer is a direct two-way communication system between the Lord and us. Each of us has the heavenly instruction book called the Bible.

It is clear, however, that the New Testament does not allude to or conceive of Christians living in spiritual isolation from each other. The moment a person is born again they should and do become a part of a community of believers called the church. Within the church the structure of delegated authority under Christ is very evident. Men have been given the opportunity through the grace of Christ to share His authority in order to lead new Christians in their pursuit of maturity in Him. Compare the following:

'Submit yourselves therefore to God,' ³⁷

'Obey your leaders and submit to them.' ³⁸

³⁷ James 4:7

³⁸ Heb. 13: 17

A question now, therefore, has to be asked, 'Who appoints these men?' God does. Each of the persons of the Godhead has a part in the appointment of men.

'God has appointed in the church' ³⁹

'His gifts, were that some should be...' ⁴⁰

'The flock in which the Holy Spirit has made you guardians' ⁴¹

What God therefore makes a man to be, is recognized and ratified before the whole church. The existing leaders, at times, carry this out when they (Paul and Barnabas) had appointed elders for them in every church.

Paul and Barnabas appointed elders for them in each church and, with prayer and fasting, committed them to the Lord in whom they had put their trust. ⁴²

'I, Paul, left you in Crete, that you might amend what was defective, and appoint elders in every town as I directed you.' ⁴³

In Acts 13:1-3, the setting apart in the church of Barnabas and Saul for the work of the ministry. Recognition, therefore, was given by the prophets and teachers in the church (13:3). This seemed to be a very common feature

³⁹ 1 Cor. 12: 28

⁴⁰ Eph. 4: 11

⁴¹ Acts 20:28

⁴² Acts 14:23

⁴³ Titus 1:5

of the setting apart to the ministry accompanied by the laying on of hands.

Timothy had hands laid on him, both by the elders and the apostle Paul.

Do not neglect your gift, which was given you through a prophetic message when the body of elders laid their hands on you.⁴⁴

For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands.⁴⁵

We also find that elders were appointed men that were delegated to do so by the apostles.

The reason I left you in Crete was that you might straighten out what was left unfinished and appoint elders in every town, as I directed you.⁴⁶

How is the Authority to be exercised?

It is very clear that authority should not be exercised in an overbearing way, subduing and crushing people. This is what the scriptures would call Gentile authority.

Also a dispute arose among them as to which of them was considered to be greatest. Jesus said to them, "The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them; and those

⁴⁴ 1 Tim. 4: 14

⁴⁵ 2 Tim. 1: 6

⁴⁶ Titus 1:5

who exercise authority over them call themselves Benefactors. But you are not to be like that. Instead the greatest among you should be like the youngest, and the one who rules like the one who serves. For who is greater, the one who is at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one who is at the table? But I am among you as one who serves. You are those who have stood by me in my trials".⁴⁷

The authority exercised by elders, like the authority of Christ, which it represents, is exercised by love, service and example, for the encouragement and mutual building up of the people.

'Our authority, which the Lord gave for building up and not for destroying'⁴⁸

'Tend the flock of God that is in your charge, not by constraint but willingly, not for shameful gain but eagerly, not as domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock.'⁴⁹

The Nature and Purpose of Authority

God is ultimate authority. He has however chosen to channel some of His authority through human agency.

Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which

⁴⁷ Luk. 22: 24 - 28

⁴⁸ 1 Cor. 10: 8

⁴⁹ 1 Peter 5:2-3

God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God. ⁵⁰

The primary function of authority appears to be to help *cultivate, shape and assist* individuals, and the community as a whole, to make the most of their gifting, talents and resources.

Therefore, authority is only able to function when it releases in others a right kind of responsibility for their own actions.

Jesus schooled the first apostles in a way of life that demanded that they learned to exercise their own *initiative*. He stimulated their thinking and provoked them to *enquire for themselves* as to the vital issues of life. Jesus did not stifle initiative or forced His followers into blind obedience.

Jesus and His disciples went on to the villages around Caesarea Philippi. On the way he asked them, "Who do people say I am?" ⁵¹

Authority in the Church must also be Christ-like

"Christ, we find, draws out in His disciples the desired qualities of self-devotion and a healthy trust in God, without effacing the stamp of the individual nature of man. He cherishes and respects personality." ⁵²

⁵⁰ Romans 13:1

⁵¹ Mark 8:27

⁵² Henry Latham, Pastor-Pastorium 1910

Jesus was indifferent to people. He took a keen interest in them and sought to better their understanding of God as Father, and of Himself as a true son.

Authority Properly Exercised

True authority does not remove from individuals the right to make responsible decisions for them.

- **Authority, properly exercised**, breaks down slavery to wrong concepts and misplaced loyalty.
- **Authority, properly exercised**, is not autocratic. It finds its most effective working in the context of a team.
- **Authority, properly exercised**, equips and empowers others.

Authority is the legitimate empowerment to achieve a task, not a position that needs to be jealously guarded. The exercise of its power calls for a moral accountability and demands a true humility of heart.

Within the New Testament we find two word pictures of the kind of leadership that Christ has in mind for the church:

The Word Shepherd

The word leaders in Hebrews 13:17 is the same word (hegeomai) used for Joseph as governor over Egypt in Acts 7:10. That was a real rule, though exercised in the people's interests. The word is used also of Jesus in Matthew 2:6 where it says, 'From you shall come a ruler who will SHEPHERD my people Israel.' The task of the

shepherd is to feed, guide and protect the people of God. It is worthy to note that the eastern shepherd would walk in front of the sheep, not behind them. We, therefore, should observe the church leaders out in front of the people by example, leading them into correct pasture. They feed them through the nourishment of God's word and guide their lives in accordance with God's pattern shown in the word and how to protect the people from harmful pressures and influences within and without. Such is Paul's advice to the Ephesian elders.

Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood. I know that after I leave, savage wolves will come in among you and will not spare the flock. Even from your own number men will arise and distort the truth in order to draw away disciples after them.⁵³

The Word Parent

'Let the elders who rule well be considered of double honor. Especially those who labor in preaching and teaching.'⁵⁴

'Respect those who labor among you and are over you in the Lord and admonish you and esteem very highly in love because of their work.'⁵⁵

⁵³ Acts 20:28-30

⁵⁴ 1 Tim. 5:17

⁵⁵ 1 Thes. 5:12

The word translated by the underlined phrases above (proistemi) is explained in 1 Timothy 2:4, where it is used of the elder who 'must manage his own HOUSEHOLD well, keeping his children submissive and respectful in every way.' So the church leader must have a parental kind of concern for the people. Accordingly he will give counsel and at times, commands.

'Declare these things, exhort and reprove with all AUTHORITY (Greek epitage, i.e., authoritative command). Let no one disregard you.' ⁵⁶

Like Paul he will embody the care of both a father, a nursing mother and show self-sacrificial concern in his exhorting, encouraging and charging the people of God to lead a life worthy of God.

As apostles of Christ we could have been a burden to you, but we were gentle among you, like a mother caring for her little children. We loved you so much that we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well, because you had become so dear to us. Surely you remember, brothers, our toil and hardship; we worked night and day in order not to be a burden to anyone while we preached the gospel of God to you. You are witnesses, and so is God, of how holy, righteous and blameless we were among you who believed. For you know that we dealt with each of you as a father deals with his own children, encouraging, comforting and urging you to

⁵⁶ Titus 2:15

live lives worthy of God, who calls you into his kingdom and glory.⁵⁷

What Areas of Life Should Elders be Concerned With?

As many areas as the Lord is concerned with, namely, every area of life. It has been said 'if Jesus isn't Lord of all, He isn't Lord at all.' The word of God sees no distinction between spiritual life and secular life. When we are in Christ, everything is spiritual.

Meetings, prayer and Bible reading take up a very small fraction of the Christian's week. He spends much more time in his job, at home with his spouse and children, and is involved with the domestic affairs with bills, shopping and leisure, etc. The Lord as our King has a lot to say about all these things. It is the responsibility of His delegated ministers in the church to implement His wishes in those areas in the lives of people.

Particular areas you will find where people are troubled as you counsel them are the vulnerable areas within marriage or interpersonal relationships and also within the areas of finance and fulfillment. Elders therefore should be conscious of the pressures within these particular areas and should be mindful of the state of their people.

The Double Account

So then, each of us will give an account of himself to God.⁵⁸

⁵⁷ 1 Thes. 2:7 - 12

⁵⁸ Rom. 14:12

The elders of the church, however, will have to give an extra account in that ultimate day when we all stand before the Lord, i.e., an account of how he took care of the flock under his charge.

'Obey your leaders and submit to them for they are keeping watch over your souls as men who will have to give an account. Let them do this joyfully and not sadly, for that would be of no advantage to you.' ⁵⁹

As men doubly accountable to God, we have to take our leadership responsibilities very seriously. We have to be totally honest and straightforward with our saints given to our charge.

Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ. ⁶⁰

⁵⁹ Heb. 13:17

⁶⁰ Eph. 4:15

Understanding Ministerial Protocol.

Presumptuous attitudes prevail in the church today concerning authority relating to Fivefold ministry and its functional roles.

The 1900's have been dominated by the influence of the Pentecostal, Evangelical and Charismatic restoration moves and thought patterns.

Are all Pastors?

For example: - All the ministries listed in Ephesians 4: 11 are referred to as Pastor, which is a direct contradiction of its designated authority mentioned in the reference.

It is universally agreed that the ministry gifts of Eph. 4:11 are all extensions of Christ's ministry.

Jesus as Chief Apostle:

And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy.⁶¹

⁶¹ Col. 1:18

This is the disciple who testifies to these things and who wrote them down. We know that his testimony is true.⁶²

I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.⁶³

“See, I lay a stone in Zion, a chosen and precious cornerstone, and the one who trusts in him will never be put to shame.”⁶⁴

Jesus as Prophet:

The crowds answered: “This is Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth in Galilee”.⁶⁵

Before long, the world will not see me anymore, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live.⁶⁶

Jesus as Evangelist:

Do you not say, ‘Four months and then the harvest?’ I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest.⁶⁷

⁶² Math. 21:24

⁶³ Gal. 2:20

⁶⁴ 1 Pet. 2:6

⁶⁵ Math. 21:11

⁶⁶ John 14:19

⁶⁷ John 4:35

Jesus as Teacher:

Jesus used this figure of speech, but they did not understand what he was telling them.⁶⁸

He said this while teaching in the synagogue in Capernaum.⁶⁹

He came to Jesus at night and said, “Rabbi, we know you are a teacher who has come from God. For no one could perform the miraculous signs you are doing if God were not with him”.⁷⁰

Jesus as Pastor:

I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. The hired hands is not the shepherd who owns the sheep. So when he sees the wolf coming, he abandons the sheep and runs away. Then the wolf attacks the flock and scatters it. The man runs away because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep. I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep knows me.⁷¹

For you were like sheep going astray, but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.⁷²

⁶⁸ John 10:6

⁶⁹ John 6:59

⁷⁰ John 3:2

⁷¹ John 10:11-14

⁷² 1 Pet. 2:25

By only recognizing the pastoral gift, the church is deploying only twenty percent of the fivefold potential. It would then be correct to conclude that the ability of the church to become God's agent through which He can establish His authority have been greatly minimized, due to misunderstanding of the five ascension gifts and its divinely given authority.

Ministerial Misconceptions

Misconceptions concerning the functional parameters of one's authority within the fivefold ministry stem from a lack of knowledge. Proper understanding is needed to operate effectively within the confines of a given authority.

Ministerial protocol, proper and correct conduct will safeguard both leaders and followers against the abuse of power and authority. Authority must govern ability. The Law is not necessarily binding, but gives one freedom to operate within regulations set up for one's safety.

Ministerial Protocol

Protocol provides discipline, which in turn enhances the capacity of one's gift, protecting God's people against spiritual witchcraft, leading to abuse and manipulation.

God has set certain limits, not to restrict ministries, but to provide parameters for success. A Pastor must operate within the metron of a pastor, within specified boundaries that becomes the rest in Christ; - Apostles, Prophets, Teachers and Evangelists, each have their God ordained

parameters. Ministry within parameters leads to understanding, which in turn leads to development, which in turn leads to growth and multiplication.

According to your Ability

Again, it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted his property to them. To one he gave five talents, and to another two talents, and to another one talent, each according to his ability.⁷³

The master gave to each servant according to his or her ability. God will never give you authority beyond the level of what you can handle.

One received five – according to his ability.

One received two – according to his ability.

One received one – according to his ability.

Usage of the gift within parameters of revealed knowledge, led to the multiplication of these gifts, thus production increased. Refusal to function within manifested guidelines led to loss of production and demotion. The blessing of the Lord makes rich and adds no sorrow.

Ability governed by authority leads to increased blessing and productivity.

⁷³ Math. 25:14 - 15

The opposite is also true. Ignore the rules and regulations of the divine concerning ability and authority and you will reap chaos and calamity.

According to your Hearing

Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash.⁷⁴

The one that heard the Word – revealed parameters of authority to function in – and ignored it, suffered great loss. His whole house collapsed. The law of sowing and reaping operates in spite of our ignorance. You reap exactly the measure you sow nothing less, nothing more, of the same kind.

As long as the earth endures, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night, will never cease.⁷⁵

The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction; the one who sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life.⁷⁶

⁷⁴ Math. 7:24 - 27

⁷⁵ Gen. 8:22

⁷⁶ Gal. 6:8

All churches and their performance can be judged in this way. Recognize and honor the authority over you and you will reap the accompanying blessings. Sad to say, many don't have the blessing, because they lack accurate estimation of God's authority. **Jesus said, "If you do not receive a prophet in the name of a prophet you cannot receive the reward of a prophet"**. They only have twenty percent blessing, because they only honor twenty percent of authority given by Christ. The pastor constitutes one fifth of delegated authority in ministry. The church runs in maintenance mode, barely surviving. Let us consider the viewpoint of centralized democracy in denominations where only pastors are produced. This caused more harm and damage, and must of necessity be challenged and changed so that we can utilize and deploy the full spectrum of God's given ministerial authority.

A Call to the Five-Fold Ministry

We call upon all Apostles and Prophets to arise and lay a proper foundation for the church, to establish correct doctrine and direction for the future. Evangelists must come forth and show us our responsibility in relation to the enormous harvest of souls worldwide with insight similar to that of the sons of Issachar. Teachers must take away our blindness regarding authority so that we can come into the full stature of that man Christ Jesus.

In order to attain the full measure and stature of Jesus Christ, we have to become the corporate man God desires to build, the deployment of the complete fivefold need to be realized. The immaturity of the body of Christ can be traced to the underdeveloped leadership structures being

trained and used today. The cry of the spirit is for reality. Throne room life must be channeled by and through throne room principles. Secular styled leadership and management can be administered in the Outer Court and the Holy Place but will never stand in the presence and awesomeness of the Most Holy Place.

Here only the Divine pattern will be sanctioned.

The dye is cast; **God said, “Build according to a heavenly blueprint”**. Rejection of God's plan leads to the withdrawal of God's presence. The absence of God's presence leaves room for envy and selfish ambition, wherein disorder and every evil practice is made manifest.

Such wisdom does not come down from heaven but is earthly, unspiritual, of the devil. For where you have envy and selfish ambition, there you find disorder and every evil practice.⁷⁷

The man made structures built on earthly wisdom urgently needs the Jeremiah administration of uprooting, tearing down, overthrowing and destroying so that an establishing of building and planting can take place effectively. The almond tree only bears fruit in God's presence. The Ark of the Covenant can be ushered back based upon God's established order or Uzzah will die trying to help God.

After David had constructed buildings for himself in the City of David, he prepared a place for the ark of God and pitched a tent for it. Then David said, “no one but the Levites may carry the ark of God, because

⁷⁷ James 3:15,16

the Lord chose them to carry the ark of the Lord and to minister before him forever.⁷⁸

They moved the ark of God from Abinadab's house on a new cart, with Uzzah and Ahio guiding it. David and all the Israelites were celebrating with all their might before God, with songs and with harps, lyres, tambourines, cymbals and trumpets. When they came to the threshing floor of Kidon, Uzzah reached out his hand to steady the ark, because the oxen stumbled. The Lord's anger burned against Uzzah, and he struck him down because he had put his hand on the ark. So he died there before God.⁷⁹

He Must Remain in Heaven

He must remain in heaven until the time comes for God to restore everything, as he promised long ago through his holy prophets.⁸⁰

The Father's intention is for the full administration of divine authority with regards to leadership and management of His church is to become manifest.

In the last days the mountain of the Lord's temple will be established as chief among the mountains; it will be raised above the hills, and all nations will stream to it.⁸¹

⁷⁸ 1 Chron. 15: 1 - 2

⁷⁹ 1 Chron. 13: 7 - 10

⁸⁰ Acts 3:21

⁸¹ Isa. 2: 2

The establishing of the mountain of God as the chief of the mountains in the earth is a top priority. Successful governing resides in the ability to govern. The question is not the church's ability to govern. No that abounds. The real issue is – are we going to accept God's governing pattern?

The discernment and recognition of divine authority structures such as, *Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, Teachers and Pastors* as the church's governing body is critical, if we are to become and maintain our relevance. Revelation 12 and it's desired end of seeing the kingdoms of this world become the kingdoms of our God and of His Christ will but remain a dream.

To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.⁸²

Christ in us the hope of glory, unless we give full recognition to theocratic avenues of authority the fullness of the stature of that man Christ Jesus will not be released in our churches. *Unless we allow Apostles to be God's send one's, directed by God's holy Prophets to set the church of Jesus Christ into divine order, we will not have a release of God's blessing to cover the whole earth, and we will not be restored to maximum power and relevance.*
LET THE EARTH BE FILLED WITH HIS GLORY!

⁸² Col. 1:27

Elders in the Old Testament

The Old Testament people of God were not exclusive in having elders.

"In most civilizations authority has been vested in those who by reason of age or experience have been thought best qualified to rule. It is not surprising therefore that the leaders in many ancient communities have borne a title derived from a root meaning 'old age'. In this respect the Hebrew 'elder' (*zāgēn* - literally, 'bearded one') stands side by side with the Homeric *gerontes*, the Spartan *presbys*, the Roman *senatus* and the Arab *Sheikh*." ⁸³

Elders in other Societies

In the Pentateuch, elders are referred to among the Egyptians

So Joseph went up to bury his father. All Pharaoh's officials accompanied him - the dignitaries of his court and all the dignitaries of Egypt ⁸⁴

The elders of Moab and Midian left, taking with them the fee for divination. ⁸⁵

⁸³ J.B. Taylor, *New Bible Dictionary*

⁸⁴ Gen. 50:7

As well as among the Israelites, where their first mention is in Exodus 3:16, at the time of the Egyptian captivity. Moses is told by God to collaborate with them in the escape of the people from Egypt. The exact number of elders in Egypt is not given, but in Exodus 24:1 Moses is commanded by God to draw aside 70 of them to worship on the mountain. It is presumably upon these 70 that the spirit of God falls in Numbers 11:25.

What about the Promised Land?

Once the people of God entered the Promised Land it would appear that every city had its ruling body of elders whose duties included acting as judges in arresting murderers,

The elders of this town shall send for him, bring him back from the city, and hand him over to the avenger of blood to die.⁸⁶

conducting inquests,

Your elders and judges shall go out and measure the distance from the body to the neighboring towns.⁸⁷

and settling marital disputes,

Then the girl's father and mother shall bring proof that she was a virgin to the town elders at the gate. However, if a man does not want to marry his brother's wife, she shall go to the elders at the town

⁸⁵ Num. 22:7

⁸⁶ Deut. 19:12

⁸⁷ Deut. 21:2

gate and say, "My husband's brother refuses to carry on his brother's name in Israel. He will not fulfill the duty of a brother-in-law to me." ⁸⁸

If theirs was a city of refuge they also heard pleas for asylum. When he flees to one of these cities, he is to stand in the entrance of the city gate and state his case before the elders of that city. Then they are to admit him into their city and give him a place to live with them.⁸⁹

The number of elders in each city appears to vary, but we know Succoth had 77 of them.

He caught a young man of Succoth and questioned him, and the young man wrote down for him the names of the seventy-seven officials of Succoth, the elders of the town.⁹⁰

Although that number may have included other civil officials, elsewhere termed officers and judges.

The National Body of Elders

The national body of 'elders of Israel' still exercised considerable influence under the Monarchy. Their position and influence was recognized by Solomon

Then king Solomon summoned into his presence at Jerusalem the elders of Israel, all the heads of the tribes

⁸⁸ Deut. 22:15; 25:7

⁸⁹ Joshua 20:4

⁹⁰ Judges 8:14

*and the chiefs of the Israelite families, to bring up the ark of the Lord's covenant from Zion, the City of David. When all the elders of Israel had arrived, the priests took up the ark...*⁹¹

Ahab

The king of Israel summoned all the elders of the land and said to them, "See how this man is looking for trouble! When he sent for my wives and my children, my silver and my gold, I did not refuse him."⁹²

Jezebel

So she wrote letters in Ahab's name, placed his seal on them, and sent them to the elders and nobles who lived in Naboth's city with him.⁹³

Jehu

Now there were in Samaria seventy sons of the house of Ahab. So Jehu wrote letters and sent them to Samaria: to the officials of Jezreel, to the elders and to the guardians of Ahab's children.⁹⁴

Hezekiah

He sent Eliakim the palace administrator, Shebna the secretary and the leading priests, all wearing sackcloth, to the prophet Isaiah son of Amoz.⁹⁵

and Josiah

⁹¹ 1 Kings 8:1,3

⁹² 1 Kings 20:7

⁹³ 1 Kings 21:8

⁹⁴ 2 Kings 10:1

⁹⁵ 2 Kings 19:2

The king called together all the elders of Judah and Jerusalem.⁹⁶

Post-exilic Elders

Following the Exile it appears that the influence of the elders became greater, because of the collapse of the Monarchy. Both in the exiled community and in Palestine the elders are quite prominent.

The word came to Jeremiah from the Lord when king Zedekiah sent to him Pashur son of Malkijah and the priest Zephaniah son of Maaseiah.⁹⁷

In the sixth year, in the sixth month on the fifth day, while I was sitting in my house and the elders of Judah were sitting before me, the hand of the Sovereign Lord came upon me there.

Some of the elders of Israel came to me and sat down in front of me.⁹⁸

They appear also in the time of Ezra where they were fully involved in the rebuilding of the Temple.

We questioned the elders and asked them, "Who authorized you to rebuild this temple and restore this structure?"⁹⁹

Now then, Tattenai, governor of Trans-Euphrates, and Shethar-Bozenai and you, their fellow officials of that

⁹⁶ 2 Kings 23:1

⁹⁷ Jer. 21:1

⁹⁸ Eze. 8:1; 14:1

⁹⁹ Ezra 5:9

province, stay away from there. Do not interfere with the work on this temple of God. Let the governor of the Jews and the Jewish elders rebuild this house of God on its site. Moreover, I hereby decree what you are to do for these elders of the Jews in the construction of this house of God: The expenses of these men are to be fully paid out of the royal treasury, from the revenues of Trans-Euphrates, so that the work will not stop. Whatever is needed - young bulls, rams, male lambs for burnt offerings to the God of heaven, and wheat, salt, wine and oil, as requested by the priests in Jerusalem - must be given them daily without fail, so that they may offer sacrifices pleasing to the God of heaven and pray for the well-being of the king and his sons. Furthermore, I decree that if anyone changes this edict, a beam is to be pulled from his house and he is to be lifted up and impaled on it. And for this crime his house is to be made a pile of rubble. May God, who has caused his Name to dwell there, overthrow any king or people who lifts a hand to change this decree or to destroy this temple in Jerusalem. I Darius have decreed it. Let it be carried out with diligence. Then, because of the decree King Darius had sent, Tattenai, governor of Trans-Euphrates, and Shethar-Bozenai and their associates carried it out with diligence. So the elders of the Jews continued to build and prosper under the preaching of Haggai the prophet and Zechariah, a descendant of Iddo. They finished building the temple according to the command of the God of Israel and the decrees of Cyrus, Darius and Artaxerxes, king of Persia. The

temple was completed on the third day of the month Adar, in the sixth year of the reign of King Darius.¹⁰⁰

and formed part of the city government in the newly resettled Jerusalem (Ezra 10:14). Now however, it was not so much clan or tribal leaders, but individual families that had risen to leadership.

The Situation by the Time of Jesus

During the inter-testamental period these family heads and elders slowly took control of the apparatus of state and began meeting as a council to rule the nation, becoming the precursor of the Sanhedrin. At some point there came to be 70 members (or 71 if one includes the High Priest) consisting of elders and aristocratic priests with the High Priest presiding. Later on, there was a growing influx of Pharisees/Scribes. The power of this central council waxed and waned throughout the Greek period.

By the time of Jesus the elders primarily served a community function, having both a civic (political/judicial) and religious role. From Rabbinic writings it would appear that both in Judea and in diasporate communities there was a council of seven elders which functioned primarily at the civic level, and an executive committee of three rulers - the head of the synagogue, the minister of the congregation and the collector of alms - which functioned at the religious level. However, there being no clear distinction between civic and religious life in Jewish communities, the normal

¹⁰⁰ Ezra 5:9; 6:6-15

situation would probably have been that the same group of elders ruled over both civic and religious matters.

In addition to the local councils there was the national council, the Sanhedrin in Jerusalem. The term 'elder' could refer generally to the whole Sanhedrin (e.g. Luke 22:66; Acts 22:5) or specifically to one element of it, thus distinguishing the elders from the other members of the Sanhedrin, namely the Sadducees, Chief Priests and Pharisees/Scribes/Teachers of the law (e.g. Mark 14:53).

Sadducees and Chief Priests were aristocrats from among who usually the High Priest who acted as the Sanhedrin President was elected. Their emphasis was the governance of the Temple. The Pharisees, Scribes and Teachers of the Law were mostly middle class and thus closer to the ordinary people. They were purists who emphasized the Mosaic Law to which they gave devoted study and concerning which they were considered experts. Their focus was the governance of the synagogues.

Elders in the New Testament Church

It is in the light of this Jewish background that eldership in the New Testament church needs to be considered, although it must be said that some scholars still debate just how closely Christian eldership reflects the Jewish model.

"These elders ... represent the congregation like a synagogue council. The formation of a body of elders probably took place when the apostles left Jerusalem and James assumed the leadership. Its functions are patterned partly after the synagogue council and partly after the Sanhedrin".¹⁰¹

The Greek word translated 'elder' in the English versions is *presbuteros*. It means literally 'an older person or a senior', in which sense it is used, for example, in John 8:9 and Acts 2:17. However, when used in the context of church leadership it is clearly referring to a specific office in the same way that it is used to refer to an office among the leaders of the Jewish people.

We will examine NT Church Eldership under a Number of Headings.

¹⁰¹ Kittel, page 932

How important is age?

Given what has been said before, should elders always be older people? Age indicates the likelihood, but not the certainty of wisdom and respect. Since a wise youth is better than a foolish old king.

Better a poor but wise youth than an old but foolish king who no longer knows how to take warning.¹⁰²

There seems no reason to refuse to recognize early maturity, although a new convert clearly would not qualify.

He must not be a recent convert, or he may become conceited and fall under the same judgment as the devil.¹⁰³

Plurality of Leadership

Like their Jewish forebears, it seems clear from the New Testament that elders were appointed in plurality.

Paul and Barnabas appointed elders for them in each church and, with prayer and fasting, committed them to the Lord in whom they had put their trust.¹⁰⁴

This they did, sending their gift to the elders by Barnabas and Saul. The next day Paul and the rest of us went to see James, and all the elders were present.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰² Ecc. 4:13

¹⁰³ 1 Tim. 3:6

¹⁰⁴ Acts 14:23

Do not neglect your gift, which was given you through a prophetic message when the body of elders laid their hands on you.¹⁰⁶

Is any one of you sick? He should call the elders of the church to pray over him and anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord.¹⁰⁷

The Issue of Community

A central element here is the issue of community: the eldership reflecting both the Godhead in whose name they govern and the people whom they have charge towards.

There is no real evidence that there was a strict internal co-equality among a local eldership. Certainly among the apostles and elders assembled in the General Council at Jerusalem, James seemed to have a presiding role.

When they finished, James spoke up: "Brothers listen to me."¹⁰⁸

It seems logical that the inevitable differences in gifts and abilities would be recognized among an eldership and indeed this view would be strengthened by the interpretation given in 1 Timothy 5:17.

The relationship towards Overseers/Bishops

¹⁰⁵ Acts 11:30; 21:18

¹⁰⁶ 1 Tim. 4:14

¹⁰⁷ James 5:14

¹⁰⁸ Acts 15:13

The word translated 'overseer' in modern English versions or 'bishop' in older versions is in the original Greek the word *episkopos*. It literally means 'overseer' or 'superintendent'. It is a compound of *epi*, which means 'over' and *skopos*, which means to 'look', or 'watch'. The word was well known in classical Greek and was used to describe magistrates, among others.

It seems clear that the terms 'elder' and 'overseer' describe one and the same person in the New Testament. In Acts 20:17, Paul sends for the 'elders' of the church in Ephesus and calls them 'overseers'.

Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers.

Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood.¹⁰⁹

In Titus 1:5, Paul instructs Titus to ordain elders and immediately afterwards, obviously referring to the same people, calls them both 'elders' (in verse 6) and 'overseers' (in verse 7).

The verb *episkopein* (to oversee) is used to describe the elders' function in 1 Peter 5:2.

While 1 Timothy 3 mentions only 'overseers' and 'deacons', the mention of 'elders' in 1 Timothy 5:17 strongly suggests that eldership is another name for the same group of people.

¹⁰⁹ Acts 20:28

There is clearly a plurality of overseers in the Philippian church

Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus, to all the saints in Christ Jesus at Philippi, together with the overseers and deacons.¹¹⁰

from which we conclude that they governed corporately, which is of course what we would expect if the 'overseers' were another way of describing the 'elders'.

It would seem therefore that in looking at the same person, references to 'elder' highlight the personal qualities, whilst references to 'overseer' highlight the function that is performed.

From all we have said it is apparent that the rise of a monarchical episcopate from the second century seems to be without any scriptural warrant.

What about the Apostolic Fathers ?

Among the Apostolic Fathers, Ignatius is the only one who insists on monarchical episcopacy, and even he never states that this is of divine institution - an argument that would have been decisive, if it had been available for him to use. Jerome, commenting on Titus 1:5, remarks that the supremacy of a single bishop arose 'by custom rather than by the Lord's actual appointment', as a means of preventing schisms in the church. It seems most probable that monarchical episcopacy appeared in the local

¹¹⁰ Phil. 1:1

congregations when some gifted individual acquired a permanent chairmanship of the board of presbyter-bishops, or when the church expanded, and the presbyters were scattered to outlying congregations, leaving only one of their number in the mother church."¹¹¹

The relationship towards Governmental Ministries in Ephesians 4:11

Take care and be on guard for yourselves and the whole flock over which the Holy Spirit has appointed you bishops and guardians...¹¹²

From this passage it is clear that the elders/overseers whom Paul is addressing are exhorted to shepherd (*poimainō*) the church of God.

Peter makes the same exhortation to the elders.

Tend, nurture, guard, guide and fold the flock of God that is your responsibility...¹¹³

We have already established that there is no distinction between elders and overseers. From these two verses it seems clear that the elders outworked their oversight through shepherding care. The evident correctness of this observation has led some to conclude that the elder/overseer is synonymous with the pastor of Ephesians 4:11.

¹¹¹ G.S.M. Walker and R.T. Beckwith, *N.B.D.*

¹¹² Acts 20:28

¹¹³ 1 Pet. 5:2

Thus elder, bishop, shepherd speak of one and the same person. It refers to the ministry of watching over, guiding, feeding, ruling, teaching and exerting protective care over the sheep by God's appointed leaders.¹¹⁴

However, this view does not go unchallenged. In 1 Peter 5:2, 2 John 1:1 and 3 John 1:1 the apostles Peter and John identify themselves as 'elders'. In Acts 15 it is clear by comparing verse 22 with verse 32 that the prophets Judas and Silas were also known as elders. Thus these two Ephesians 4 ministries were elders, but not pastors/teachers. Is it not more likely that while all Ephesians 4 ministries can be elders (although this is perhaps least likely to be relevant for the evangelist), not all elders will be Ephesians 4 pastor/teachers and yet others could be Ephesians 4 apostles, prophets or even evangelists.

This interpretation seems to be backed up by 1 Timothy 5:17, where it would seem that at least two, and perhaps three, types of elders are being referred to.

The saying is true and irrefutable: If any man eagerly seeks the office of bishop, he desires an excellent task.¹¹⁵

This scripture makes it clear that a man may aspire to oversee the church. It is questionable whether he may aspire to an Ephesians 4 ministry. If the latter were gifts of the risen Christ, appointment would appear to be the

¹¹⁴ Connor, *The Church in the New Testament*

¹¹⁵ 1 Tim. 3:1

prerogative of God, the function of men being simply to recognize what has been given.

Qualifications of Eldership

Self-controlled (1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:8)
Hospitable (1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:8)
Able to teach (1 Timothy 3:2; 5:17; Titus 1:9)
Not violent but gentle (1 Timothy 3:3; Titus 1:7)
Not quarrelsome (1 Timothy 3:3)
Not a lover of money (1 Timothy 3:3)
Not a recent convert (1 Timothy 3:6)
Has a good reputation with outsiders (1 Timothy 3:7)
Not overbearing (Titus 1:7)
Not quick-tempered (Titus 1:7)
Loves what is good (Titus 1:8)
Upright, holy (Titus 1:8)
Disciplined (Titus 1:8)
Above reproach/blameless (1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:6)
Husband of one wife (1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:6)
Temperate (1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:7)
Respectable (1 Timothy 3:2)
Not given to drunkenness (1 Timothy 3:3; Titus 1:7)
Manages his own family well (1 Timothy 3:4)
Sees that his children obey him (1 Timothy 3:4-5; Titus 1:6)
Does not pursue dishonest gain (1 Timothy 1:7)
Keeps hold of the deep truths (Titus 1:9)

The appointment of Elders and ongoing Relationship with Apostles

The appointment of elders is clearly a function of the apostles.

Paul and Barnabas appointed elders for them in each church and, with prayer and fasting, committed them to the Lord in whom they had put their trust.¹¹⁶

Apostles may also delegate the task to others.

The reason I left you in Crete was that you might straighten out what was left unfinished and appoint elders in every town, as I directed you.¹¹⁷

Although there is some debate about the meaning of the Greek word *cheirotoneō* in Acts 14:23, it does seem that the best translation is the word 'appointed' which appears in the main text of most modern English versions [The word in Titus 1:5, *Kathistēmi*, is clearly translated 'appoint']. However, particularly with the example of Acts 6 in mind, it seems perfectly possible that the apostles, upon their return to the churches, took soundings from among the people in some way to help them in their appointing process.

It is overwhelmingly from the ministry of Paul that we have any insight into the ongoing relationship that apostles had with the churches that they worked towards. It is perhaps worth making the point that apostles are those sent forth to preach the gospel of the kingdom and to make provision for the ongoing care of those who respond to their ministry. Therefore apostles could be expected to

¹¹⁶ Acts 14:23

¹¹⁷ Titus 1:5

have a relationship not only to the elders of a church, but in some sense to the church as a whole. Thus they are not merely 'superintendents' supporting all the elders in a particular region.

The exact nature of the relationship would obviously depend upon a number of factors, not least whether or not the apostle was personally involved in the establishment of the church and the nature and extent of input that was subsequently needed, which would inevitably reflect the needs of the people in the light of the competence of their elders (e.g. Corinth).

It is clear that the elders cared for their church communities in any given location under the guidelines of doctrine and church practice set by the apostles. However, from Acts 15 we can see that the elders had a significant role in the first General Council, and from Acts 15:22 it would even appear that in some way the whole church was involved.

Elders in the City

Evangelicals have often talked about the New Testament describing the church in two ways; the church universal and the church local. We have normally taken the latter phrase to refer to what we would describe as our local congregations. However, this does not appear to be the situation referred to in the New Testament.

When Paul, for example, writes,

"To the church of God in Corinth" ¹¹⁸

or

"To the church of the Thessalonians" ¹¹⁹

He seems to view the church in those cities as one people.

Clearly, it would not be possible for all the Christians in a large city to come together for every meeting. Thus we have the church in the home.

Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts.

Day after day, in the temple courts and from house to house, they never stopped teaching and proclaiming the good news that Jesus is the Christ.

You know that I have not hesitated to preach anything that would be helpful to you but have taught you publicly and from house to house.¹²⁰

Greet also the church that meets at their house.¹²¹

The churches in the province of Asia send you greetings. Aquila and Priscilla greet you warmly in the Lord, and so does the church that meets at their house.¹²²

¹¹⁸ 1 Cor. 1:1; 2 Cor. 1:1

¹¹⁹ 1Thes. 1:1

¹²⁰ Acts 2:46; 5:42; 20:20

¹²¹ Rom. 16:5

¹²² 1 Cor. 16:19

Bearing in mind that these homes need not have been the small ones that we are used to, is it not possible that the 'church in the home' could equate as much to, if not more so, what we now call 'local congregations' (at least the smaller ones) as to what we now call 'home groups'?

We must not mistakenly think that cities in the first century in the Mediterranean were all small. In Ephesus, for example, the theatre referred to in Acts 19 probably held around 25 000 people. Nevertheless, it is of course true that today our largest cities are considerably larger than those at the time of the early church: but it is also true that our transport and communication links are vastly superior!

There is undoubtedly much thinking yet to do on this subject, but immediately certain things come into prospect when we consider this issue.

- the prize of church unity
- the emergence from isolationism
- the overthrow of small thinking

Deacons in the New Testament Church

“You know Lord how I serve you with great emotional fervor in the limelight. You know how eagerly I speak for you at a Women's Club. You know how I effervesce when I promote a fellowship group. You know my genuine enthusiasm at a Bible study. But how I would react, I wonder, if you pointed to a basin of water and asked me to wash the calloused feet of a bent and wrinkled old woman day after day, month after month, in a room where nobody saw and nobody knew.” Those words by Ruth Calkins, I believe, really capture the essence of a true servant. To be content to give sacrificially of yourself even where nobody will ever notice or give you praise -- simply because you are doing it unto the Lord.

You know, that is a perfect description of the Lord Jesus Christ. He came down from heaven, not to do His own will, but the will of Him who sent Him. He did not come to be served, but to serve, and to lay down His life as a ransom for many. The Lord Jesus did not go about healing the sick, preaching the gospel, and ultimately die upon a cross for the sins of His people because of all the

notoriety, publicity, and wonderful kickbacks He would get out of it. He did it out of obedience and love for His Father. He is the greatest example of a True Servant who has ever lived.

I want to introduce you to an order of men and women in the church of Jesus Christ, who are recognized as true servants. They are called to model for the rest of the church what true servanthood is all about. They are The Servants - or to use the technical word: The Deacons.

Today there are many different models of Deacons in the church of Christ:

The Baptist Model

In that paradigm, the Deacons are the ruling body of the church, and the Eldership is ignored altogether. Instead, there is one pastor and many Deacons. In this model, the Deacons are the employer of the pastor who works for them.

The Liturgical Model

In this model, the Deacons are a suborder to the priests. They help with communion, vestments, and the facilities of the church.

Enforcers of Church Discipline Model

Dr. E.V. Hill, Pastor of the Mt. Zion Missionary Baptist Church in Watts, talks of growing up in Sweet Home, Texas. In that church, a man beating his wife was told by

the Deacons "we don't want you to beat your wife no more. If you do, we will come and beat you up ourselves". He beat her up again, and they came and beat the man to a pulp. In the words of Dr. Hill "and he don't jump on his wife no more".

With all of these various models of Deacons, and all of our various backgrounds in different churches, we probably have a great many different ideas of what Deacons are, what they do, and what their qualifications are. Therefore, we must collectively go to the Scriptures to allow them, and them alone to inform us (not our past traditions or church experiences), so that when we talk of deacons, we all mean the same thing.

Let's examine three questions that relate to the ministry of deacons:

1. What is a Deacon?
2. What is the function of a Deacon?
3. What are the qualifications of a Deacon?

What is a Deacon?

The use of the word Deacon in the New Testament comes from three similar Greek words:

Diakonos - servant;

Diakonia - service;

Diakoneo - to serve.

They are mentioned 101 times and the vast majority of times these words refer simply to general service. The root

idea is to "wait on tables", like a waiter in a restaurant. John 2 speaks of servants (diakonos) who filled stone water pots with water. In Luke 4, Peter's mother-in-law arose and began to serve (diakonew) them.

Romans 13:4 speak of those who are "ministers of God to you for good". In this context the "diakonos" is a civil magistrate, similar to our State soldiers or our policemen. We speak of 'serving' a wonderful meal; taking a car to the service station; joining the military so we can serve our country. This is what the Greek word speaks of - general service.

Only 2 out of 101 times that the word is used in the New Testament does it refer to the office of a Deacon (Philippians 1:1 and 1 Timothy 3:8). The million-dollar question is "How did the word come to be known as an office in the church?"

Well in order to answer that question, I have to explain the difference between translation and transliteration. Translation is taking a word in one language and explaining its meaning in another (uno, dos, tres = 1, 2, 3). Transliteration is simply inventing a new word in the English that sounds the same as the word in the first language. For example, our word baptism is a transliteration from the Greek word 'baptizw', which means, "to dip". The King James Version translators invented this word because they were afraid of offending the churches that sprinkled. Translators recognize in 1 Timothy 3 a word, which refers to more than general service. It refers to an office in the church. Thus the translators have invented a new word. They have transliterated "deacon" from 'diakonos'. These are the

official servants of the church. They are servants with a capital S; deacons with a capital D – a specific, recognized group of people who served in an official capacity under the Elders of the local church.

There are three levels of service mentioned in the Bible:

A. Service Required of All Christians

1 Peter 4:10 says "As each one has received a special gift, employ it in serving one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God." All of us who are Christians are deacons with a small d. All believers are called to serve, not just the Elders and Deacons. You are in the ministry, placed in an army under the banner of Christ and enlisted in service for advancement of His kingdom. The New Testament makes no mention of a believer who willfully chooses not to serve. Too often we have servers and spectators. We shouldn't think in terms of a leadership level (Elders), a serving level (Deacons), and a spectator level (all the rest). Ephesians 4:11-12 says "And He gave some apostles, some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ".

B. The Gift of Service

Some are supernaturally gifted by the Holy Spirit to serve. They derive joy and delight in it. Romans 12:7 speak of the gift of service. Those with this gift enjoy serving behind the scenes, out of the limelight, where not many see or know. We have such in our own local church body.

You will see these people serving by cooking meals, running the sound board, working on special “spring clean days”, typing and printing, and working in the tape and book library.

C. The Official Office of Deacon

These previous two levels cover every use of the word in the New Testament except for two. These other two references are translated as "deacon". Why are there moral qualifications listed in 1 Timothy 3 of the Deacons? Because they are the official servants who provide a moral example for everyone else to emulate. Why has God set them apart in an official way to do what everybody else does in an ordinary way? Because we all need models to follow. Their example teaches us how we are to live while serving. You see, leaders lead by example. Their lives are to be the embodiment, and the incarnation of the truth.

What is a Deacon?

As we have seen, he is an official servant in the Church, called by God to provide an example for all the rest to follow.

2. What is the Function of a Deacon?

It's important to note that nowhere in the New Testament are we given a job description for him.

Evidently, Deacons occupy a very fluid ministry. There are very specific job descriptions for Elders: God has called them to oversee, rule, lead, shepherd, and protect the body of Christ. But what do Deacons do? Very simply, they are

to do “anything the elders need them to do”! Right about now you are probably thinking, "Wait a minute! I thought Deacons handled the physical needs of the church and Elders handled the spiritual needs!" Well, let's take a look at it.

In Acts 6, the church is exploding. A conservative estimate is that 20,000 new Christians have been added to the church since Pentecost. The early church took it upon them to feed their widows. But at this point, the non-Palestinian, Greek-speaking Jewish widows are being overlooked in the daily serving of food. This was a major problem! How were they going to deal with it? Acts 6:2-4 reads "and the 12 summoned the congregation of the disciples and said, 'It is not desirable for us to neglect the word of God in order to serve tables. But select from among you, brethren, seven men of good reputation, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, which we may put in charge of this task. But we will devote ourselves to prayer, and to the ministry of the word.'" The Apostles knew God's call on their lives - the ministry of the word of God and prayer. That line of demarcation must be protected and they must not misdirect their energies. God had called them to a specific function. They were in danger of getting sucked into other tasks that God had not called them to.

Notice that they were never referred to as Deacons, but always as ‘The 7’. In fact, they exercised ministries more like Elders. Philip evangelized, performed miracles, and healed the sick. Stephen preached fearlessly before the Sanhedrin. Both had speaking gifts. One of the distinctions between Elders and Deacons is that Elders must be able to teach, whereas Deacons don't have to. We've assumed

these 7 are Deacons. Since they handled physical needs, we assume that's what Deacons do. But wait! They are never called Deacons. Thus, we can't assume Deacons only handle the physical needs of the church.

Thus, we have sought to answer the question, "what is the function of a Deacon?" Our answer is, "to serve the Body of Christ by doing whatever the Elders delegate for them to do". This can be overseeing the women's ministry or men's ministry, providing meals for the sick and needy in the body, building maintenance, overseeing the Sunday school ministry, and so on and so forth.

3. What are the Qualifications of a Deacon?

Well, to find out, let's take a look at the only place in the Bible that lists them - **1 Timothy 3:8-13**.

The same goes for those who want to be servants in the church: serious, not deceitful, not too free with the bottle, not in it for what they can get out of it. They must be reverent before the mystery of the faith, not using their position to try to run things. Let them prove themselves first. If they show they can do it, take them on. No exceptions are to be made for women--same qualifications: serious, dependable, not sharp-tongued, not over fond of wine. Servants in the church are to be committed to their spouses, attentive to their own children, and diligent in looking after their own affairs. Those who do this servant work will come to be highly respected, a real credit to this Jesus-faith.

Notice, first of all, that the Deacons are to possess the same basic moral qualifications as Elders. In no way does Paul refer to the Deacons as morally inferior to Elders. The character qualifications are exactly the same, but their function is distinct. The Elders rule and teach. The Deacons serve. We can't just let anyone be a Deacon. We can't lower the standards for the sake of convenience. Deacons are to be models of spiritual virtue. We should never say "This man's life is not in order. Let's make him a Deacon because he can't be an Elder" or "He's got one little blemish in his life; let's make him a Deacon. When it gets cleared up we will make him an Elder". We can't lower the standards for the sake of convenience. Deacons are to be models of spiritual virtue.

These moral virtues can be listed under 3 main headings.

1. Personal Holiness

1 Timothy 3:8 "Deacons likewise must be men of dignity, not double-tongued, or addicted to much wine or fond of sordid gain." "Likewise" must refer to another office than that of Elder (compare 3:1). This verse could read "Just like the office of an Elder, a Deacon must be..."

Dignity: 1 Timothy 3:8 – Dignity is defined as "the quality of a man's life that inspires awe because of the integrity of a spiritual life". It carries with it the idea of being stately or royal. It inspires awe from people who witness their life. It includes the idea of someone who is serious-minded. It's not that they aren't fun or can never crack a joke, but they are serious about serious matters. They aren't flippant or flighty, but deadly serious about spiritual matters.

Not Double-Tongued: 1 Timothy 3:8 It literally means "a person who says one thing to one person and something else to another to achieve their own goals". A Deacon can't be a gossip. A Deacon must have integrity of speech and be consistent in his speech. Why is this so important? Because Deacons will deal with people. They will be involved in the lives of people and must be able to handle personal information without gossiping.

Not Addicted to Much Wine: 1 Timothy 3:8 The Deacon must not be known as a "heavy drinker". He never gets drunk. We can't say that it is a sin for a Deacon to have a drink because the Bible doesn't say that. But the Bible does say he is not to be a person who drinks to excess. He should also not be abusive with drugs or any other chemical substance. A Deacon must be able to think on a moment's notice. His mind must not be clouded, because he is involved in God's work.

Not Fond of Sordid Gain: 1 Timothy 3:8 The word sordid means "filthy". Leaders must deal with the church funds and therefore must not be money-motivated. The issue of materialism is a done deal in their lives and not a present issue that they are working through. If they are still dealing with this issue, they won't be able to give wholeheartedly to the service of the church but will always be hankering after the things of the world and spending their energies there. A Deacon must be a trust-worthy person.

Women Deacons: Verse 11 says, "Women must likewise be dignified, not malicious gossips, but temperate, faithful in all things". Women Deacons have the same

qualifications as male Deacons. These four qualifications correspond to the four qualifications of their male counterparts in personal holiness. Temperate means wine less; and faithful means trustworthy or not fond of sordid gain. Who are these women? How do we know if it is speaking of a deaconess? It may mean wives of Deacons, or wives of Deacons and Elders, but the following difficulties occur with that interpretation:

- The word "likewise" is used to introduce a second or third in a series. Here it refers to a list of church officials. Therefore, it would be natural to use it in listing the qualifications of Deaconesses, but unnatural to use it to refer to Deacon's wives.
- There is no possessive pronoun: "their women" would be needed if these women were the wives of the deacons. But it just says "women".
- The Elder's wives are not mentioned: why then should there be a reference to the Deacon's wives?
- This section is dealing completely with church officials and qualifications - not spouses of church officials.

For these reasons, I believe it is best to see Paul speaking of an office in the church. Phoebe, in Romans 16:1 may have functioned as a Deaconess. What are the qualifications for women Deacons? 1 Timothy 3:1 tells us that they are the same as for their male counterparts: dignified, not malicious gossips, temperate (which means wine less), and faithful in all things.

2. Spiritual Maturity

"But holding to the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience." 1 Timothy 3:9

Holding to the mystery of the faith:

Mystery means something once hidden but now revealed. It refers to New Testament truth. This person must understand the Gospel, be committed to New Testament theology, and to sound doctrine. The word "hold" means steadfast adherence to. Why must they hold steadfastly to the truth? Because there is no spiritual maturity without Biblical knowledge. Of course one can know much and be immature, but one can never have maturity without knowledge.

With a clear conscience:

That is, a conscience that doesn't accuse. They don't just know the truth, but they obey it. A Deacon is a person of spiritual integrity. There is no hypocrisy between what he says and how he lives.

Beyond reproach:

There is nothing to accuse of him. He is blameless and irreproachable. There is no obvious defect in his moral character or sin which taints his reputation or puts his character in question.

First tested: 1 Timothy 3:10. The word "also" refers us back to the Elders. The Elders also have to be tested. The Deacons are given responsibility and then the Elders watch their lives to see how they are performing. Are they faithful and beyond reproach? Do they meet the qualifications? Then after a period of time, if they are found faithful, they can bring those people before the

body, and the body can ratify that these are people God has raised up so that they can be publicly put into office within the church of Jesus Christ. The word "tested" refers to "metal cast into a furnace to see if it is good and genuine, or whether it is mixed with impurities". It would not be right to say "let's make Harry a Deacon - maybe he'll come to church more often" or "If we make him a Deacon, maybe he'll start coming to prayer meeting". These men are supposed to be of such character that they are already tested. You already know of their quality, and because of their sterling quality, they are set apart in the church to act as models for the rest of the congregation.

3. Godly Home Lives

The husband of one wife.

1 Timothy 3:12 is referring to male Deacons who are married. In the original it means "a one-woman man". The emphasis is on the quality of his relationship to his wife, not on his marital status (single, divorced, or widowed). He is completely committed to one woman alone. He's not a flirt or a ladies' man, but solely devoted to his wife. He is a person of integrity when it comes to people of the opposite sex. He doesn't give opportunities for people to make allegations against him by his meeting with people of the opposite sex alone when other people could misconstrue what is happening.

A good manager of his family.

1 Timothy 3:12. How does he handle his children? Do his children respect him or does he have a child-centered home? Who's in charge at home? Are the finances in order or does he have five charge cards charged to the hilt? Is he

ready to declare bankruptcy? Does he delegate to his wife areas where she's stronger than he is? Is he overseeing the functions and responsibilities within the family? Does he take a leadership role at home? The home is the proving ground for leadership in the church.

What are the qualifications of a Deacon? Personal holiness, spiritual maturity, and a godly home life!

Conclusion

1. Pray for God's will in the selection and appointment of Deacons.
2. Aspire to the office of Deacon. There is nothing wrong in desiring the work of a Deacon or Elder as long as your heart's motivation is right. It is great if you are aspiring for the right reasons. Don't aspire to the office for personal profit, ambition, recognition or applause, but for the glory of God and the good of His church. 1 Timothy 3:1 says "It is trustworthy statement: if any man aspires to the office of overseer, it is a fine work he desires to do."
3. Follow the example of your leaders insofar as they follow Christ. 1 Corinthians 11:1 reminds us "Be imitators of me, just as I also am of Christ". Imitate the faith of those in leadership. Let their example stir you to be like them and to serve sacrificially.

Apostolic Authority

I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.”¹²³

The Binding & Loosing principle

Or again, how can anyone enter a strong man's house and carry off his possessions unless he first ties up the strong man? Then he can rob his house.¹²⁴

Every born again person can to a certain measure be functional or should be, in the area of binding and loosing. Throughout the history of the church the saints have partaken and experienced of the accompanying blessing released by the key of binding and loosing. These relate to individual or personal victories. Presently God is restoring the principle of binding and loosing, relating to the Apostolic. The apostolic anointing will release a greater authority for greater corporate victories. The strongman concept, binding and loosing areas, regions and cities is a product of apostolic technology, driving back the powers of darkness and setting the captives free.

¹²³ Math. 16:19

¹²⁴ Math. 12:29

Wrestling control from the enemy by binding the strongman literally loosens thousands from the kingdom of darkness, to be saved, healed and delivered.

Apostolic ministry is an authority-centered ministry. The anointing operative through it challenges the domain of the enemy and darkness must succumb, yielding to the authority related to that anointing.

Apostolic Authority Demonstrated

Ephesus: business went on as usual. Idol worship centering on Diana, the goddess of fertility, flourished, to the extent that financial gain was made out of it by Demetrius, the silversmith. Then entered Paul the Apostle, the authority upon him engaged the principality over the entire region namely Diana and dethroned her from that stronghold.

With the strongman bound the church could enter its house, the city of Ephesus and plunder the spoils, setting free an entire region from demonic control and oppression.

This is not an isolated incident. What about the Apostolic exploits of Moses whose authority released the Israelites from 400 years of Egyptian slavery, demonic oppression operating through the pharaohs.

Samuel's anointing delivered individuals, groups, towns, cities, and even nations. But the most remarkable achievement of Samuel was the restoration of the prophetic through the spoken word. **1 Samuel 3:1** says the

Word of God and visions were rare; note the difference later on from **1 Samuel 3:2 – 20**.

Another powerful illustration of the Apostolic going into a region and binding the strongman is Amaziah, King of Judah. He planned strategic spiritual warfare. He built an army of 100,000 soldiers and laid them off by Divine instruction. Defeated the army of Seir 10,000 of them (**1 Chronicles 26**).

Judean towns from Samaria to Beth Horon were ruined and 3,000 killed and great spoils were taken. This exploit nails into insignificance when compared to Uzziah's in **1 Chronicles 27**. An intercessory giant he defeated the Philistines broke down the walls (demonic strongholds) of Gath, Jabneh and Ashdad. After dethroning the Philistine principality, he proceeded to rebuild the surrounding towns of Ashdad and other towns in Philistine.

He defeated the Arabians of Gur-Baal and the Meunites. Uzziah released the pastoral anointing, intercession ministry, provided the living water – the word for his livestock – God's parish. Mega Church concepts are not entirely new. Strategic level warfare, Uzziah had a well-trained army, 307,500 men were trained as experts of war, and he had 2,600 captains. Skillful men designed machines to overthrow towers and high places compare this with the warfare techniques of Ephesians.

For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.

Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace.

In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith; with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one.

Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints.¹²⁵

Not all apostles have the same ministry. They operate under various anointing and authorities. Some are called to countries, some are called to nations, some are called to cities, and some reside in local churches.

Apostles are Foundational Ministries

Build on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone.¹²⁶

God's household, the church is built upon the foundation of the Apostles and prophets, Jesus being the chief cornerstone.

¹²⁵ Eph. 6:12-18

¹²⁶ Eph. 2:20

A house without a solid foundation will never stand pressure as proven in **Mathew 7:24 – 27**. The Apostolic sets in place a good foundation based upon the revelation given to Peter by the Father **Mathew 16:13 – 19**. The Lordship of Jesus Christ is the surest foundation that the church can be built upon and apostles have that build into their own lives through trials and hardship. Apostolic teaching and training lays foundational truths from the heart not just rhetoric.

Apostles are correctional

Apostles are concerned with governmental form, structure and order. Disorder Breeds Division and if it is not judged with apostolic insight and clarity, it will destroy the house of God. When something or somebody needs correction it indicates that something is wrong. When a wrong is left unattended, it will affect relationships negatively, kills any form of efficiency and leaves many hurt and offended.

Not anybody in the church is equipped to handle conflict correctly, reason being that ability is wanting because of the absence of authority. When one's anointing does not authorize one, such a one can cause more harm or damage than provide a harmonious solution.

Illegitimate involvement in conflict can also be a major distraction. Therefore it is best to seek counsel from legitimate source, seek out apostle and prophets. A church, which encountered such problems, was the Corinthians. We would learn a great deal from observing the Apostolic Strategy Paul applied in addressing it.

Paul never dealt with issues that others could solve. He did not accept an unnecessary workload.

“And if any man hunger, let him eat at home, that ye come not together unto condemnation”.¹²⁷

Here we see that immediate problem immediately solved. Paul then suggests “the rest He will set in order when He comes.” The problems that cause disorder needed his personal attention and will be dealt with, with the apostle being there in person.

Secondly, Paul delegated authority unto an eldership that would oversee the church he planted.

The reason I left you in Crete was that you might straighten out what was left unfinished and appoint elders in every town, as I directed you.¹²⁸

Titus was left by the apostolic delegation in Crete to take care of the flock. Transferred anointing gave Titus authority to set in order the things that lack, and also to ordain elders in surrounding cities. This was done by apostolic agreement.

A note of caution must be given here: Apostles can only exercise authority in churches that he established his own planting. Apostolic authority does not permit apostles to do what they want, wherever they want. Remember for authority to be effective it must be received.

¹²⁷ 1 Cor. 11:34

¹²⁸ Titus 1:5

“But we will not boast of things without (beyond) our measure, but according to the measure of the rule which God hath distributed to us, a measure to reach even to you.” ¹²⁹

The Apostle Paul could operate in Corinth because he planted the church and was applying his authority within his jurisdiction. But he could not boast of another man’s labor and operate therein.

Neither do we go beyond our limits by boasting of work done by others. ¹³⁰

Apostolic Order

Many churches lack order.

“Let all things be done decently and in order”. ¹³¹

God is a God of order. Creation took place in six days of phenomenal order. The original Aramaic word order is translated as light in the English translation of the creation account. God despises chaos. The Almighty only created mankind after He brought order from existing chaos. Man was then given authority over the existing order of God.

Authority can never function where there is disorder. Scripture lays out a Divine pattern of order for the church to operate in. Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, Pastors and

¹²⁹ 2 Cor. 10:13

¹³⁰ 1 Cor. 10:15

¹³¹ 1 Cor 14: 40

Teachers need to be ordained (set) in the church. So do elders, bishops and deacons.

Placing and setting of people into positions of authority must be done with apostolic acumen. Apostles are usually men of insight and perception and have an amazing ability to judge well. This is the result of intimacy with the Holy Spirit. It is needed to set the right person into the right position. You need the right person for the right job. Efficiency needs to be coupled by Effectively, doing the right thing, the right way.

Apostolic Pioneering

It is automatically accepted that Apostles start churches but that is not all they start. We are currently in the infant stage of the apostolic being restored and what we are witnessing is but a small percentage of the apostolic anointing being released. The ride from hereon in will be very bumpy and we need to adapt to the pace set forth by the Holy Spirit.

Apostles Initiates Church Planting

Peter Wagner is of the opinion the fastest way of evangelism today, is to plant new churches. Churches numbers are heavily outweighed by the population count. So that it stands to reason that the quickest way to bring in the harvest is to plant new churches.

Dion Robert of the Ivory Cost has planted more than 1,500 churches alone all over Africa.

The Apostle, Paul had such a remarkable rate of starting new churches, it is assumed that churches started around him without the apostle being involved.

Apostles Initiates New Moves Of God

Movements usually start out of frustration. People who stay on in frustration become stagnant and eventually die. Those who move on discern what works and what have failed. The church has become experts at riding a wave that has died and crashed out on the beach.

God will speak to a man or woman, work in their lives and make them aware of a certain message or revelation. Then a ministry is released which draws the right kind of people, the people will identify with the Apostolic message and assign their allegiance to it by committing themselves to God's man. As people are drawn, a snowball effect takes place caused by the anointing and without human effort and sweat a movement has started.

The most dangerous thing in today's church is to stay on where God has vacated no anointing and no grace for living is left; the best is to move on.

Apostles Initiates New Strategies for Church Growth

Thinking of the names of Ralph Neighbor, Lawrence Kong, Larry Stockstill, Bill Hybels, Rick Warren, John Kelly, John Eckardt to name but a few, makes one think of new ideas, new methods, new strategies of church growth. Many of today's apostolic leaders are independent church

pioneers who broke away from centralized governing bodies after their new way and methods were rejected by their denominations. The apostolic anointing is not afraid to try new ideas break new ground or to take risks.

Different Apostolic Anointing

Different ministries have different measures of anointing. The Apostolic ministry also has different dimensions to it, but all of it comes via the grace of God. Some operate in more grace than others, relative to their calling and commission. Various administrations exist within each ministry office, with different characteristics allowing individual's to minister with distinct variance.

By the grace of God I am what I am.

For I am the least of the apostles and do not even deserve to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace to me was not without effect.¹³²

Some are Apostles to nations, either one specific nation or a number of nations pooled together. The authority given to such national or international anointing verifies this. The third world has a number of apostles speaking into their own governments, many times bringing deliverance on a national level. Examples of that is a man like Myles Munroe, a man with a specific passion for the third world. Some apostles have authority for specific ethnic groups.

¹³² 1 Cor. 15:9 - 10

Pieter Pretorius, a South African White Apostolic Evangelist, feels called to move among the black ethnic groups in Africa and he does so with tremendous results. He goes in where others fear to tread.

Turnell Nelson works with excellence amongst the peoples of the West Indian Islands.

Jonathan David has a call for the Malaysian people but also operate with a strong international anointing.

In Latin America the names Anaconda, Callaberg and Silvoso have become household names, especially since they caused the breakdown of the drug syndicates in many countries. These apostles, after breaking stronghold principalities held over nations and countries, took up the position of becoming the strongman over these nations. Aligning with these territorial authorities releases a grace and anointing that as a result open up avenues that were closed before.

Some Apostolic Anointing Minister Mainly in the Local Churches

The local church is the most important institution in the economy of God. Apostles are firstly given and set up in the local church.

The Apostle Paul writes his epistles and very significantly with salutation for a specific local assembly.

- Unto the church at Corinth (1 Corinthians. 1:2)

- Unto the church of God which is at Corinth (2 Corinthians 1:1)
- Unto the churches of Galatia (Galatians 1:2)
- To the saints which are at Ephesus (Ephesians 1:1)
- To all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Phillipi (Philippians 1:1)
- To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ, which are at Colosse (Colossians 1: 2)
- Unto the church of the Thessalonians (1 Thessalonians 1: 1)
- Unto the church of the Thessalonians (2 Thessalonians 1:1)

Paul was an apostle with the local church in mind – he had no hit and run type of attitude. During his two missionary journeys he planted churches and stayed with each planting for at least a couple of years. When he left, he set in place an eldership that would take care of the flock with transferred Apostolic Authority.

The local church that accepts apostolic authority and covering will become a powerful force that needs to be reckoned with.

Some Apostles have a Leadership Anointing.

These apostles basically work exclusively with leaders. They seek material for leadership, once found proceed to build characteristics of high quality leadership into their followers through a mentor-protégé relationship. Example of this is Elijah and Elisha, Moses and Joshua, Jesus and the disciples who became apostles.

It has been said that Bible school seminaries has never produced teachers, just scholars good at church history, Greek and Hebrew.

We need to learn how it was done in God's Prophetic Schools. Our greatest commodity is people. Leaders must produce quality leaders after their kind and character. The most effective way of doing this is the apostolic way. Paul needs to recognize the Timothy and walk with to produce the apostolic legacy.

Apostolic Authority Needs and Increases Through Prayer

... but we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the Word.¹³³

The Apostolic ministry is a ministry of impartation. The principle remain true, with the measure you meet it shall be measured you. Ministry is an outflow of what you are and you cannot minister beyond yourself. Simply said ministry is an extension of who you are. Apostolic authority rallying point is Prayer and the Word. If the apostolic ministry is a ministry of impartation then the source from which the impartation originates, is critical. Moses asks God: "Whom must I say send me?" In other words: "Who is the source of my authority?" God replies: "Tell them I am that I am" has sent you.

God said to Moses, "I am who I am. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: 'I AM has sent me to you.'"¹³⁴

¹³³ Acts 6:4

¹³⁴ Ex. 3:14

Apostolic Authority is derived from God. This authority comes with a price, a giving of oneself to the ministry of prayer (intercession) and the Word.

Apostolic ministry is a giving of your spirit, soul and body, your all unto the purposes of God. In order to be able to give (impart) to others apostles must be willing to give themselves to God unreservedly.

Jesus, our chief Apostle set the example: His ministry started with a 40-day period of prayer and fasting. He spends days and nights in prayer. He even needed to be prayed for.

Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil. After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry.¹³⁵

About eight days after Jesus said this, he took Peter, John and James with him and went up to a mountain to pray.¹³⁶

On reaching the place, he said to them, "Pray that you will not fall into temptation."

He withdrew about a stone's throw beyond them, knelt down and prayed,

"Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done."

An angel from heaven appeared to him and strengthened him.

¹³⁵ Math. 4:1,2

¹³⁶ Luke 9:28

And being in anguish, he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground. When he rose from prayer and went back to the disciples, he found them asleep, exhausted from sorrow.

"Why are you sleeping?" He asked them. "Get up and pray so that you will not fall into temptation."¹³⁷

"My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death," he said to them. Stay here and keep watch". Going a little farther, he fell to the ground and prayed that if possible the hour might pass from him.

"Abba, Father," he said, "everything is possible for you. Take this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will."

Then he returned to his disciples and found them sleeping. "Simon," He said to Peter, "are you asleep? Could you not keep watch for one hour?"¹³⁸

Apostles draw strength from prayer. Moses ministered victory to the forces of Israel while he prayed, as soon as his hands dropped, Joshua and Hur assisted in supporting prayer and Israel prevailed. The battle was fought in the valley but Moses' prayer and action imparted victory.

Through prevailing prayer apostolic authority is maintained.

¹³⁷ Luke 22:40-46

¹³⁸ Mark 14:35 - 37

Prophetic Authority

Old Testament Prophets

In the Old Testament God communicated His creative and sustaining word through the prophets. They were His messengers that stood before the people, leaders and their kings.

The Lord used a prophet to bring Israel up from Egypt, by a prophet he cared for him.¹³⁹

They say to the seers, “See no more visions!” and to the prophets, “Give us no more visions of what is right! Tell us pleasant things, prophesy illusions. Leave this way, get off this path, and stop confronting us with the Holy One of Israel!”¹⁴⁰

The Sovereign Lord has given me an instructed tongue, to know the word that sustains the weary. He wakens me morning by morning, wakens my ear to listen like one being taught. The Sovereign Lord has opened my

¹³⁹ Hos. 12:13

¹⁴⁰ Isa. 30:10 - 11

ears, and I have not been rebellious; I have not drawn back.¹⁴¹

The OT Prophets were Prophets of Expectation

All of the OT prophets looked down the corridors of time and prophesied of the OT to come, even the messiah. John the Baptist came to prepare a way for Him.

When the man came to Jesus, they said, “John the Baptist sent us to you to ask, “Are you the one who was to come, or should we expect someone else?”¹⁴²

Their expectation focussed on a person

For Moses said, “The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own people; you must listen to everything he tells you.¹⁴³

Jesus Introduced a New Era of Prophetic Ministry

Jesus came in the fullness of the Spirit to fulfill all the prophetic promises about Him.

In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he

¹⁴¹ Isa. 50:4 - 5

¹⁴² Luke 7:20b

¹⁴³ Acts 3:22

appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the universe.¹⁴⁴

Indeed all of the prophets from Samuel on, as many as have spoken have foretold these days.¹⁴⁵

For all the Prophets and the Law prophesied until John.¹⁴⁶

The Prophetic in Jesus was recognized by the People

His Discernment

“Sir,” the woman said, “I can see that you are a prophet.

His Declarations

On hearing his words, some of the people said, “Surely this man is the Prophet.”¹⁴⁷

His Demonstrations

Finally they turned again to the blind man, “What have you to say about him? It was your eyes he opened.”

The man replied, “He is a prophet.”¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁴ Heb. 1:1 - 2

¹⁴⁵ Acts 3:24

¹⁴⁶ Math. 11:13

¹⁴⁷ John 7:40

¹⁴⁸ John 9:17

The Prophetic in Jesus was recognized by the Disciples

“What things?” he asked.

“About Jesus of Nazareth,” they replied. “He was a prophet, powerful in word and deed before God and all the people.”¹⁴⁹

Jesus Himself Confessed His Prophetic Ministry

And they took offence at him. But Jesus said to them, “Only in his hometown and in his own house is a prophet without honor.”¹⁵⁰

In any case, I must keep going today and tomorrow and the next day – for surely no prophet can die outside Jerusalem!¹⁵¹

Although this was in a negative sense in this statement it continues to affirm His prophetic ministry

Jesus Came to Produce a Prophetic Community

Now when he saw the crowds, he went up on a mountainside and sat down. His disciples came to him, and he began to teach them, saying:

“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted. Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth. Blessed are those who hunger

¹⁴⁹ Luke 24:19

¹⁵⁰ Math. 13:57

¹⁵¹ Luke 13:33

and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled. Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God. Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. “Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me.

Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you. “You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled by men. “You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.

This teaching establishes undoubtedly in the minds of the listeners that the Kingdom of God is an alternative society. Jesus said: “You are in the world but not of the world.”¹⁵²

All of the beatitudes demands that the response increase in commitment and ministry.

¹⁵² Math. 5:1 - 16

Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.¹⁵³

This was in keeping with the OT Expectation.

Moses prophesied about it

Now Moses said to Hobab son of Reuel the Midianite, Moses' father-in-law, "We are setting out for the place about which the Lord said, 'I will give it to you.' Come with us and we will treat you well, for the Lord has promised good things to Israel"¹⁵⁴

Amos described it

"And afterwards, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days. I will show wonders in the heavens and on the earth, blood and fire and billows of smoke. The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord. And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved; for on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there will be deliverance, as the Lord has said, among the survivors whom the Lord calls."¹⁵⁵

¹⁵³ Math. 5:12

¹⁵⁴ Num. 11:29

¹⁵⁵ Joel 2:28 - 32

Pentecost made it manifest

‘In the last days,’ God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy.¹⁵⁶

All prophetic but not all Prophets

It is important to understand that a clear distinction exists between a person operating the gift of prophecy and the office of a prophet.

The person operating the gift of prophecy is doing so by the Holy Spirit. The prophet is a gift of Jesus to the church, he is a person who operates by the Holy Spirit in His office and prophecy is only a part of that function.

Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles?¹⁵⁷

For you can all prophesy in turn so that everyone may be instructed and encouraged.¹⁵⁸

He had four unmarried daughters who prophesied. After we had been there a number of days, a prophet named Agabus came down from Judea.¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁶ Acts 2:17 - 18

¹⁵⁷ 1 Cor. 12:29

¹⁵⁸ 1 Cor. 14:31

The NT Prophets are Prophets of Realization

NT prophets are not so much occupied with the future as they are with the present. They take aspects of the past and expound and explain the future. They also take great trouble to explain the present.

In Christ Jesus every promise is “yes and amen”

For no matter how many promises God had made, they are “Yes” in Christ. And so through him the “Amen” in Christ. And so through him the “Amen” is spoken by us to the glory of God.¹⁶⁰

You diligently study the Scriptures because you think that by them you possess eternal life. These are the Scriptures that testify about me.¹⁶¹

Then the two told what had happened on the way, and how Jesus was recognized by them when he broke the bread.

While they were still talking about this, Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, “Peace be with you.”

They were startled and frightened, thinking they saw a ghost.¹⁶²

But I have had God’s help to this very day, and so I stand here and testify to small and great alike. I am

¹⁵⁹ Acts 21:9 - 10

¹⁶⁰ 2 Cor. 1:20

¹⁶¹ John 5:39

¹⁶² Luke 24:35 - 37

saying nothing beyond what the prophets and Moses said would happen – that the Christ would suffer and, as the first to rise from the dead, would proclaim light to his own people and to the Gentiles.”¹⁶³

Prophetic revelation flows from Christ’s glorification

Many people, because they had heard that he had given this miraculous sign, went out to meet him. So the Pharisees said to one another, “See, this is getting us nowhere. Look how the whole world has gone after him!”

Now there were some Greeks among those who went up to worship at the Feast. They came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, with a request. Sir, they said, we would like to see Jesus. Philip went to tell Andrew; Andrew and Philip in turn told Jesus.¹⁶⁴

The next day the great crowd that had come for the Feast heard that Jesus was on his way to Jerusalem. They took palm branches and went out to meet him, shouting, “Hosanna!” “Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!” “Blessed is the King of Israel! Jesus found a young donkey and sat upon it, as is written, “Do not be afraid, O Daughter of Zion; see, your king is coming, seated on a donkey’s colt.” At first his disciples did not understand all this. Only after Jesus was glorified did they realize that these things had been written about him and that they had done these things to him.¹⁶⁵

¹⁶³ Acts 26:22 - 23

¹⁶⁴ John 2:18 - 22

¹⁶⁵ John 12:12 - 16

So Peter and the other disciple started for the tomb. Both were running, but the other disciple out ran Peter and reached the tomb first. He bent over and looked in at the strips of linen lying there but did not go in. Then Simon Peter, who was behind him, arrived and went into the tomb. He saw the strips of linen lying there, as well as the burial cloth that had been around Jesus' head. The cloth was folded up by itself, separate from the linen. Finally the other disciple, who had reached the tomb first, also went inside. He saw and believed.¹⁶⁶

They still did not understand from Scripture that Jesus had to rise from the dead.

Revelation Flows from OT Declaration

“Indeed, all the prophets from Samuel on, as many as have spoken, have foretold these days.¹⁶⁷

When they finished, James spoke up: “Brothers, listen to me.

Simon has described to us how God at first showed his concern by taking from the Gentiles a people for himself. The words of the prophets are in agreement with this, as it is written: ‘After this I will return and rebuild David’s fallen tent. Its ruins I will rebuild, and I will restore it, That the remnant of men may seek the Lord, and all the Gentiles who bear my name, says the

¹⁶⁶ John 20:3 - 9

¹⁶⁷ Acts 3:24

Lord, who does these things' that have been known for ages.¹⁶⁸

Concerning this salvation, the prophets, who spoke of the grace that was to come to you, searched intently and with the greatest care, trying to find out the time and circumstances to which the Spirit of Christ in them was pointing when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow. It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves but you, when they spoke of the things that have now been told you by those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven. Even angels long to look into these things.¹⁶⁹

For it is written in the Law of Moses, “Do not muzzle an ox while it is treading out the grain.” Is it about oxen that God is concerned? Surely he says this for us, doesn't he? Yes, this was written for us, because when the ploughman ploughs and the thresher threshes, they ought to do so in the hope of sharing in the harvest.¹⁷⁰

Key verses

Now to him who is able to establish you by my gospel and the proclamation of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery hidden for long ages past, but now revealed and made known through the prophetic writings by the command of the eternal God, so that all

¹⁶⁸ Acts 15:13 - 18

¹⁶⁹ 1 Peter 1:10 - 12

¹⁷⁰ 1 Cor. 9:9 - 10

nations might believe and obey him – to the only wise God be glory for ever through Jesus Christ! Amen.¹⁷¹

And we have the word of the prophets made more certain, and you will do well to pay attention to it, as to a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts.¹⁷²

The “UP” Factor in Prophecy

But everyone who prophesies speaks to men for their strengthening, encouragement and comfort.¹⁷³

Strengthening = builds up

Encouragement = stirs up

Comfort = cheers up

Apostles and Prophets are yokefellows

Ministry of Establishing

Built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone.¹⁷⁴

Ministry of Enlightening

Surely you have heard about the administration of God’s grace that was given to me for you, that is, the

¹⁷¹ Rom. 16:25 - 27

¹⁷² 2 Peter 1:19

¹⁷³ 1 Cor. 14:3

¹⁷⁴ Eph. 2:20

mystery made known to me by revelation, as I have already written briefly.

In reading this, then, you will be able to understand my insight into the mystery of Christ which was not made known to men in other generations as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to God's holy apostles and prophets.¹⁷⁵

Ministry of Equipping

It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming. Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ. From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.¹⁷⁶

The Prophet Ministers with Insight - he is Predictive

¹⁷⁵ Eph. 3:2 - 5

¹⁷⁶ Eph. 4:11 - 16

During this time some prophets came down from Jerusalem to Antioch. One of them, named Agabus, stood up and through the Spirit predicted that a severe famine would spread over the entire Roman world. (This happened during the reign of Claudius.)¹⁷⁷

After we had been there a number of days, a prophet named Agabus came down from Judea. Coming over to us, he took Paul's belt, tied his own hands and feet with it and said, "The Holy Spirit says, 'In this way the Jews of Jerusalem will bind the owner of this belt and will hand him over to the Gentiles.'" When we heard this, we and the people there pleaded with Paul not to go up to Jerusalem. Then Paul answered, "Why are you weeping and breaking my heart? I am ready not only to be bound, but also to die in Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus." When he would not be dissuaded, we gave up and said "The Lord's will be done."¹⁷⁸

The Prophet Ministers with Impartation - he is Productive

Timothy, my son, I give you this instruction in keeping with the prophecies once made about you, so that by following them you may fight the good fight.¹⁷⁹

Do not neglect your gift, which was given you through a prophetic message when the body of elders laid their hands on you.¹⁸⁰

¹⁷⁷ Acts 11:27 - 28

¹⁷⁸ Acts 21:10 - 14

¹⁷⁹ 1 Tim. 1:18

¹⁸⁰ 1 Tim. 4:14

Judas and Silas, who themselves were prophets, said much to encourage and strengthen the brothers.¹⁸¹

Prophets Interpret The Word

The Spirit of Christ provoked Old Testament prophets; pointing to the Person of Christ; and predicting the glories of Christ (1 Peter 1:10 – 12), for... *the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy* (Revelation 19:10).

Jesus endorsed John the Baptist as being a prophet and ‘more than a prophet’ (Matthew 11:9). The elevated uniqueness of his ministry was not in its length, for it was fleeting. It was not in its volume, for it was sparse. It was not in its demonstration, for John did no miracle (John 10:41). Rather it was in the fact that John saw the expected Messiah, recognized the Redeemer and pointed men to Jesus.

The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, “Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!”¹⁸²

New Testament prophets are the same spirit and are entrusted with the same testimony. Taking hold of Old Testament prophetic expectations they disclose them as New Testament realization. All of which find their “yes” and “amen” in Jesus (2 Corinthians 1:20).

¹⁸¹ Acts 15:32

¹⁸² John 1:29

Prophets Discern the Times

“There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under heaven...”¹⁸³

‘sons of Issachar, who understood the times and knew what Israel should do....’¹⁸⁴

Jesus appears to have been amazed that the people of His generation did not understand the days of God’s visitation (Matthew 16:1 – 3; Luke 12:54 – 56; Luke 19:41 – 44).
A Lesson From History – *The Deliverance from Egypt*.

Acts 7:17 – ‘As the time drew near’ significant things began to happen.

1. Explosion of Population (Acts 7: 17)
2. Exertion of Political Power (Acts 7: 18)
3. Exploitation of the Oppressed (Acts 7: 19)
4. Execution of the Innocent (Acts 7: 19)

“At this time Moses was born”.¹⁸⁵

He thought that his own people would realize that God was using him to rescue them, but they did not.¹⁸⁶

Prophets first and foremost must be able to read the “signs of the times” and prepare the church accordingly (Matthew 24:45; Ecclesiastes 8:5-6; Psalm 102:13; 119:126)

¹⁸³ Ecc. 3:1 - 8

¹⁸⁴ 1 Chron. 12:32

¹⁸⁵ Acts 7:20

¹⁸⁶ Acts 7:25

Prophets Equip The Church

*“...some to be prophets ...to prepare God’s people for works of service, ...”*¹⁸⁷

The New Testament reveals different ways in which this function was fulfilled.

Prediction – but not Direction

Agabus predicted widespread famine (Acts 11:27-28). He gives no direction to the church in light of his prediction – the people decide how best to respond. The prophetic word does not rob the church or individual of personal decision or responsibility.

Agabus demonstrates Paul’s binding (Acts 21:10 – 14). Agabus’ prediction was in line with warnings of what lay ahead for Paul that had been spoken prophetically in every city. At Tyre the disciples, ‘through the spirit’ urged Paul not to go to Jerusalem. This may be in the same way that ‘we and all the people pleaded with Paul not to go up to Jerusalem’ after hearing Agabus’ prophetic word at Caesarea (Acts 21:12).

Paul clearly saw the word as a warning but not as a prohibition. He was convinced it was God’s will to go to Jerusalem. Having expressed this, his companions then gave up trying to dissuade him, and said, ‘The Lord’s will be done’ (Acts 21:14). While many may have interpreted the prophetic word as a prohibition, Paul viewed it more as a preparation.

¹⁸⁷ Eph. 4:11 - 12

Direction – but not Instruction

The prophets and teachers separated Barnabas and Saul for the work to which the Holy Spirit had called them (Acts 13:1 – 3). There is no evidence here that a specific strategy for that work was given. Even the promise of Jesus to the disciples in Acts 1:8 should not be seen as a strategy,

“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the earth.

but a simultaneous and spontaneous expansion, ‘Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.’ Separated to the work in the World means that everywhere in the world is right. Decisions and adjustments are then made in the light of further –

Revelation (Acts 16:6 – 10)

Reception (Acts 13:50 – 51; 14:5 – 7 etc)

Resource (2 Corinthians 2:12 – 13)

Instruction – but neither Prediction nor Direction

Judas and Silas encouraged the church through their prophetic ministry.

Judas and Silas, who themselves were prophets, says much to encourage and strengthen the brothers.¹⁸⁸

Impartation

¹⁸⁸ Acts 15:32

“Timothy, my son, I give you this instruction in keeping with the prophecies once made about you, so that by following them you may fight the good fight,” ¹⁸⁹

“Do not neglect your gift, which was given you through a prophetic message when the body of elders laid their hands on you.” ¹⁹⁰

Timothy was endowed with a spiritual gift through prophetic ministry, and prophetic words were part of his armory in spiritual warfare. The prophetic word was able to produce a work within and wage war without. Only that word which has first produced something in us can be expected to achieve something beyond us.

Prophets Address The World

“Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations.” ¹⁹¹

“You must prophesy again about... nations.” ¹⁹²

The word of God is not limited to the church – it is for the world. The creative word brought forth the whole earth and all things are sustained by that word.

¹⁸⁹ 1 Tim. 1:18

¹⁹⁰ 1 Tim. 4:14

¹⁹¹ Jer. 1:5

¹⁹² Rev. 10:11

The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word.¹⁹³

Prophets themselves are to carry the word of God to the corridors of power of the nations. They are to equip the saints to be prophetic, so that a church, full of the word of God, can speak with authority and power to its generation.

The Prophetic Office in Operation

See, I have this day set thee over the nations and over the kingdoms, to root out, and to pull down, and to destroy, and to throw down, to build, and to plant.¹⁹⁴

Prophets speak with a tremendous amount of divine authority. Utterances, which come from their mouths, are charged with the anointing and power of God. This authority is given to prophets by the grace of God. It is given for two reasons. One is for the destruction of Satan's kingdom. The other is for the establishing of the kingdom of God.

The authority of the prophets enables them to root out, pull down, destroy, and throw down the works of the devil. Prophets also have the authority to build and plant the kingdom of God. Twice as much emphasis is given to destroying the kingdom of darkness as opposed to building up the kingdom of God.

¹⁹³ Heb. 1: 3

¹⁹⁴ Jer. 1:10

Those operating in the prophetic anointing, find themselves being thrown into warfare, having direct conflict with the powers of darkness. The prophetic anointing is often *confrontational*.

An example of this confrontational anointing is Elijah who challenged and confronted the powers of idolatry on Mount Carmel. Because of the prophet's office he was able to pull down the stronghold of Baal that ruled Israel. As a result of Elijah's ministry, eventual judgment came upon the house of Ahab.

Spirits are rooted out of their dwelling places through the utterances of prophets. Remember, prophets speak with more authority than believers who prophesy by the spirit of prophecy, or the simple gift of prophecy. The words of the prophets are like an axe laid at the root of the tree.

The axe is already at the root of the trees, and every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire.¹⁹⁵

Every tree that bears not fruit is cut down and cast into the fire. Only what is fruitful and productive to the kingdom will stand in the midst of true prophetic ministry.

Prophets Pull Down

For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds.¹⁹⁶

¹⁹⁵ Luke 3:9

¹⁹⁶ 2 Cor. 10:4

Jeremiah the prophet was given authority over kingdoms and nations. Prophets have authority over demonic kingdoms. The prophet's anointing is a spiritual weapon in the hand of the Lord to pull down strongholds. Satan sets up demonic strongholds in individuals, families, churches, cities and nations. I have seen deliverance come through prophesying to individuals, families and local assemblies. I have seen people weeping and broken after receiving prophetic utterances. Prophets usually carry a strong deliverance anointing. The ministry of the prophet provides deliverance and the pulling down of strongholds.

And by a prophet the Lord brought Israel out of Egypt, and by a prophet was he preserved.¹⁹⁷

The prophet has the responsibility to minister the words of God as well as prophesying by the Spirit of God. This anointing provides the ability to bring deliverance to God's people in a unique way. I have witnessed pastor's struggle with strongholds in local assemblies that they were unable to pull down. This does not elevate the prophet above the pastor in the local assembly, for we are all laborers together with God. However, pastors need to discern the importance of the prophet's anointing to the pulling down of strongholds.

Prophets Destroy

True prophets will destroy the works of the devil. Many people, including pastors, fear prophetic ministry. True prophetic ministry will only destroy what is of the devil; it

¹⁹⁷ Hos. 10:13

will never destroy what is of the Lord. The things of the Spirit will be established, while the things of the devil destroyed.

Much of what goes on in local assemblies is fleshly, and sad to say, sometimes demonic. The prophet's ministry will destroy what is fleshly and demonic, and establish holiness and purity, in the house of the Lord. Prophets have a hatred for what God hates.

Do I not hate those who hate you, o Lord, and abhor those who rise up against you? I have nothing but hatred for them.¹⁹⁸

Prophets will often be criticized for not being more tolerant. The prophetic gift leaves no room for compromise. A compromising prophet will lose his effectiveness and eventually be judged by the Lord. This does not give prophets the right to be offensive and minister in the flesh. Prophets must minister in the spirit at all times. A prophet in the flesh will end up destroying and damaging what is of the Lord, instead of what is of the devil.

Prophets in the flesh cause reproach and damage, the same as any ministry gift in the flesh. True prophets have love and compassion for people, but hatred and intolerance for the works of the devil. The anointing will change one into another man (1 Samuel 10). We cannot mistake a hatred for the works of the devil as being hard or judgmental. We must discern between the operation of the flesh and

¹⁹⁸ Ps. 139:21,22

the administration of the Holy Spirit. Without proper discernment, we will misjudge prophets and reject them for lack of understanding.

Prophets Throw Down

And it shall come to pass, that like as I have watched over them, to pluck up, and to break down, and to throw down, and to destroy, and to afflict; so will I watch over them, to build, and to plant, saith the Lord.¹⁹⁹

The nation of Israel was commanded to enter Canaan and throw down the altars of the heathen. This was a part of rooting out the nation of Canaan for their iniquity. Israel had to dispossess the Canaanites before they could possess the Promised Land. The prophet's anointing is one of confrontation and warfare. This is not all the prophet does. He also builds and plants. But notice that before building and planting comes rooting out and throwing down. This is an unpleasant part of ministry, but it is necessary nonetheless.

Many prophets' ministry gifts draw back from this because of soulish fear and intimidation. This is unpleasant to the soul. However, the anointing changes you into another man. The strength of the anointing will overpower the drawing back of the soul and cause one to throw down the altars of sin.

¹⁹⁹ Jer. 31:28

Though Ephraim built many altars for sin offerings, these have become altars for sinning.²⁰⁰

Prophets may encounter rebellion, control, witchcraft and pride in an assembly in the spirit without knowing anything of the congregation in the natural.

Often in ministry, one will not understand why that which they are ministering is going in a certain direction. Sometimes the direction is the total opposite of where one started ministering in the Word. The anointing and leading of the Holy Spirit will cause one to hit areas of sin and rebellion in the spirit, without knowledge in the natural.

Prophets Plant

Those that be planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God.²⁰¹

People who are exposed to prophetic ministry will be planted in the house of the Lord. Those who are planted will flourish in all areas. To be *planted* means to be rooted and grounded. The prophetic ministry can uproot those planted by the enemy, and plant what is ordained by the Lord, in local assemblies.

I have witnessed people come to local churches with a hesitancy to be planted. Many waver and are not dependable to help in the work of the Lord. The prophet's anointing can minister strength and certainty, and establish them in the house of the Lord.

²⁰⁰ Hos. 8:11

²⁰¹ Ps. 92:13

We don't need church members who are not planted. We need people who are planted in the house by the Lord. Those who are planted will develop strong roots and be like trees planted by the rivers of living water. The planting of the Lord will be fruitful Christians. They will be steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord.

Therefore my dear brothers, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.²⁰²

As we receive prophets we will become trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord.

... and provide for those who grieve in Zion - to bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair. They will be called oaks of righteousness, a planting of the Lord for the display of his splendor.²⁰³

I am firmly convinced that one of the reasons why we don't have more fruitful Christians in our local assemblies is because of the lack of true prophetic ministry. I have been ministering and telling people for years that it takes the anointing to perfect the saints. Each ministry gift carries a distinct anointing. Each ministry gift has a divine ability to build the church. Prophets have an anointing and ability to build and to plant. Without this anointing, there

²⁰² 1 Cor. 15:58

²⁰³ Isa. 61:3

will be areas where the saints are not built up, and things they are not planted in. Prophets have the authority from God to *root out, pull down, destroy, throw down, build* and *plant*. These things will be the result of the word of the Lord that comes out of the prophet's mouth.