

Chapter	
The Change In Understanding of The Apostolic Function	
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The Church enjoyed a glorious start. There was remarkable growth. Order, structure, discipline, and practice were all nicely taking shape in the developing Church. Even some mild confrontation with the Jewish authorities had helped to delineate the Church from Judaism and show that it was no mere aberration of Judaism. Because of the influence of its leadership it would forever be known as *the Apostolic Church*.¹

The mission of the Church though, was not readily or systematically being acted upon. The apostles seemed slow to move out even when confrontation turned into persecution.

And Saul was there, giving approval to his death. On that day a great persecution broke out against the church at Jerusalem, and all except the apostles were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria.

Acts 8:1

¹ This of course was incorporated into the earliest creeds of the Church. The Nicene Creed states, "...one, holy, catholic, and apostolic..."

No explanation is given in the Acts narrative as to why the apostles didn't move out of Jerusalem at this time. Yet with the migration of the believers from Jerusalem the Gospel would soon begin to be carried to the "ends of the earth" (Colossians 1:23).

A study of the earliest Church's leadership structure demands an explanation of the role of the original apostles since they are so integral to it. Their initial role seems to have been that of trustees of the Gospel and its proclamation. But as the Church began to expand beyond Jerusalem, the apostolic role began to change. We begin the pursuit to define the apostolic role as we simultaneously and progressively examine the developing leadership structure of the earliest Church as described in the New Testament.

A. HOW THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH NECESSITATED A CHANGE IN LEADERSHIP STRUCTURE

The words of Christ's Commission were still ringing in the ears of the apostles: "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you;" (Matthew 28:18-19). Jesus had declared to a leader of the Jewish people, Nicodemus, that God loved the *whole world* (John 3:16), and therefore not *just* the Jewish people. But for many Jewish people *they* were the chosen race and the Gentile nations were therefore the *rejected* nations. This was seemingly going to be an obstacle to the Gospel being carried *to all nations*.

The other obstacle was what William Barclay called the "double hatred" of the Jews.² Most Jews were filled with hatred for other nations. But the hatred was equally reciprocated by other nations as well! Cicero labelled the Jewish religion and therefore the Jews as a "*barbarous, superstition*" (Cicero, *Pro Flacco*, 28). Tacitus called the Jews, "*the vilest of people*" (Tacitus, 5:8). So it seems that there was always going to be an obstacle to the Church, led by Jewish apostles, proclaiming the Gospel to the nations.



² Barclay, 1970:9

(i) THE CHURCH IN JERUSALEM

It wasn't long before God ensured that the Church extended beyond the bounds of Jerusalem as the Gospel was preached by the scattered believers. Some scholars have suggested that on the Day of Pentecost the converted Jews who had come from all over the Empire returned to their homelands and began Christian outposts (none the least: the church at Rome). With the rise in persecution, Christians were scattered everywhere, which resulted in new churches being commenced. This demanded a change in the leadership structure of the church. While the Church in Jerusalem continued to grow with Jewish converts, it soon became apparent that it was extending beyond the bounds of Jerusalem with branches throughout the Empire.

(ii) THE CHURCH ESTABLISHED IN SAMARIA

There doesn't appear to have been anything intentionally strategic about the earliest Church's mission. This is despite Christ's Commission given in Acts 1:8 -

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.

This statement could be viewed as a strategic commission, in which case Christ intended for the apostles to deliberately evangelise the regions mentioned. Or, it could be seen as a prophetic statement, in which case it was a declaration of where the Church *would* carry the Gospel. That it was a prophetic statement of Christ would be supported by the context of the verse (which was also prophetic). While some scholars have noted that there is no chronological order given in this verse (that is, Christ did not command that Jerusalem be evangelised first, then for Judea to be evangelised and so on) there is a logical geographic expansion in the statement *Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the ends of the earth*.

Perhaps the apostles initially considered Christ's statement as relating exclusively to the *Diaspora* (Jews scattered among Gentile nations). There is no doubt that the Gospel was to be taken to the Jews first (Romans 1:16) but what transpired in Samaria, under the ministry of Philip, began to change that possible assumption.

Philip went down to a city in Samaria and proclaimed the Christ there. When the crowds heard Philip and saw the miraculous signs he did, they all paid close attention to what he said...But when they believed Philip as he preached the good news of the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.

Acts 8:5 - 6, 12

These were obviously not Jews responding to the Christian Gospel, but Samaritans. We know this because although the Jews were scattered throughout the Empire, they would never have lived in Samaria. During the ministry of Christ on earth, some Samaritans refused to show hospitality to Him and the Disciples. James and John were very quick to ask the Lord if He wanted them to call down fire from heaven on the Samaritans, even though many of the Jewish towns were just as deserving of heavenly fire.

When the disciples James and John saw this, they asked, "Lord, do you want us to call fire down from heaven to destroy them?"

Luke 9:54

There was such ingrained racial vilification from Jews toward Samaritans that when the Pharisees wanted to hurl a stinging insult at Christ they labelled Him as being a "sinner", and even worse than a sinner: a "Samaritan", which was equivalent to being "demon-possessed."

A second time they summoned the man who had been blind. "Give glory to God," they said. "We know this man [Jesus] is a sinner."

John 9:24

The Jews answered him, "Aren't we right in saying that you are a Samaritan and demon-possessed?"

John 8:48

It was clear that the apostles in Jerusalem understood what had happened in Samaria as being cross-cultural missionary activity. Their involvement in this mission advance was *reactive* rather than *proactive*. It could be argued that this is the model for the Church's expansion. The Holy Spirit leads a person or people to advance the mission of the Church, and the leadership of the Church reacts, or responds, to this advance. This hermeneutical method is advocated by many as the legitimate approach to understanding the Book of Acts. In this sense it is viewed as being *Prescriptive* rather than *Descriptive*. In any examination of the earliest Church, we must settle this issue for two reasons. Firstly, sound scholarship, and secondly, correct practical application.

"The book of Acts provides a model of what the Church is expected to do."³

John Eckhardt

I disagree. Despite much popular teaching advocating the *Prescriptive* approach to the Book of Acts, it can be logically seen that it should be seen as a *description* of the earliest Church instead. This is because:

- (i) The Church was evolving throughout Acts, and there is no particular model of Church consistently presented.
- (ii) Many of the mistakes of the Church and its leaders are described throughout Acts. (For example, Paul's intolerance of John Mark's retreat, which Paul seems to admit [2Timothy 4:11]).
- (iii) The nature of the book is narrative rather than didactic.

The reason this is important at this point in our examination of the Church's expansion into Samaria, is that it helps us to form the crucial paradigm necessary to make any application from the earliest Church to the modern Church. The issue therefore is not what the earliest Church did, but (i) what did God want them to do? And, (ii) what supra-cultural principles did they engage in that helped them to accomplish what God had told them to do?

³ (John Eckhardt, Pastor of Crusaders Church of Christ, Chicago, Illinois) Wagner, 1998:51

Their response to what had happened in Samaria is significant because it was the beginning of their deployment into the missions programme commissioned by Christ. Some time had elapsed between the Day of Pentecost and the expansion of the Church into Samaria. I have heard some preachers suggest that God allowed persecution to come against the Church in order to mobilise it out of its inactivity and into its missions programme. Whether this was the divine plan or not, the fact remains that it was persecution that resulted in the Church being scattered everywhere and preaching the Gospel throughout the Empire.

And Saul was there, giving approval to his death. On that day a great persecution broke out against the church at Jerusalem, and all except the apostles were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria...Those who had been scattered preached the word wherever they went.

Acts 8:1, 4

The Church's response to the Samaritan expansion reveals something of its leadership structure at this point. By this stage the apostles and elders in Jerusalem must have been monitoring the Church's progress. This would have constituted a "Council" type of structure. We find this council deciding to commission Peter and John to investigate the situation in Samaria and presumably report back to the Council in Jerusalem.

When the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had accepted the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them.

Acts 8:14

We also presume that a church was established in Samaria as a result of Philip's evangelistic campaign. We are not told from the account in Acts who was appointed to oversee this church. Because we know that the Apostolic Council had sent Peter and John to Samaria, we could safely assume that they maintained some, at least initial, oversight over the church in Samaria.



(iii) THE EMPIRE

⁴ As the Acts narrative unfolds, we discover a church in Damascus where Ananias, who ministered to Saul, was presumably from (Acts 9:10), since Paul was deliberately going there to destroy those in it (Acts 9:2). We are not told who its leader was, although it is a reasonable assumption that it was Ananias. We note that he had some form of contact if not relationship with the church leaders in Jerusalem.

⁴ Pictured: Emperor (Caesar) Nero, a brutal enemy of the Church, who in 64AD launched a campaign to eradicate Christians from the Empire. He is responsible for the martyrdom of many believers in the early stages of the Church. He was the fifth Caesar since Christ (Rev. 6:9) and the sixth in the list of the order of Caesars (Rev. 17:10).

“Lord,” Ananias answered, “I have heard many reports about this man and all the harm he has done to your saints in Jerusalem.”

Acts 9:13

Therefore we may also assume that the apostles in Jerusalem had some form of oversight over the church in Damascus. If the church leadership at Damascus was not in relationship with the Jerusalem oversight, it would have been an exception to what was obviously the standard practice. For we see Peter going, or possibly being sent, to another previously unmentioned church at Lydda (Acts 9:32) which clearly indicates that there was a perceived obligation on the part of churches to relate to the apostles at Jerusalem. The founding of the church in Caesarea by Peter, presumably with Cornelius appointed as the elder in charge, would have had obvious links to the Jerusalem apostles. Thus the leadership structure of the early church at this point was generally one appointed elder overseeing the local work, while relating to apostles or an apostle.

The revealed leadership of the churches mentioned to this point can be tabled as:

SCRIPTURE	LOCAL NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH	LEADERSHIP STRUCTRE
(Acts 8:5 NIV) Philip went down to a city in Samaria and proclaimed the Christ there... (Acts 8:14 NIV) When the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had accepted the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them.	Samaria	No local leaders appointed according to the Acts account. The work was supervised by Jerusalem apostles.
(Acts 9:1-2 NIV) Meanwhile, Saul was still breathing out murderous threats against the Lord's disciples. He went to the high priest and asked him for letters to the synagogues in Damascus, so that if he found any there who belonged to the Way, whether men or women, he might take them as prisoners to Jerusalem.	Damascus	Possibly Ananias was the elder in charge (Acts 9:10).
(Acts 9:32 NIV) As Peter travelled about the country, he went to visit the saints in Lydda.	Lydda (Sharon, and Joppa)	Possibly founded by Peter, but the name of the local elder is not mentioned.
(Acts 10:1 NIV) At Caesarea there was a man named Cornelius, a centurion in what was known as the Italian Regiment. (Acts 10:5 NIV) Now send men to Joppa to bring back a man named Simon who is called Peter.	Caesarea	Presumably founded by Peter probably leaving Cornelius as its leader.

Beyond these churches, which are specifically mentioned to this point in Acts, we know that other churches were established throughout the Empire as well. There was a strong likelihood that the nationalities and regions mentioned in Acts are mentioned for a good reason: it explains how the churches in these areas were started -

Parthians, Medes and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene; visitors from Rome (both Jews and converts to Judaism); Cretans and Arabs--we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues!

Acts 2:9 - 10

All we can surmise from this is that there were churches founded in these areas.⁵ We know nothing of their structure or of their relationship to the apostles. Of the areas mentioned we are only given sparse Canonical details about the Roman church via Paul's epistle to them. Presumably when Paul left for Arabia shortly after his conversion, he associated with a church there.

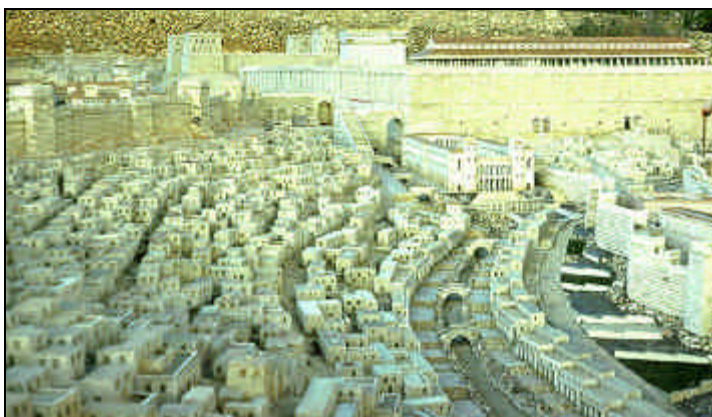
nor did I go up to Jerusalem to see those who were apostles before I was, but I went immediately into Arabia and later returned to Damascus.

Galatians 1:17

Yet we are unable to shed any light on their leadership structure except to presume that since their founders were probably converted on the Day of Pentecost there was more than likely some relationship of these churches to the apostles in Jerusalem. Luke seems to suggest that it was standard practice for the apostles to be kept up-to-date with what was happening throughout the Empire with churches by stating-

The apostles and the brothers throughout Judea heard that the Gentiles also had received the word of God.

Acts 11:1



A reconstructed model of First Century Jerusalem where the apostles commenced their quest to fulfil the Great Commission.

⁵ Marshall, 1983 (1980:73)

B. THE ESTABLISHMENT OF LOCAL LEADERSHIP

(i) THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE CHURCH AT ANTIOCH

Many scholars have noted the change of pace and theme from chapter 11 and on in the Book of Acts. Some attribute this to the narrator devoting the first ten chapters to Peter's leadership, and the remaining chapters to the influence of Paul. There can be no doubt that Paul's entrance into Christian ministry really begins in Acts 11 with him being based at Antioch. Whether Luke intended it or not, from this point the church at Antioch clearly begins to outshine the church at Jerusalem.

The Antiochan church, unlike the Jerusalem church, was founded with both Jews and Gentiles. When news of this reached the apostles at Jerusalem, they were somewhat startled, so they commissioned Barnabas to investigate.

Some of them, however, men from Cyprus and Cyrene, went to Antioch and began to speak to Greeks also, telling them the good news about the Lord Jesus. The Lord's hand was with them, and a great number of people believed and turned to the Lord. News of this reached the ears of the church at Jerusalem, and they sent Barnabas to Antioch.

Acts 11:20 - 23

When Barnabas did investigate, he obviously saw the potential in the church there.⁶ In the short time he had been there, many people turned to the Lord (Acts 11:24). He quickly went to Tarsus to fetch the controversial Saul of Tarsus (Acts 11:25). Now for the first time we are introduced to a church with a multiple leadership.

(ii) THE INITIAL INFLUENCE OF PAUL ON THE EARLY CHURCH

Perhaps the most dramatic turn of events in the earliest church occurred when Saul of Tarsus was converted and was released into ministry. Although the church was being scattered from Jerusalem due to the persecution driven by Saul of Tarsus, the apostles were largely static. Even after the death of James, the brother of John, there doesn't seem to be any movement of apostles into the expansion of the global Church. This is reinforced when we are told of the first Church council held in Jerusalem (Acts 15), where Paul and Barnabas conferenced with the remaining apostles who were still present:

⁶ Marshall, 1983 (1980):202

When they came to Jerusalem, they were welcomed by the church and the apostles and elders, to whom they reported everything God had done through them.

Acts 15:4

It was the ministry of Paul that clearly marked a turning point in the history of the Church. He had, by “revelation”, an appreciation for Church and its responsibility to the Great Commission of Christ that none before him had experienced.

I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it; rather, I received it by revelation from Jesus Christ.

Galatians 1:12

For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles-- Surely you have heard about the administration of God's grace that was given to me for you, that is, the mystery made known to me by revelation, as I have already written briefly.

Ephesians 3:1 - 3

Paul's extensive knowledge of synagogue administration formed the basis for his local church leadership appointments. As in the synagogue, Paul appointed “elders” in each of the local churches he established.

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.

Acts 14:23

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.

Titus 1:5

From his epistles we also observe that Paul's modelling of local church leadership went beyond merely transferring the concept of the synagogue's elder to the church, for he also transferred the concepts of the “Head of the Synagogue” (Rabbi) to that of the “Presbyter” (“Pastor” seems to be our modern equivalent), and the “Hazzan” to that of “deacons”. Both of these functions are stated in First Timothy 3.

(iii) PAUL THE APOSTLE

Paul's early leadership role in the Church is easily recognisable. But was he truly an apostle in the same genre as the Twelve? The answer to this has a bearing on our investigation into the structure of the early church's leadership from the aspect of truly understanding what Christ intended the apostolic function to be, and whether Paul was aligned with that understanding, or indeed reinterpreted that understanding.

If Christ had trained and established the Twelve apostles as the foundational pillars in His Church (Galatians 2:9), then what right did Paul have to claim that he was an *equal* apostle, and thus presumably a foundational pillar of the Church?

But I do not think I am in the least inferior to those "super-apostles."

2Corinthians 11:5

Two things are undoubted about Paul's apostleship: firstly, he claimed to be an apostle, and secondly, he was accepted and received as an apostle by the early Church. This conspicuous fact is acknowledged by nearly all Biblical scholars.

*"Unlike the Twelve, Paul had not accompanied Jesus during His preaching ministry. Nevertheless, he regarded himself and was accepted by the primitive Church as manifesting the signs of an apostle."*⁷

Yet, in examining the early Church's leadership, the issue of Paul's apostolic leadership is cardinal. It at least raises the possibility that the apostolic function was never intended to be restricted to just the Twelve. In one respect the Twelve are uniquely apostolic because (i) they were trained personally by the Lord Jesus, (ii) they witnessed His resurrection appearances, and (iii) they were commissioned to found the Church through the initialising of Gospel proclamation. Many scholars see this qualification of the Twelve, being physically present with Christ, as mandatory for authentic apostleship. Thus, the requirements for Judas' successor was that he had been physically present with Christ, and witnessed a resurrection appearance.

Therefore it is necessary to choose one of the men who have been with us the whole time the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from John's baptism to the time when Jesus was taken up from us. For one of these must become a witness with us of his resurrection."

Acts 1:21-22

These three aspects of apostolic qualification appear to be the Primitive Church's criteria for determining true apostolicity. Knowing this, Paul seems to state that he met all three aspects. He stresses that he had not been taught (trained) by another man, but that he had received his teaching by direct revelation from the Lord-

I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it; rather, I received it by revelation from Jesus Christ.

Galatians 1:12

He also stresses that he was a witness to a post-resurrection appearance of Christ-
Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles, and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born.

1Corinthians 15:7-8

⁷ ISBE, Vol. 1, page 194

And he undoubtedly helped in the founding of the earliest Church, and consequently claimed apostolic leadership-

*Am I not free? Am I not an apostle? Have I not seen Jesus our Lord?
Are you not the result of my work in the Lord?*

1Corinthians 9:1

Based on these observations, we can understand how Paul could, and should, be regarded as being an equal apostle to the Twelve.

(iv) STRUCTURE UP UNTIL THE JERUSALEM COUNCIL

By the Jerusalem Council of Acts 15, the Church had begun to spread throughout the Empire. This almost inevitably led to the conversion of Gentiles into the Church. This in turn resulted in the first major ecclesiastical crisis. This crisis was largely brought about when Paul and Barnabas embarked on their first church-planting trip where not only were Gentiles welcomed into the newly established churches, but they were appointed to lead these churches. During this trip, Paul and Barnabas resolved that they would concentrate their ministry to Gentiles.

Then Paul and Barnabas answered them boldly: "We had to speak the word of God to you first. Since you reject it and do not consider yourselves worthy of eternal life, we now turn to the Gentiles.

Acts 13:46

Thus Paul considered himself the apostle to Gentiles, and Peter, and James, the apostles to Jews.

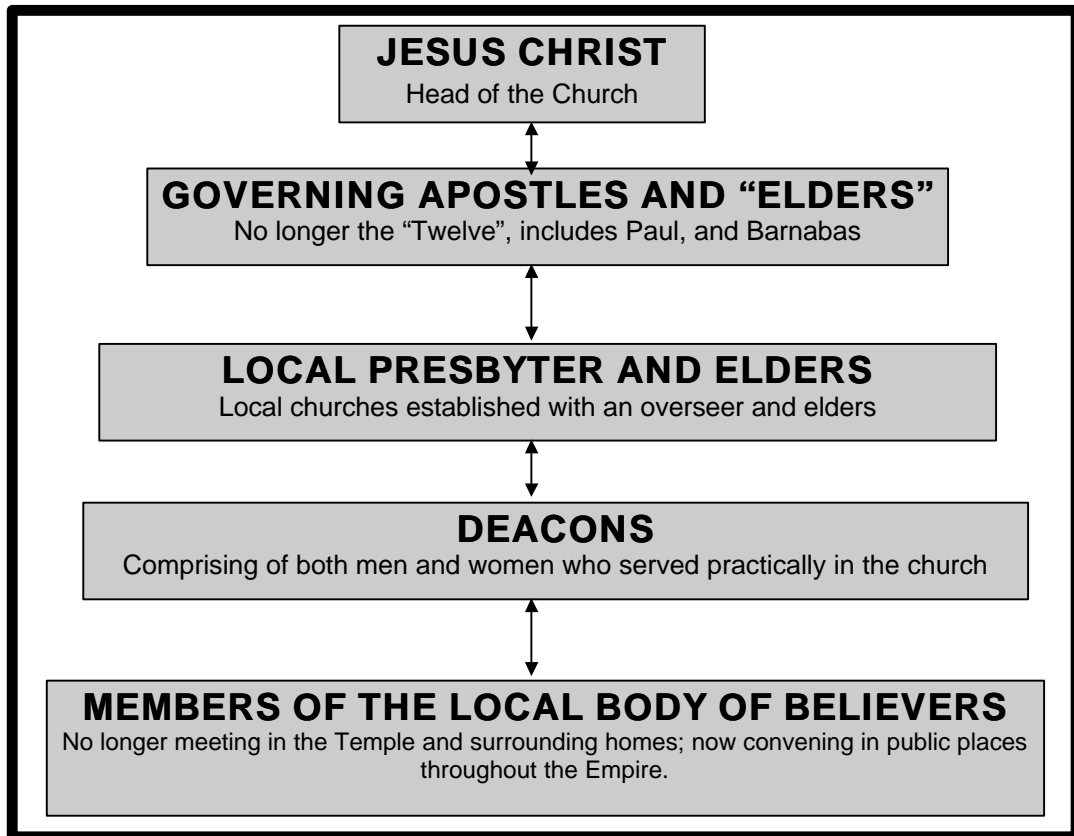
On the contrary, they saw that I had been entrusted with the task of preaching the gospel to the Gentiles, just as Peter had been to the Jews. For God, who was at work in the ministry of Peter as an apostle to the Jews, was also at work in my ministry as an apostle to the Gentiles.

Galatians 2:7



Photo left: The facade of St. Paul Outside the Walls Church, Rome, the traditional site of Paul's burial. The evidence for this tradition is fairly strong.

The Structural Chart of the Church to this point can now be seen to be -



(Structural Chart 2)

C. THE DIRECTION AND SUPERVISION OF LOCAL CHURCHES BY APOSTLES

The record in Acts shows that not only did Paul found local churches, but he took an on-going interest in them as well. This involved a desire to revisit those churches which he had originally founded.

Some time later Paul said to Barnabas, "Let us go back and visit the brothers in all the towns where we preached the word of the Lord and see how they are doing."

Acts 15:36

We also know from Paul's epistles that he was in regular contact with these churches as well. This pattern of apostolic contact went beyond Paul (Peter, John, Jude, and James the Just, all wrote apostolic epistles), thus indicating that it was an apostolic function, rather than something peculiar to Paul's ministry.⁸ Again it is hard to escape the influence of the Jewish Synagogue leadership structure when we study the comparison between the "Scribe" and the Church's "Apostle". While not *exactly* the same in function,

⁸ The assumption is often made that Paul was the model apostle. This examination of apostolic leadership does not make this assumption.

they both had responsibility for writing doctrinal documents, and exercised governmental responsibilities. Indeed the New Testament Scriptures are often referred to as *Apostolic Writings*, thus emphasizing the apostle's role as a New Testament Scribe of correct doctrine.⁹

Supervision of the now rapidly expanding global Church was clearly done by apostles. Again their epistles bear this out. From Paul's epistles we see that he also *directed* local churches. Sometimes this was in response to an appeal from the local church, as in the case of the Corinthian church on several occasions:

Now for the matters you wrote about: It is good for a man not to marry.

1Corinthians 7:1

(i) ACCEPTANCE OF THE APOSTLE

But in the majority of cases, the apostle seems to take the initiative to direct the local church. Even in these cases the apostle's authority seems to be subject to the local church's acceptance of it. Canadian denominational leader, Barney Coombs, makes this point when he says-

*"When Paul commanded the Corinthians to discipline the man who was living in incest, and to deliver him over to Satan for destruction of his flesh, it was up to the church to decide whether or not to obey the command."*¹⁰

This is an interesting aspect to the early apostolic leadership that is overlooked today. The basis of the apostle's authority was not his appointment or position, but his acceptance by the local church. While we have established that the Twelve (which later included James and Jude the half brothers of Jesus, and Paul), were uniquely apostolic, the Church continued, rightly or wrongly, to recognise other apostles. Some of these, Paul labelled as "false".

For such men are false apostles, deceitful workmen, masquerading as apostles of Christ.

2Corinthians 11:13

Yet Paul's appeal to authentic apostleship does not entirely rest on the three aspects of apostolic qualification discussed earlier. His greatest appeal has to do with the church's acceptance of him as an apostle based on his proven abilities.

*Even though I may not be an apostle to others, surely I am to you!
For you are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord.*

1Corinthians 9:2

⁹ Clowney, 1995:75

¹⁰ Coombs, 1996:196

This aspect of apostolic recognition is reinforced with Paul's statement about being him being the apostle to the Gentiles, while Peter was the apostle to the Jews (Galatians 2:8). This implies that a person may have been recognised by one church as an apostle, but not necessarily by another. Gentiles may have considered Peter an apostle, but not *their* apostle, and therefore they would not have responded to his apostolic authority as they might have with Paul. An apostle without ecclesiastical authority was merely reduced to an itinerant minister, and therefore not *fully* accepted as an apostle. The original Jerusalem-based Twelve did not previously encounter this situation. This comparative observation shows how the apostolic ministry was evolving beyond the original concept of the Twelve.

As the establishment of churches across the Empire opened up the possibility of preaching circuits for itinerant Christian ministers, many of these ministries were claiming to be an apostolic ministry. This caused Paul to respond in two ways. Firstly, he cautioned churches about men who “masqueraded” as apostles, and were therefore false, in the sense of “illegitimate”, apostles (2Corinthians 11:13). Secondly, he cautioned churches about too readily accepting and recognising another group of self-appointed apostles. Without a fatherly relationship to the church, these men were merely *teachers*, not apostles.

For though you might have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet you do not have many fathers; for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel.

1Corinthians 4:15 (NKJV)

(ii) APOSTLES RELATED TO LOCAL LEADERSHIP

In Sir Henry Chadwick's “*The Early Christian Church*”, he notes that, “*Evidently the churches established by the travelling missionaries soon came to have local, stationary clergy, subordinate to the general oversight of mobile apostolic authority.*”¹¹ It becomes clear from Paul's epistles that he oversaw the churches relating to him through locally appointed leadership. Some of Paul's epistles are even addressed initially to the local leadership:

Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus, To all the saints in Christ Jesus at Philippi, together with the overseers and deacons:

Philippians 1:1

This early apostolic relationship with local church elders and deacons can not be understated. Clearly Paul knew many of these leaders well. His greetings contained in many of his epistles bear this out (for example, Romans 16). And this relationship with the churches' leaders was not a job given to Paul in the sense of him receiving an appointment from an organisation. There was a genuine spiritual connection between him these leaders and their churches. This caused him to feel a deep ongoing burden for their care.

¹¹ Chadwick, 1993 (1967):46

Besides everything else, I face daily the pressure of my concern for all the churches. Who is weak, and I do not feel weak? Who is led into sin, and I do not inwardly burn?

2Corinthians 11:28-29

(iii) TOWARD THE END OF THE FIRST CENTURY

The Early Church was developing with an emerging structure of *functional* leadership. The Jerusalem church leadership gradually lost its earliest influence over the Church, and as such it never did appoint or replace leaders in, or over, a particular church. Despite this seeming lack of bureaucratic administration over the Church, it continued to flourish with apostolic leadership who forged relationships with local churches and their leaders. These apostolic relationships were not restricted to churches planted by themselves either. We know that Paul founded the Ephesian church, yet it was John who became its apostle after Paul. This further added to the evolution of the early Church's leadership structure.

This structure is best seen from Christ's address in the closing book of the New Testament. He communicated His message to John (the apostle), who was told to communicate it to the local "*angelos*" (or *Pastor*¹²), who in turn was to communicate the message to the local church.

"To the angel of the church in Ephesus write: These are the words of him who holds the seven stars in his right hand and walks among the seven golden lampstands:"

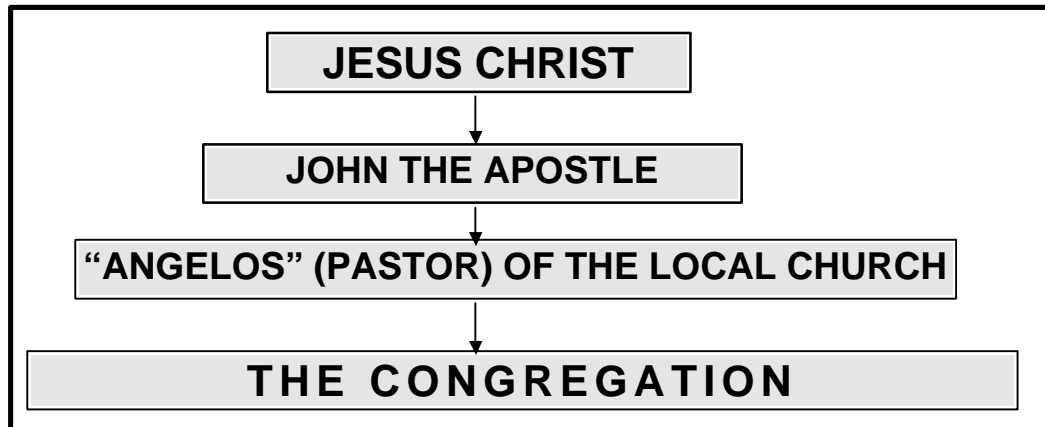
Revelation 2:1



Pictured left: A view of Patmos Harbour. This is where John wrote at least the early part of the Book of Revelation. Dr Kenneth L. Gentry's doctoral work has now shown that Revelation was most likely written around 65AD not 95AD as previously thought.

¹² Commentators speculate on what the term "angel" means in Revelation 2-3. If it refers to heavenly angels, it seems absurd and entirely inconsistent that Christ would instruct John to write letters to them (where would John send the letters?). The Greek word "*angelos*" was previously used of Christ's disciples in Luke 9:52 "*And he sent messengers on ahead, who went into a Samaritan village to get things ready for him*" and is translated as "messengers": It is more logical to understand the Greek word "*angelos*" as meaning "*messenger*". The other issue that makes *angelos* almost certainly the elder/pastor/bishop of the local church is Christ's summons to them to repent (Rev 3:19 "*Those whom I love I rebuke and discipline. So be earnest, and repent.*") Heavenly angels can not do this- (2Peter 2:4) "*For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but sent them to hell, putting them into gloomy dungeons to be held for judgment*". See ISBE, Vol. 1, page 127

Thus toward the end of the first century, with only a few of the Twelve still remaining, the Church's broad leadership structure could be represented as being -



Structural Chart 3. "The leadership structure of the Church as seen in the Book of Revelation"

The Book of Revelation at least highlights the apostle John's relationship to these seven churches of Asia Minor while he was based at Ephesus. Without wanting to state the obvious, it was an "apostolic" relationship. While John was not the founder of these churches, we know that after the imprisonment and then death of Paul, he established a strong relationship to the Ephesian church, and formed apostolic links to the surrounding six churches.¹³ Which further illustrates the point that apostles were leaders whose ministry involved the supervising and direction of local churches.

D. A NEW UNDERSTANDING OF APOSTOLIC FUNCTION

While the original Twelve, also designated as "apostles of the Lamb" (Revelation 21:14 "*The wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb*"), are to be regarded as uniquely apostolic, there is a case to be made that the function which the early apostles performed continued into the next generation of leadership and was at times also designated as being the ministry of an "apostle".

Greetings to Andronicus and Junia, my relatives, who were in prison with me. They are very important apostles. They were believers in Christ before I was.

Romans 16:7 (NCV)

¹³ The epistles of John are known to be primarily to these seven churches. Passages like 1John 2:19 show that John had intimate knowledge of a specific situation, which Dr. John R.W. Stott believes must have been "*a particular congregation, or group of them*" and since we know that John was based at Ephesus, it seems logical that the particular group of churches would be the remaining six churches mentioned in Revelation 1. See Stott's commentary on *The Epistles of John*, pages 13, and 40.

*Paul, Silas and Timothy, To the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace and peace to you...(2:6)
We were not looking for praise from men, not from you or anyone else. As apostles of Christ we could have been a burden to you*

1Thessalonians 1:1 - 2:6

Paul refers to Timothy and Silas as apostles (1Thessalonians 2:6). He also implies that Titus was an apostle as well -

As for Titus, he is my partner and fellow worker among you; as for our brothers, they are representatives of the churches and an honor to Christ.

2Corinthians 8:23

Although Titus is not directly referred to as an “apostle”, there can be doubt that if he was “partnering” Paul in ministry, he was at the least functioning as an apostolic leader and therefore as an “apostle”.

(i) THE EMERGENCE OF THE NEXT GENERATION

Because we see the emergence of the next generation of apostolic leaders within the closing pages of the New Testament historical record, we are also able to observe how the apostolic function of leadership was developing. These observations will begin to lay the foundation for this disquisition: *that although the Twelve apostles of the Lamb were uniquely apostolic, the apostolic function was developed and continued on by those who were divinely appointed and charismatically gifted to do so, as a necessary ministry to the Church.* In the table below, consider how it can be seen that there is Biblical evidence to show that there was indeed a second generation of apostolic leaders, who continued and built upon the work of preceding apostles:

FIRST APOSTLES Establishment and Pioneering	NEXT GENERATION OF APOSTLES Continuation and Advancement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initially based in Jerusalem (Acts 8:1; 15:2) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spread throughout the Empire (Acts 17:6; Col. 1:6; 1Thess. 1:8)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishment of sound doctrine (Acts 2:42; 2Tim 1:13) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Defence of sound doctrine (1Tim. 6:2; Phil. 1:27; Jude 3)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oversaw the establishment of churches (Acts 8:14; 15:4) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oversaw churches (Titus 1:5)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trained by the Lord (Mark 3:14) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trained by apostles (Acts 15:22, 40; 1Cor. 4:17)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apprehensive to accept Gentile conversions (Acts 10:45; 11:1-2) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focussed on Gentile conversions (Acts 13:46; Gal. 2:7)

(ii) THE SECOND GENERATION OF APOSTOLIC LEADERSHIP

Is it legitimate to consider New Testament leaders such as, Timothy, Silas, Titus and possibly John Mark as apostles? Traditionally in most segments of the Church, *the Twelve apostles of the Lamb* have been the only ones considered to be authentic apostles. We have already argued for Paul's legitimate inclusion as a fully-fledged apostle, but can we do the same for those that are also identified as apostles but not a part of the Twelve?

The evidence from the New Testament is easily sufficient for realising that there were people considered "apostles" other than the original Twelve. Centuries of hermeneutical conditioning and its lingering affect on institutional orthodox theology is apparent when respected leading scholars take the plain teaching of Scripture and eisegetically twist them to distinguish the term *apostle* as merely meaning a *special messenger* and stating emphatically that although the text ascribes apostleship to others outside of the original Twelve, they could not possibly be apostles, because there were only Twelve. This is a form of circular reasoning. First Corinthians 15 makes a matter of fact statement that from the earliest point in the history of the Church, there were more than just Twelve apostles. (Note the last part of verse 7.)

⁴ that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, ⁵ and that he appeared to Peter, and then to the Twelve. ⁶ After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. ⁷ Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles, ⁸ and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born.

1Corinthians 15:4 - 8

This passage alone makes it plain that there were other apostles. There is speculation that these *other* apostles were the Seventy that Christ had previously sent out under His earthly ministry (Luke 10:1ff).¹⁴ F.F. Bruce says -

However it may be explained, it seems safest to allow that there were, at an early date, apostles outside the Twelve. Paul's own apostleship makes such a breach in any more restrictive theory that there is room for others of God's appointment to pass with him. A hint of this may be given in the distinction between 'the Twelve' and 'all the apostles' in 1Cor. 15:5, 7.¹⁵

If we can discover from the Scriptures that there was indeed a second generation of apostles, then there may be some essential principle of the early Church's leadership structure that needs to be considered as applicable for the modern Church. That is, if the criteria used by the first apostles to decide on a replacement for Judas is the only authentic basis for determining whether someone is considered an apostle or not, then,

¹⁴ IBD, Volume 1, 1980:80, F.F. Bruce wrote- "*Whether as old writers suggested, some who are later called 'apostles' belonged to the Seventy sent out by the Lord is another matter.*"

¹⁵ IBD, Volume 1, 1980:80

there can not be any authentic apostles past the first century. But if this was only the criteria for determining which *other apostle* should replace the special position made vacant by Judas, then we need to discover the actual criteria for determining what an apostle is and does.

One modern writer, Harold Eberle, feels that there was indeed a second generation of apostolic leaders and were also designated as such.

Again, let's remember that twenty-two people in the New Testament are called apostles. Besides the original twelve, they are Matthias (Acts 1:26); Barnabas and Paul (Acts 14:14); Andronicus and Junias (Rom. 16:7); James, the Lord's brother (Gal. 1:19); Epaphroditus (Phil. 2:25); Apollos (1Cor. 4:6-9); and Silvanus and Timothy (1Thess. 1:1, 2:6). Some Scriptures imply that even more were considered apostles (for example, see Romans 16:7).¹⁶

While Eberle doesn't elaborate on his reasoning for considering these people as apostles beyond the plain designation of Scripture, below is a listing of those ascribed as apostles with elaborated reasoning based on exegetical research.

(iii) JUSTIFICATION FOR THE RECOGNITION OF ADDITIONAL NEW TESTAMENT APOSTLES

Matthias

Then they cast lots, and the lot fell to Matthias; so he was added to the eleven apostles.

Acts 1:26

The recognised apostles unanimously recognised that the Lord had called Matthias to be an equal apostle. The criteria used to be included among the "apostles of the Lamb" was that he had to be very familiar with the Lord to the extent that he was a witness to His life and teaching; and that he was a witness to the resurrected Christ.

Therefore it is necessary to choose one of the men who have been with us the whole time the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from John's baptism to the time when Jesus was taken up from us. For one of these must become a witness with us of his resurrection." So they proposed two men: Joseph called Barsabbas (also known as Justus) and Matthias. Then they prayed, "Lord, you know everyone's heart. Show us which of these two you have chosen to take over this apostolic ministry, which Judas left to go where he belongs."

Acts 1:21 - 25

¹⁶ Eberle, 1994:26

The criteria used to replace Judas included-

- Been with the other apostles from the time of John the Baptist until Christ's ascension
- A direct witness to the resurrection of Christ
- Chosen by the Lord to be an apostle (the implication is that apostles are not *ordained* or chosen by men)

Some consider this criteria as the sum total for authentic apostleship. What is overlooked is that this was the criteria for *replacing Judas*. Clearly, if it were the case that authentic apostleship was bound by the above criteria, it would rule out the possibility for anyone else ever being considered an authentic apostle.

But there is another fundamental criteria that can be considered as the true qualifications of an apostle. In Acts 1:20, Peter identifies that it was the Lord's will and call for *someone* to take the place of Judas. This is the overriding principle for determining authentic apostleship: *God's will and God's call*.

Barnabas

But when the apostles Barnabas and Paul heard of this, they tore their clothes and rushed out into the crowd, shouting:

Acts 14:14

The call of Barnabas to the apostolic ministry is described in Acts 13:1-2. The Greek word used as a descriptive of Barnabas in Acts 14:14 is ἀποστόλοι. Just as Paul was called to be an apostle, so was Barnabas. He discharged the ministry of an apostle, wrought the signs of an apostle, and displayed the fruit of an apostolic ministry. In 1Corinthians 9:5-6, Paul lists himself and Barnabas with *the other apostles*, having already named Peter (referred to as Cephas) as one of the other apostles that he was referring to. Therefore in Paul's mind, Barnabas was an apostle equal to the original Twelve.

Paul

Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle and set apart for the gospel of God—

Romans 1:1

It is generally accepted, even by those holding to a cessationist position (that the ministry gift of apostle ceased after the death of the original Twelve apostles) that Paul was an apostle of at least equal standing with the original Twelve. Some have even gone so far as to suggest that Paul, and not Matthias, was the rightful heir to the Twelfth position vacated by Judas.

...Some have introduced more desperate expedients, suggesting that James replaced James bar-Zebedee as Matthias replaced Judas, or that Matthias was mistakenly hurried into the place which God intended for Paul. Of such ideas there is not a hint in the NT.¹⁷

¹⁷ IBD, Volume 1, 1980:80

The reasons for accepting Paul's apostleship as authentic include: (i) his direct call by the Lord Jesus on the road to Damascus to be an apostle, Acts 9:5-6, 15-16; (ii) his forthright claims to an apostle, Gal. 1:1, 19; (iii) the acceptance by and recognition of the original apostles as an authentic apostle, Gal. 2:8-9; (iv) the obvious signs of an apostle were wrought by him, Acts 19:11; and (v) the fruit of an apostolic ministry were evident, 1Cor. 4:15.

Andronicus and Junias

Greetings to Andronicus and Junia, my relatives, who were in prison with me. They are very important apostles. They were believers in Christ before I was.

Romans 16:7 (NCV)

The plain rendering of this verse is that Andronicus and Junia (or Junias) were apostles, not just well known by ("of note among the apostles", NKJV) recognised apostles. The NIV renders this verse in favour of Andronicus and Junia being apostles - *They are outstanding among the apostles...* The plain construction of the original Greek makes it deliberately clear that Paul was referring to Andronicus and Junia as apostles. Several scholars show their blatant eisegesis by either forcing the text to mean something that it most certainly does not say (*that they were merely well known to the Twelve apostles*), or to diminish the sense in which Paul uses the word *apostle*. For cessationists the plain statement by Paul that Andronicus and (perhaps his wife?) Junia were outstanding apostles.

Professor Everett F. Harrison in his commentary on Romans says -

The pair are further described as "outstanding among the apostles." We cannot well reduce the word "apostle" to "messenger" in this instance, however suitable it may be in Philippians 2:25, and it goes without saying that Andronicus and Junias do not belong in the circle of the Twelve. What is left is the recognition that occasionally the word is used somewhat broadly to include leaders in Christian work (cf. 1Thess. 2:7). To interpret the statement as meaning that these men were outstanding in the estimation of the apostles scarcely does justice to the construction in the Greek.¹⁸

Astoundingly, Professor Henry E. Jacobs (Professor of Systematic Theology, Lutheran Theological Seminary, Philadelphia) wrote in the highly respected *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* about Andronicus and Junia-

When he and Junias, another kinsman of Paul, are referred to as "of note among the apostles," this may be interpreted either as designating the high esteem in which they were held by the Twelve, or as reckoning them in the number of apostles. The latter is the sense, if "apostle" be understood here in the more general meaning, used in Acts 14:14 of Barnabas, in 2Cor. 8:3 of "the travelling

¹⁸ EBC, Volume 10, 1976:164

evangelists or missionaries who preached the gospel from place to place." On this assumption, Andronicus was one of the most prominent and successful of the travelling missionaries of the early Church.¹⁹

The bias of the cessationist hermeneutic is apparent. Both Professors Harrison and Jacobs admit that the construction of the Greek text clearly describes Andronicus and Junia as apostles. The only way they can overcome this challenge to their cessationist theology is to diminish the definition of the word *apostle*.

Surprisingly, Professor A. F. Walls (Professor of Religious Studies, University of Aberdeen) says of Andronicus and Junia-

... 'distinguished among the apostles' ('well known "to" the apostles' is improbable)...²⁰

And perhaps even more surprisingly, the late legendary exegete, F.F. Bruce said -

Andronicus and Junias are probably called apostles in Rom. 16:7, and Paul, always careful with his personal pronouns, may so style Silas in 1Thess. 2:6.²¹

To accept the consistent use of the word *apostle* and the plain construction of the Greek text, we rightfully recognise Andronicus and Junia as apostles.

James

I saw none of the other apostles--only James, the Lord's brother.

Galatians 1:19

The apostle James, who oversaw the Jerusalem church, is first referred to in the New Testament as being Christ's brother in Mark 6:3- *Isn't this the carpenter? Isn't this Mary's son and the brother of James, Joseph, Judas and Simon? Aren't his sisters here with us?" And they took offense at him.* He is not either of the two James referred to as being members of the Twelve chosen apostles. In Acts 12:2, James the son of Zebedee (the brother of John) is martyred by Herod. Further in the same chapter, Peter is released from prison by the Lord and told by the Lord to go directly to His brother James and tell him what has just happened. Later as the Church met for its first Council, it is James the Lord's brother, the author of the Book of James, who is regarded as the leading apostle in Jerusalem.

The whole assembly became silent as they listened to Barnabas and Paul telling about the miraculous signs and wonders God had done among the Gentiles through them. When they finished, James spoke up: "Brothers, listen to me..."

Acts 15:12-13

¹⁹ ISBE, Volume 1, 1979:123

²⁰ IBD, Volume 1, 1980:50

²¹ IBD, Volume 1, 1980:80

When Paul returned to Jerusalem after he himself was a seasoned apostle, he submitted and reported to James the Lord's brother-

The next day Paul and the rest of us went to see James, and all the elders were present.

Acts 21:18

Paul also specifically mentions James the Lord's brother as having a special appearing of the resurrected Christ-

Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles,

1Corinthians 15:7

James, the brother of the Lord Jesus Christ, was not one of the Twelve. He is however clearly designated as an apostle of at least equal standing with the other apostles. It is a futile argument to suggest that the ascription of *apostle* in James' case merely means special messenger because the plain narrative of the New Testament shows that he was highly respected as an authority in the Church with both the surviving original members of the Twelve, and Paul looking to him for apostolic input.

James is designated as an apostle; and he worthily performed the duties of that office for a generation as a home missionary to Jerusalem, as the chief minister of the church there, and as a witness for Jesus to Jewry.²²

*Professor Emeritus William C. Robinson, Columbia Theological Seminary,
Decatur, Georgia*

E paphroditus

Yet I considered it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother, fellow worker, and fellow soldier, but your messenger and the one who ministered to my need;

Philippians 2:25 (NKJV)

The Greek word used here to describe Epaphroditus is ἀποστολὸν (*apostolon*), is only used in one other place in the New Testament to describe the apostleship of Christ (Hebrews 3:1). Most English translations render the word as "messenger". The associated word ἀποστολὸς (*apostolos*) is the word most commonly rendered in English as *apostle* but this word is also translated as *messenger*. The Greek word is used most often simply to describe a *messenger* is ἀποστελεῖν (the verb: *apostello*).

The issue regarding Epaphroditus is whether we can build a case for him to be considered an apostle based on this reference and the only other one that we have of him in Philippians 4:18.

Exegeting Philippians 2:25 there is reasonable support for considering Epaphroditus as an apostle. He was (i) a special *brother* to Paul; (ii) a fellow (equal) worker with Paul *the apostle*; (iii) a fellow *soldier* of Paul; (iv) he was a *sent one* (the root meaning of the word *apostle*).

²² ISBE, Volume 1, 1979:193

In much the same way that Paul had installed Timothy as the resident apostle at Ephesus, it is again reasonable to assume that he did the same with Epaphroditus at Philippi. If we take the Greek word rendered in this passage as “messenger” (but elsewhere translated as “apostle”) the passage would be understood as Epaphroditus being their apostle and a timely minister to Paul’s needs.

Professor Homer A. Kent (President of Grace Theological Seminary, USA) says of Epaphroditus -

He is identified by the apostle in a series of glowing terms. He was “my brother” (ton adelphon), a sharer of spiritual life with Paul and so his brother in Christ. He was a “fellow worker” (synergon) a participant with Paul in the labors of the gospel. Paul said he was also “my...fellow soldier” (systratioten mou), a sharer of the dangers involved in standing firm for Christ and in proclaiming the gospel. The next terms tell of Epaphroditus’s relation to the Philippians. He had acted as their “messenger” (apostolon), the duly appointed and commissioned delegate to convey the Philippians’ gift to Paul. (The broader use of the term ‘apostle’ without the addition of the phrase “of Jesus Christ” is used also of Barnabas [Acts 14:14] and apparently of Silas and Timothy [1Thess. 2:7; cf. 1:1], and James the Lord’s brother [Gal. 1:19; 1Cor. 15:7]. For this less-restricted use of the ‘apostolon’, see also 2Cor. 8:23.)²³

Professor Kent makes the point that the word *apostolon* is indeed used to identify those with an apostolic ministry, and the way in which Paul describes him would certainly make him deserving of the designation *apostle*. There is little doubt that Epaphroditus put his life on the line in typical apostolic fashion (Philippians 2:27).

Therefore, based on etymology and exegetics, it is very reasonable to accept that Epaphroditus was an authentic, recognised and accepted apostle.

Apollos

Now, brothers, I have applied these things to myself and Apollos for your benefit, so that you may learn from us the meaning of the saying, “Do not go beyond what is written.” Then you will not take pride in one man over against another. For who makes you different from anyone else? What do you have that you did not receive? And if you did receive it, why do you boast as though you did not? Already you have all you want! Already you have become rich! You have become kings--and that without us! How I wish that you really had become kings so that we might be kings with you! For it seems to me that God has put us apostles on display at the end of the procession, like men condemned to die in the arena. We have been made a spectacle to the whole universe, to angels as well as to men.

1Corinthians 4:6-9

²³ EBC, Volume 11, 1978:134

Paul refers to himself and Apollos as “*us apostles*”. Some scholars have attempted to dismiss Paul’s plain reference to Apollos being an equal apostle by claiming that he is actually described as a *διάκονος* (*diakonos*), a “minister” in 1Corinthians 3:5. Professor William Robinson says of Apollos -

In 1Corinthians 3:5, Apollos is called a minister (Gk. diakonos); hence he is hardly to be included as an apostle in 4:6, 9.²⁴

This is highly questionable hermeneutics. Again the reasoning for this kind of statement against Apollos being an apostle is the biased assumption that *there were no other apostles apart from the Twelve*. From what we know though of Apollos from the New Testament narrative we observe that he was indeed suitably qualified to be considered an apostle. Paul plainly calls him an apostle. For Professor Robinson and others to claim that Apollos was *merely* a minister of the Gospel and not an apostle based on 1Corinthians 3:5, is to also bring into question Paul’s apostleship based on the same reasoning. Clearly, Paul was not denying his own apostolic call and ministry when he referred to Apollos and himself as *servants* (or *ministers*) of Christ. To deny that Apollos was an apostle is to deny that Paul was an apostle. Furthermore, Paul also lists apostles and includes Apollos in those lists.

What I mean is this: One of you says, "I follow Paul"; another, "I follow Apollos"; another, "I follow Cephas "; still another, "I follow Christ."

1Corinthians 1:12

So then, no more boasting about men! All things are yours, whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas or the world or life or death or the present or the future--all are yours,

1 Corinthians 3:21-22

Silvanus

Paul, Silas and Timothy, To the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace and peace to you...We were not looking for praise from men, not from you or anyone else. As apostles of Christ we could have been a burden to you,

1Thessalonians 1:1; 2:6

Silvanus (the Latin version), or *Silas* (the Hebrew version), is referred to by Paul as an apostle. The New Testament introduces us to Silas in Acts 15, describing him as “*a leading man among the brethren*” (Acts 15:22), and “*a prophet*” (Acts 15:32). The fact that he is referred to as a prophet in Acts 15:32 does not dismiss any claim that he was an apostle. This precedent for apostles being renowned as prophets is possibly evidenced in the ministry of Paul who was identified as being a teacher or prophet in Acts 13:1. It is reasonable to accept that emerging apostles ministered prophetically before their full apostolic ministry blossomed. This could well be the case with Silas.

²⁴ ISBE, Volume 1, 1979:193

Silas became one of the most respected leaders in the earliest Church. He was an extremely close associate of Paul, travelling with him for the best part of several decades. He co-founded several churches with Paul including Philippi, Thessalonica, Corinth, and Berea. He later worked with Peter the apostle as his amanuensis to compose First and Second Peter.

With the help of Silas, whom I regard as a faithful brother, I have written to you briefly, encouraging you and testifying that this is the true grace of God. Stand fast in it.

1Peter 5:12

The epistle to the Thessalonians is largely the wording of Silas with the guidance of Paul. Thus the fruit of Silas' ministry is evidenced from Acts 15 where he is one of the chief ambassadors of the Church to the Gentiles, and the bringer of apostolic doctrine. From Acts 16 on, he is a missionary in the same sense as Paul was, and a church planter in the same sense that Paul was. From Paul's epistles to the Corinthians and Thessalonians we see that he wrote with the same authority as Paul. It is therefore clear that he at the very least *functioned* in an apostolic capacity. Combined this observation with Paul's plain reference to Silas as an apostle (1Thess. 1:1; 2:6), and it is exegetically legitimate to recognise Silas as an authentic apostle.

Timothy

But you know that Timothy has proved himself, because as a son with his father he has served with me in the work of the gospel.

Philippians 2:22

There is little doubt from what we read in the New Testament that Timothy was Paul's closest colleague. Paul was accompanied by Timothy for most of his latter missionary career. Paul regarded Timothy as his son in the Lord (Philippians 2:22). Having established that the New Testament does indeed identify apostles other than the original Twelve, there would be no more suitable candidate for recognition as a second generation apostle than Timothy. It is extremely reasonable to assume that someone who spent most of their adult life training under the ministry of perhaps the most fruitful first century apostle would themselves be trained to minister apostolically. Paul encourages Timothy to do the same thing with those he is "fathering" so that a third generation of apostolically motivated ministry is raised up (2Timothy 2:2).

Just as an apostle is a sent and commissioned minister of the Lord Jesus with a very clear and direct call from the same Lord, we can observe that Timothy was *sent* several times to bring apostolic order and instruction to various churches.

We sent Timothy, who is our brother and God's fellow worker in spreading the gospel of Christ, to strengthen and encourage you in your faith,

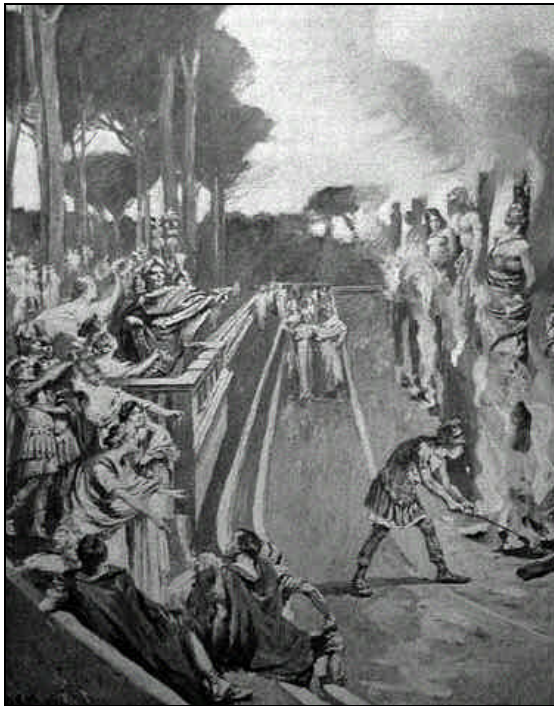
1Thessalonians 3:2

I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you soon, that I also may be cheered when I receive news about you.

Philippians 2:19

Again add to the New Testament narrative of how Timothy functioned, we have Paul's reference to Timothy in Thessalonians to being an apostle (1Thessalonians 1:1; 2:6).

There is plain Scriptural support for the inclusion of at least another ten people to be regarded as apostles. It would be naïve to conclude that these were the sum total of all first century apostles. What we can see from the New Testament is that apostles *are* a necessary ministry in the church. It is apparent from the New Testament that there was an emerging second generation of apostolic leadership. It is then apparent from history that there was a further generation of apostolic leadership, as will be shown in the proceeding compiled research. And throughout history there is enough evidence to be persuaded that God has continually indeed raised up apostolic and prophetic leadership.



Left: A depiction of Christians being publicly martyred under the reign of Caesar Nero. His official campaign against the Church commenced in 64AD and ceased 68AD lasting 42 months (Revelation 13:5). Both Peter and Paul were martyred during his reign. His attack on the Church was one of the greatest challenges facing the apostles.

(iv) THE IMPORTANCE OF CONTINUED APOSTOLIC LEADERSHIP

True apostolic leaders aren't concerned with titles, or even being labelled as "apostle". There is not one reference to Paul, or any other apostle addressing themselves as "Apostle Paul", or "Apostle Peter". It was always, "*from Paul, an apostle of Christ*" (Ephesians 1:1). The function was more important than the title. Therefore as we conclude that there were indeed apostolic leaders functioning beyond the first century, it is not whether their contemporaries referred to them as apostles, or whether they claimed they had an apostolic gift. The point is that Christ's church has been built with apostles and prophets throughout every era of the Church. Yet it is possible to reject, ignore, or ridicule those who are gifted as apostolic leaders today, and thus deprive the Church of what Christ considers His Church needs.

From the previous chapter we saw that apostles carried out some of the following functions:

- They pioneered churches
- They brought discipline to entire local congregations
- They installed local church leadership
- They maintained sound doctrine through formal teaching, writing, and preaching
- They were prolific trainers of emerging leaders and ministries
- They were driven to reach the lost for Christ
- They were anchored to a local church where they had direct leadership oversight
- They were routinely visiting other relational churches to strengthen them

Not all apostles fulfilled every one of these functions. One of the common deficiencies in modern “paperback” theology is the lack of appreciation for the diversity of New Testament apostolic leadership. While the above functions were the general parameters of apostolic function, (which we examine in more detail in chapters 4 and 8, but especially the closing sections of chapter 10) it needs to be appreciated that God raises up apostolic leaders to minister in their day, in ways and methods relevant to their culture and time. In this way, Timothy’s apostolic ministry was similar but different to Paul’s. Ignatius’ apostolic ministry was similar but different to Timothy’s. Athanasius’ apostolic ministry was appropriate for his time, just as John Wesley’s was for his, and Bill Hybels’ is for ours.

The primary pursuit of this book is to investigate the various leadership functions of the early Church with a particular desire to trace the importance and development of apostolic leadership (apostles and prophets). The desire is that we may come to recognise the hand of Christ on His Church throughout all ages, and realise that He has placed *firstly* apostles, then *secondly* prophets in the Church (1Corinthians 12:28) for all ages. Many modern churches are deprived, and even worse still, deprive themselves, of apostolic leadership. It will be shown that churches have generally thrived where they have been relationally aligned with apostolic leadership. In the next chapter we continue to investigate the Church’s second century leadership and continue to see that apostolic leaders still functioned as a necessary ministry in the Church.